Tip Sheet

Information Literacy: Resource Evaluation & Plagiarism

#FCPSDigCit

1. Provide students with a framework for identifying the need to evaluate sources. Each source has distinct characteristics that will help students evaluate the quality and usefulness of the information.

   The essential characteristics for effective website assessment are defined in the Guided Inquiry Design model:

Characteristics for Evaluating Sources	
Expertise	Knowledge of the author
Accuracy	Factual correctness and authenticity of a source
Currency	The date of publication or presentation of the material
Perspective	Point of view and outlook of an author
Quality	Value and merit of an information source

2. When needed, reduce resource evaluation to basic elements. These questions provide the backdrop for effective resource evaluation: Who, What, When, Why and How.

3. This video effectively communicates the need for and essential elements of resource evaluation in basic language: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZprDxESW7U

4. For older students, reliability is another important variable to consider. Ask students to identify if a resource is *biased.*

5. In order to avoid plagiarism, encourage students to do the following:
   - Take notes as an alternative to copy and pasting.
   - Paraphrase and use evidence to create their own ideas.
   - Document sources when *beginning* their work.

- Cite *all* sources (not just those from which they pulled quotes) that were used during their learning and research.

6. Identify two common myths about plagiarism for your students:

   Myth #1: "I didn't know I was plagiarizing. It's not plagiarism if I didn't mean to do it."
   Fact: Sharing ideas that are not you own without including appropriate attribution is plagiarism whether it was *intentional* or *unintentional*.

   Myth #2: "I only need to cite information that I've quoted."

   Fact: You must cite ideas that are not your own whether the ideas are summarized, paraphrased or provided in an exact quote.

7. Make a personal connection with students about the nature of plagiarism. Encourage reflection on ethical use of information. Use prompts related to honesty for discussion in:
   - "Why bother being honest?"
   - "In what ways does honesty change you?"
   - "How is plagiarism like stealing?"

Works Cited

Kuhlthau, Carol C., et al. "Information Literacy Curriculum." Guided Inquiry: Learning in the 21st Century, 2nd ed., Libraries Unlimited, 2015, pp. 73-95. Libraries Unlimited Guided Inquiry. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*, go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=GVRL&sw=w&u=fairfaxcps&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CCX6347500019&asid=3a82aa689d589954e7648c589d968c8b. Accessed 31 July 2017.

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