

5-9-2023

## **Source Evaluation & Critical Thinking - Teaching media literacy in college writing**

Emily Newell PhD

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/ccd\\_ts](https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/ccd_ts)

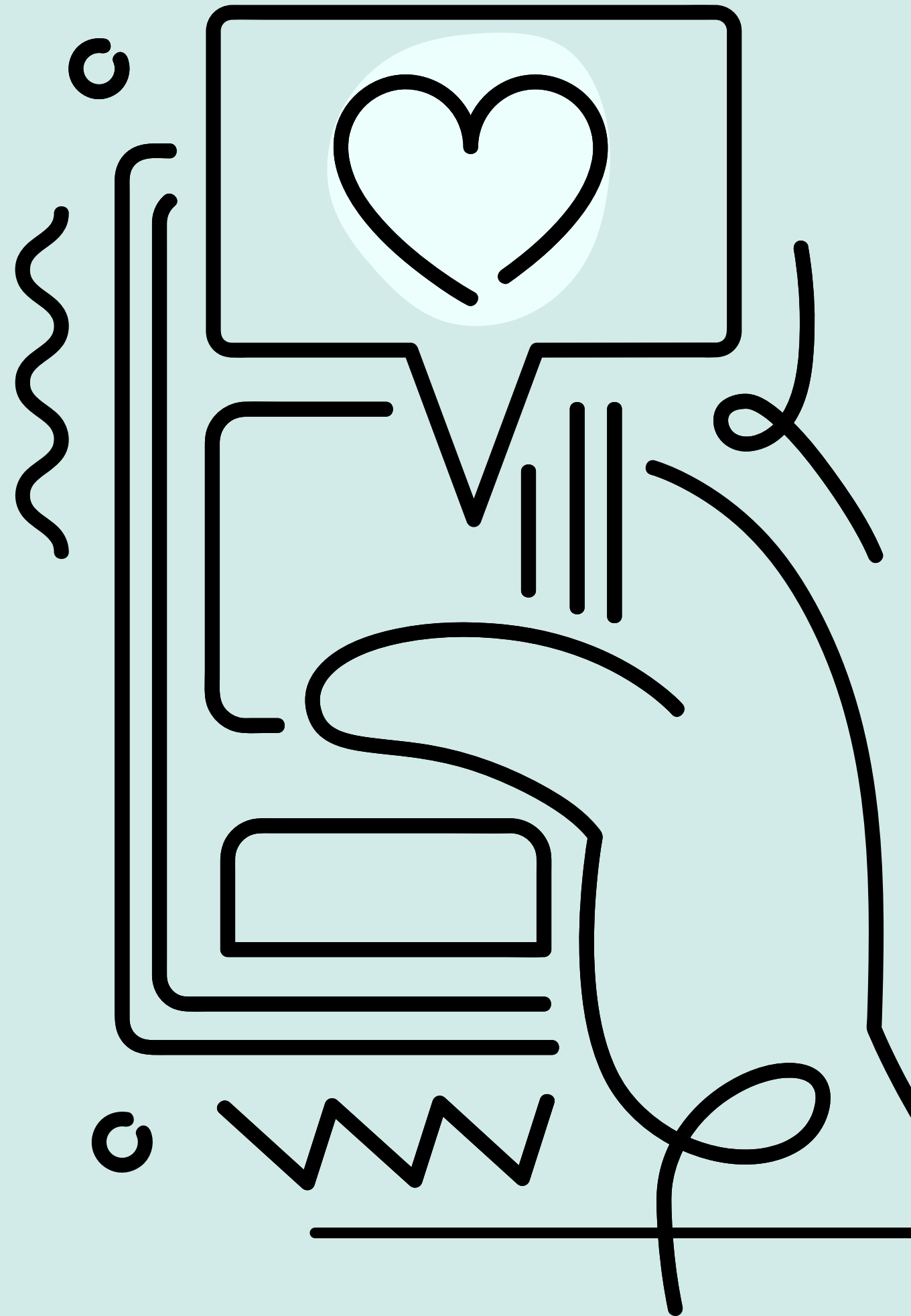
---

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Symposia at USM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in USM Teaching Symposium by an authorized administrator of USM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [jessica.c.hovey@maine.edu](mailto:jessica.c.hovey@maine.edu).

# SOURCE EVALUATION & CRITICAL THINKING

Teaching media literacy in college writing

Dr. Emily Newell  
May 9, 2023



# WHAT WE'LL DO

---

## 01. WHY MEDIA LITERACY

Discussion of media literacy and how it can help students in the classroom and beyond.

## 02. OUTCOMES

Look at how embedding media literacy lessons in the classroom can teach students about a whole host of other skills, including critical thinking and source evaluation.

## 03. PRACTICE

Walk through a media literacy assignment used in BUS 314 - Sport Communication & New Media to understand source evaluation on multiple levels.

## 04. APPLICABILITY

How we can use media literacy in different courses, and help students understand our subjects outside of academic research.

# LIFELONG OUTCOMES

---

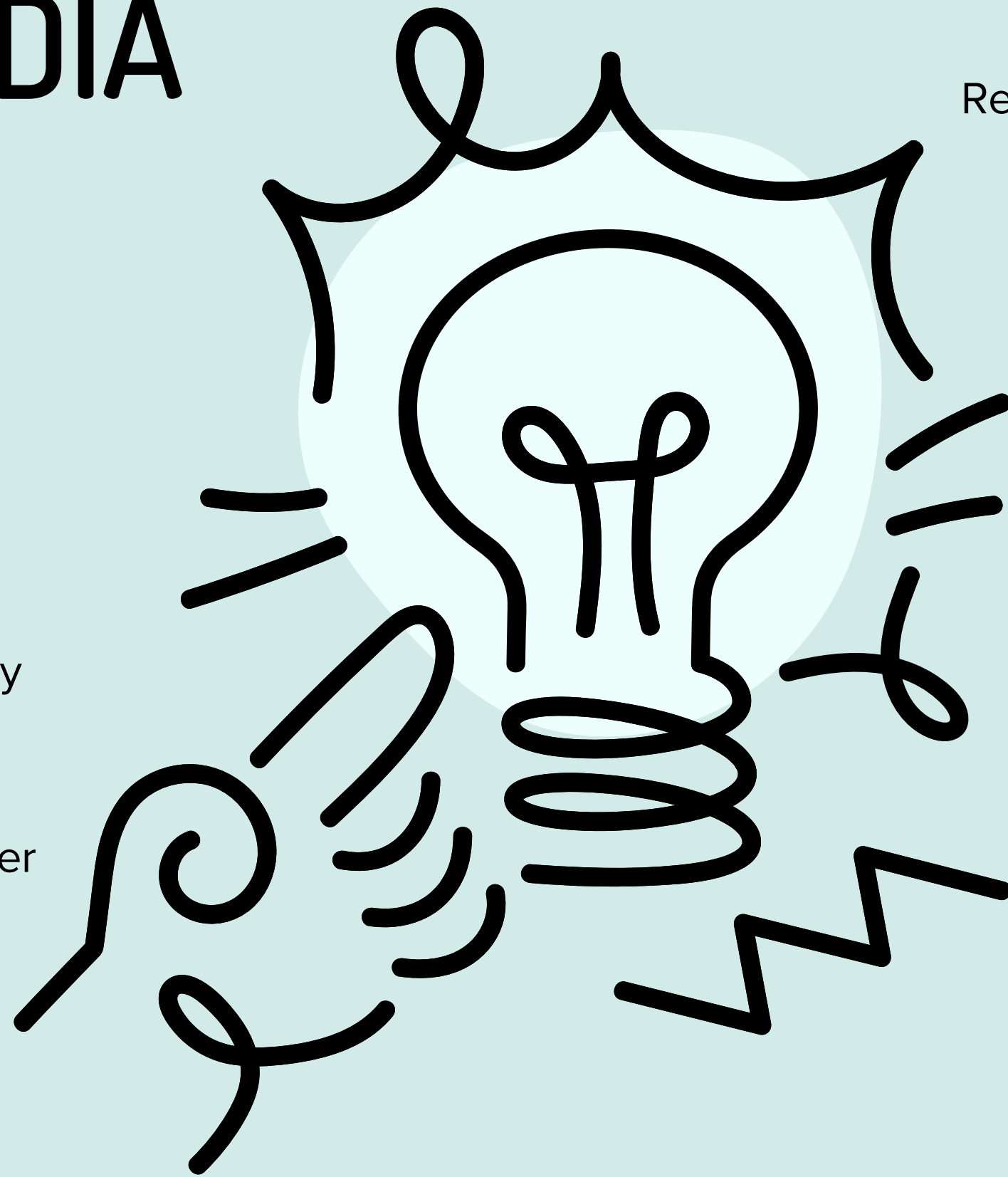
- Students leave us (colleges) often knowing how to write a research paper, but not practical, real-world writing.
- We teach students to search for credible sources on library/journal sites, but not (often) how to find credible information elsewhere.
- No matter how hard we try, students will continue to get most of their information and/or form their opinions from what they see/read/watch on social media.



# WHAT MEDIA LITERACY CAN DO

Learn to think more critically

Become a smarter consumer of products & ideas



Recognize point of view

Create media responsibly

Identify the role of media in culture

Understand the author's goal

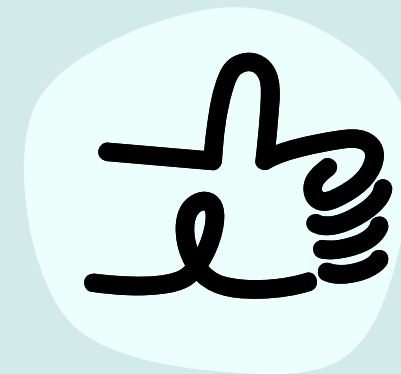
# WHAT THIS SESSION IS/IS NOT

---

When representing the company on social media, follow our established branding and messaging guidelines. Use approved logos and images, and seek permission before sharing content related to company events or activities. Consistent branding is crucial to maintaining a strong and cohesive online presence.



- Telling you to stop assigning research projects.
- Negating the value of understanding academic research in the classroom.
- Replacing typical research projects/papers in college classes.



- An alternative way of teaching critical thinking and writing in classes where it makes sense.
- Teaching an additional research and evaluation skill to students.
- Exposing students to writing they often will not read on their own, or in other classes.

# WHAT WE'LL DO

---

## 01. DISCUSS

Discuss media literacy, what skills it helps students develop (more in-depth) and the goals for this specific course example.

## 02. CONNECT

Look at how teaching media literacy connects to teaching source evaluation in multiple contexts, and helps improve writing.

## 03. PRACTICE

Walk through an example assignment done in the classroom to help introduce the topic.

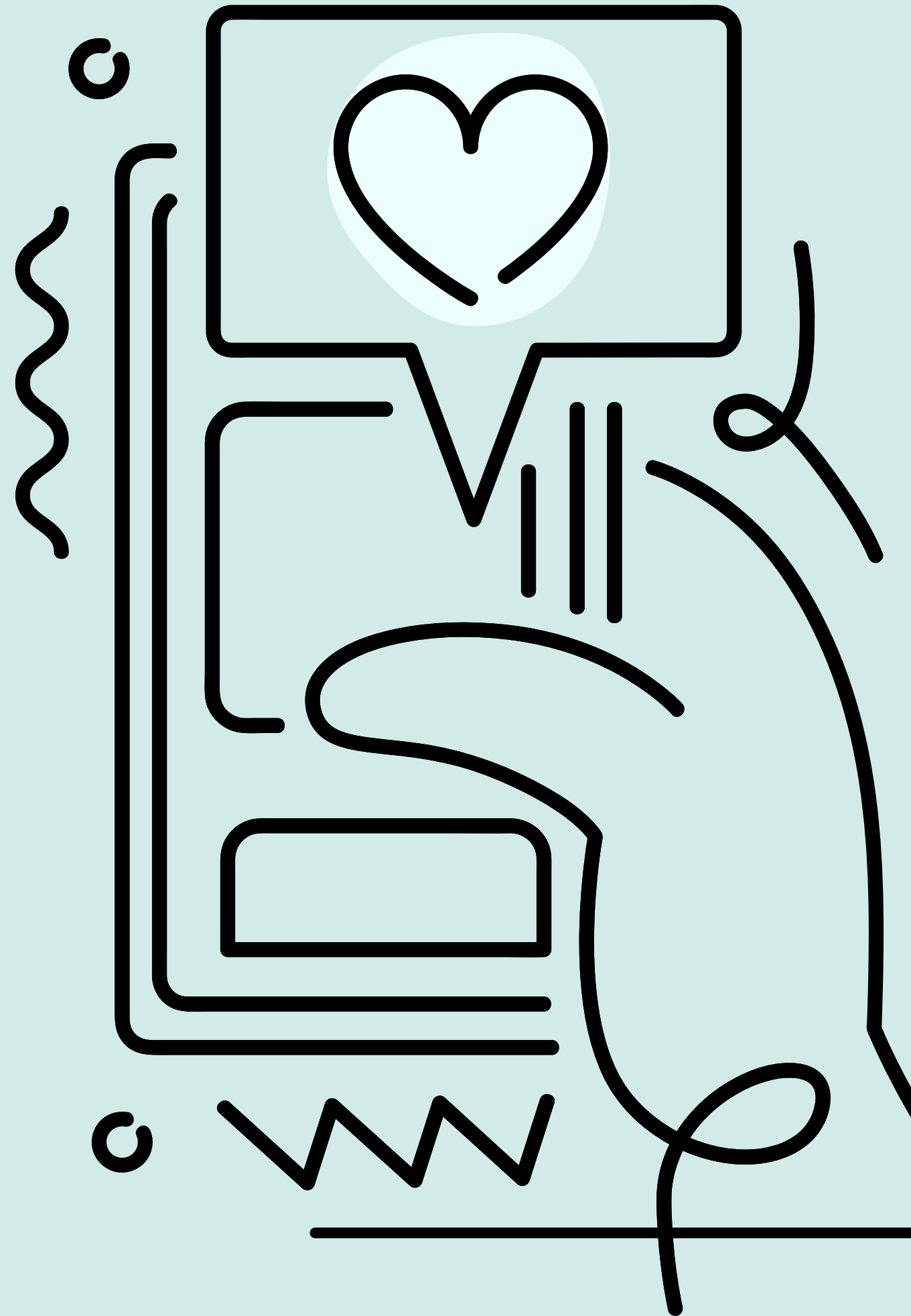
## 04. DEBRIEF

Discuss the assignment, show other examples of worksheets/guides, and assignments used in this class, and look at what the students said.

# SOURCE EVALUATION & CRITICAL THINKING

Teaching media literacy in college writing

Dr. Emily Newell  
May 9, 2023





# OVERVIEW OF THE SESSION

---

- 1 Review lifelong outcomes/importance of media literacy
- 2 Connect media literacy to source evaluation and critical thinking
- 3 Embedding in the course vs. one-off lecture or assignment
- 4 Putting media literacy into practice - short example
- 5 Other examples of how the practice is continuous
- 6 Student feedback
- 7 Questions

# LIFELONG OUTCOMES

---

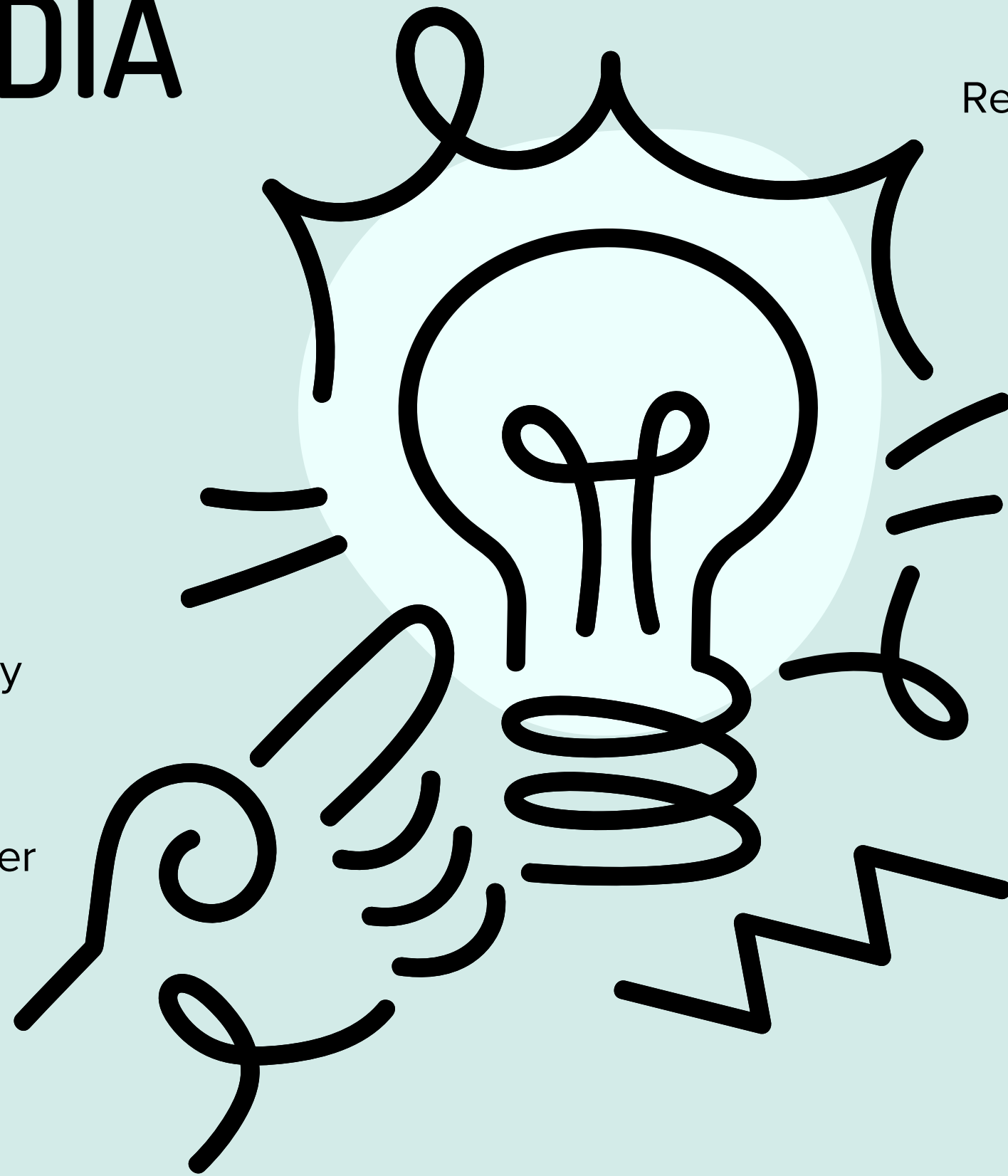
- Students leave us (colleges) often knowing how to write a research paper, but not practical, real-world writing.
- We teach students to search for credible sources on library/journal sites, but not (often) how to find credible information elsewhere.
- No matter how hard we try, students will continue to get most of their information and/or form their opinions from what they see/read/watch on social media.



# WHAT MEDIA LITERACY CAN DO

Learn to think more critically

Become a smarter consumer of products & ideas



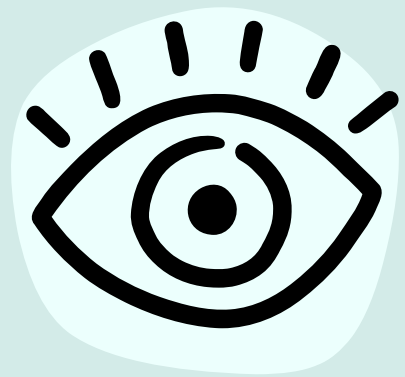
Recognize point of view

Create media responsibly

Identify the role of media in culture

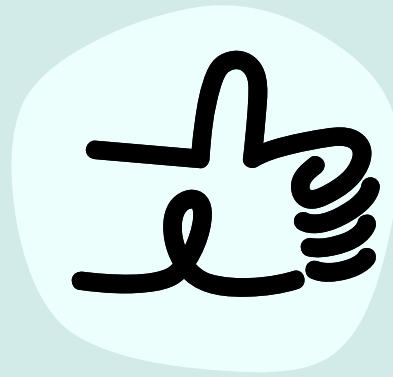
Understand the author's goal

# CONNECTING MEDIA LITERACY TO SOURCE EVALUATION & CRITICAL THINKING



## **Who said what?**

Make students aware of what they're reading, and who is saying it. Many students don't think about why who said something matters, and how it could impact the direction of what they're reading.



## **I never heard that part.**

Give students the same story from multiple viewpoints, and in multiple formats (video, podcast, opinion/editorial, news) to show them how confirmation bias pops up in their media consumption.



## **Evaluating the timeline.**

Have students search for specific news (in this case sports) on their own social media and compare what people came up with. Discussion how different people were fed different ideas helps them see that they need to go the extra step to seek out facts.

# EMBEDDING IT IN THE COURSE

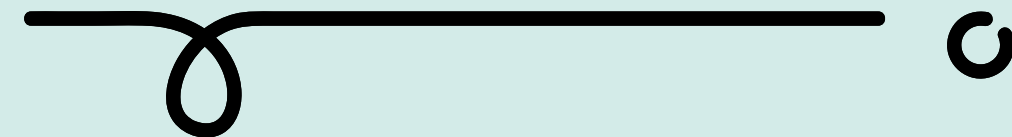
---

Media literacy does not have to be a one-off lesson, lecture, or assignment. Discussing what it is, why it's important, then learning through practice in various manners embedded critical media evaluation into the day-to-day of students in the – and beyond.

**TEACHING AND PRACTICE**

**UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE TOPIC IS  
AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT**

**PRACTICING THROUGH READING,  
RECOGNITION, AND WRITING PREP**



# UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF BIAS



# LET'S READ!

---

- You will have two articles to read on the same topic.
- Remember the types of media bias we discussed/reference as needed.
- Use a pen or highlighter to circle:
  - Sources referenced or interviewed.
  - Words/phrases that help you determine the type of article you're reading.

# LET'S DISCUSS!

- How would you classify each article?
- What helped you come to that conclusion?



# OTHER WAYS WE PRACTICE

---

## READING. A LOT.

One assignment in the course is writing a sports column. When we introduce the topic, students read 5-6 different sports columns that are written in various styles, from news-editorial to full satire, in order to understand how bias and opinion can take different forms.

## PLANNING.

Another assignment is writing a sports feature story. We mind map and outline in the planning process, but students also submit a proposal sheet on which they must a) justify the "why" of their story and b) evaluate each of their proposed sources.

## PEER EDITING.

In addition to the writing improvements that come from the peer editing process, it also helps students learn to recognize potential bias and source issues in writing more on their level.

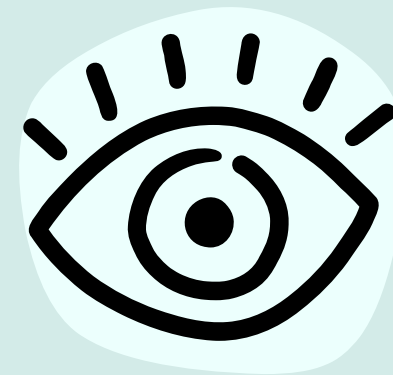


# WHAT THE STUDENTS SAID

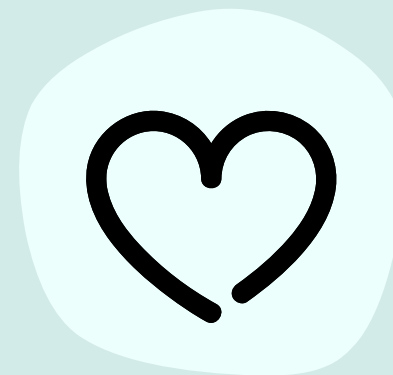
---



Although maybe an unintended consequence, I now am much more aware of what I'm reading on a day to day basis, not just in sports but in all news. I didn't realize before this class how much opinion I see on tv and social media every day. Even sports, since ESPN is almost all opinion.



I also really benefitted learning more about the journalism industry in general. I never realized how much of it I actually see and hear in my daily life and I have started picking up on different techniques and strategies that people use to convey different information.



I have been opened to new ways of writing and been able to (for once) feel free in a writing class. This class has inspired me to take time to write passionately, whether that be journaling, or working on a film, I have practiced writing happily and more often. For a while, I stopped writing freely and for fun because it was sucked out of me through so many bland writing assignments I truly had no interest in. Writing about something more fun and interesting to me has given me the spark and love I had for writing before I came to college. I have always wanted to write a book or a movie so getting back to trying has been fun for me, while using new tactics I have learned through class and peers.



**QUESTIONS?**