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What the CRAAP?: Comparing Approaches to Teaching Web Evaluation in FYE Programs

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What the CRAAP?: Using an Investigative Approach to Web Source Evaluation
Students’ Application of the CRAAP Test

Assessed Loyola Freshman Info Literacy (‘16-’17)
- Difficulty understanding criteria jargon
- Fall back on label and credential recognition
- Often used a single criterion

Shift Needed Approach to Teaching Web Evaluation
- Simple, more intuitive criteria
- Promotes synthesis of criteria (higher-level Bloom’s)
Late 1990s/ early aughts

- Authority, Accuracy, Objectivity, Currency, Coverage
  (Jim Kapoun)
- Long checklists, scoring

A Brief History of Web Source Evaluation

Into the early 2000s, there was a shift away from checklist approach, one which still urged students to discern multiple qualities as markers of legitimacy.
A Brief History of Web Source Evaluation, Continued

Early-mid aughts to 2010s

- Currency, Reliability, Accuracy, Authority, Perspective (CRAAP — Cal State Chico)
- Deeper focus on each quality

Still uses jargon and relies mainly on a yes/no approach rather than asking students to look at the process by which a source is created.
2010s (concurrent w/ CRAAP)
- Deploys only 5 of 6 journalistic questions
- Sometimes focuses on site, not source
- Less emphasis on deep criteria than CRAAP

Open-ended, simple criteria ask students to produce analysis focused on the production process behind the source. But potential uses for a source are not included.

Kathy Schrock’s 5 Ws of Website Evaluation is a typical representative of this methodology.
Complexity
Frames evaluation at level of source, not site.* Avoids yes/no responses, prefers analysis over judgement.

* But site matters too, of course!

**The Investigative Approach**

Intuitiveness
Employs a simple mnemonic that learners at almost all levels can grasp.

Self-Reflexivity
Promotes a more nuanced practice of metaliteracy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What</strong></th>
<th><strong>Who</strong></th>
<th><strong>When</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What type of source is it? Blog, article, book review, encyclopedia entry? How does this determine the source's information content?</td>
<td>Who wrote it? Why might their views be valuable? In what ways is their voice relevant to your topic and its scope?</td>
<td>When was this written or published? Given the field and your project, can the info be considered current?</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Where</strong></th>
<th><strong>Why</strong></th>
<th><strong>How</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Where is it posted? How does the outlet suggest anything about the source value in a particular context?</td>
<td>Why has the outlet chosen to devote space to this source? Why has the author written the source?</td>
<td>Two different questions: How is the source supported by outside information? How will you use the source?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The investigative model promotes some key pillars of the ACRL’s Framework

Authority is Created and Contextual.

Scholarship as a Conversation

Information Has Value.

Knowledge Creation is a Process.
Revised First-Year Info Literacy Skills Assessment for 2018

Simplified assessment
Fewer skill areas tested. Focus only on open web source evaluation.

Complex cognition
Our assessment tool staged synthesis--asked students to identify two biggest factors. Higher-level Bloom’s cognition.

Intuitive language
Students directed to investigate using journalistic questions, not terms they may not grasp fully.
Results from second IL assessment were similar

- Excessive emphasis on name/brand recognition
- Difficulty synthesizing evaluation criteria (using only 1)
- Inappropriate or irrelevant proposed use of source

Upshot: The shift in curriculum let us see more clearly where students were struggling with evaluating web sources.
Any questions?

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Works Cited


