Disinformation in the Classroom

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Teaching media literacy isn’t new. Nor is the issue of students entering our classrooms with distorted or misinformed conceptions of our subjects. Increasingly, though, these existing problems are being exacerbated.

“Disinformation and propaganda are flourishing,” Beth McMurtrie writes for the Chronicle of Higher Education. “Colleges have traditionally been places where professors and their students use the tools of reason and inquiry to get to the truth. But such work has become monumentally harder.”

This shift has left many feeling unprepared to tackle these difficult conversations, even as several studies have found that many students, at both a high school and college level, struggle to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information online. But it’s not all bad news! This has also led to an explosion in new studies and pedagogical tools designed to address these concerns – some of these are collected below.

Questions to consider:

1. How can we encourage students to question their preconceptions, particularly on highly politicized topics?
2. How can we equip our students with the skills to identify and avoid misleading and false information?

Resources

Online Curricula
- Stanford University, curriculum for Civic Online Reasoning - https://cor.stanford.edu/
News Literacy
- News Literacy Project - https://newslit.org/
- Center for News Literacy - https://www.centerfornewsliteracy.org/

Games:
- Go Viral! - https://www.goviralgame.com/en
- Spot the Troll - https://spotthetroll.org/

Karla Lassonde & Melissa Birkett (eds.), *Curriculum-Based Strategies for Knowledge Change* (Society for the Teaching of Psychology, 2021) - https://teachpsych.org/ebooks/mythsmistruths

*The Debunking Handbook, 2020* (George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication) - https://www.climatechangecommunication.org/debunking-handbook-2020/

References


