

Session 2: Lateral Reading & Click Restraint

The Problem: Common advice for evaluating online information—like .org websites are better than .com—can actually lead students astray.

In this session, participants will continue to learn about *lateral reading* and *click restraint*—skills professional fact checkers use to make accurate online evaluations—and anticipate opportunities and challenges to teaching this new approach to students.

For the facilitator—Look through these activities and consider which would be most useful for your group, given your time constraints and interests. Note that the Practice Space activity can be completed using the free platform Teacher Moments or in a Google Doc, both of which are [linked below](#).

Video Discussion

For the facilitator—We recommend spending around 15 to 20 minutes on the video discussion.

[VIDEO 1: SORT FACT FROM FICTION ONLINE WITH LATERAL READING](#)

For the group—Video Discussion Questions

- Do your students tend to read “vertically” or “laterally”? How do you know?
- What’s different about the internet from print sources that makes lateral reading a more effective strategy online?

- Have you had students express that they believe websites with dot-org domains are necessarily trustworthy? If so, where do you think they picked up that misconception?
- Checklists have dominated digital literacy instruction, but research suggests the checklist approach may be leading students astray. What obstacles do you think there are to adopting evidence-based instructional strategies? How might you overcome those obstacles in your context?

[VIDEO 2: CIVIC ONLINE REASONING IN ACTION](#)

For the group—Video Discussion Questions

- What did you notice about how students participated in and reacted to the lesson? What do you wonder about?
- Will Colglazier said, “Every unit, we’re doing a little bit of skill development, a little bit of research.” How do you integrate these kinds of skills into your curriculum now? Have you tried something similar to Will’s approach?
- What challenges would you anticipate your students having with the lesson that Will taught?
- How might you adapt [the lesson Will used](#) for your classroom?

Practice Space Discussion

*For the facilitator—*We recommend having participants complete the **practice space** and review the **debrief** outside of the meeting and reserving the time you have together for discussion. If you choose to complete the practice space during the meeting, plan to leave 35 to 45 minutes for participants to do it and another 5 minutes to go over the debrief.

[PRACTICE SPACE: SUPPORTING LATERAL READING](#)

Advise participants to select “Continue anonymously” to complete the activity.

[PRACTICE SPACE DEBRIEF](#)


The practice space debrief includes the questions that appear in the practice space along with the correct answers. Encourage participants to review the practice space debrief only after they’ve completed the practice space.

For the group—Practice Space Discussion Questions

- As you were going through the practice space, what did you notice, and what details seemed most salient?
- The idea of lateral reading is simple, but as the example of Timothy’s work cited page showed, doing it well takes practice. What are some challenges that students may face when learning to read laterally? How can we help them be better at lateral reading?
- To become skilled lateral readers, students need opportunities to practice and develop flexible approaches to reading laterally. In particular, they need help understanding the resources available to facilitate lateral reading. With practice, students will grow more confident and flexible in using various resources. What are some opportunities for practicing lateral reading you can identify in your existing curriculum?

Reading

For the facilitator—If your group is interested in learning more about how traditional digital literacy approaches, including checklists, have been ineffective in teaching students to be effective online readers, you can read the following *Phi Delta Kappan* article together as a group, followed by a quick discussion, or you can share the article for participants to read after the session.

 BREAKSTONE, ET AL., 2018. [WHY WE NEED A NEW APPROACH TO TEACHING DIGITAL LITERACY](#). PHI DELTA KAPPAN.

For the group—Reading Discussion Questions

In this article, staff from the Stanford History Education Group explain why students and adults urgently need to develop the skills of Civic Online Reasoning and why checklists don't work for evaluating websites. Use the following questions to spark your discussion:

- How and when did you learn about online evaluation strategies? If you had any formal instruction, were you taught any misconceptions or faulty strategies? How has the internet changed since you learned these strategies?
- Has your department, grade level team, or school ever made a major change in how they teach a subject or skill? What worked well? What didn't work so well?

Assignment

For the facilitator—This assignment is designed for participants to complete in the days or weeks after your meeting. We suggest meeting with a colleague to plan your implementation strategy and organizing a whole-group meeting afterwards to discuss your experience with the assignment.

INSTRUCTIONS—*for the group*

Teach [a model lesson](#) developed by the Stanford History Education Group on lateral reading. Using the responses you collect from your students, reflect on how the lesson went overall. Note that the assignment is not about helping students master these strategies but rather 1) getting more familiar with these strategies, 2) understanding

student misconceptions about evaluating online sources, and 3) identifying how you can more effectively teach these strategies in the future.

We recommend that you try to meet with a colleague to discuss your lesson plan and implementation strategy before teaching your students. Here are topics that you might discuss:

- Is there anything that you learned from your baseline assessment exercise that indicates that it might be helpful to adapt the lesson?
- As a follow up to the lesson, are there any activities in your curriculum coming up where you could practice these skills soon after the first lesson? Are there topics that students are talking about that would lend itself to additional practice?

REFLECTION—*for the group*

In this assignment, you were asked to teach a model lesson on lateral reading to your own students. Meet again with colleagues to discuss your experiences.

- Which parts of the lesson went well?
- Which parts of the lesson did not work as well?
- How would you describe your students' current ability to *read laterally*?
 - Beginning - Most students did not successfully find who was behind the information
 - Developing - About half of the student did successfully find out who was behind the information
 - Proficient - Most students did successfully find out who was behind the information

- What misconceptions did your students have about evaluating online information?
- How might you modify this lesson in the future?