

Seeking the Fountain of Youth

A Lesson in Website Reliability

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LI 877

Overview

This lesson, *Seeking the Fountain of Youth: A Lesson in Website Reliability*, will last approximately 45 minutes, one class period. This lesson is designed to teach skills in evaluating website reliability. By taking students through a reliability checklist, I will introduce them to a method for determining the trustworthiness of websites. It will also provide an introduction to concept of everlasting life in the novel *Tuck Everlasting* which the class will be reading soon.

Time Frame

The time frame for this introductory lesson is 45 minutes. Additional lessons will be taught by the classroom teacher and regular librarian on website reliability, finding and citing sources, note taking, and selecting information. A full research project and paper will be completed by students in the spring semester, using the skills taught in this lesson and built upon in subsequent sessions.

Common Core Content Standards

Reading Information Text

6.2: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

Writing

6.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question.

6.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source.

Information Literacy Standards (AASL Standards)

1.1.4: Find, evaluate, and select appropriate sources to answer questions

1.1.5: Evaluate information found in selected sources on the basis of accuracy, validity, appropriateness for needs, importance, and social and cultural context.

1.1.8: Demonstrate mastery of technology tools for accessing information and pursuing inquiry.

Required Resources

These are resources used in this lesson. Though not much is needed, it can be difficult to find available computers, so advance planning is absolutely necessary.

- Worksheets (see Appendix)
- Computers
- Search engine
- World Book Student subscription (purchased by school district)

Teaching Plan

Following is the teaching plan that I followed. My words, in italics, are typed in combination with the actual worksheet that students completed so that they appear in a step-by-step order.

Research means to search or investigate. Today we will be doing some research on the Fountain of Youth.

How many of you use the internet to search for information? How do you know if the information you find is true? Is everything on the internet true?

For example... if Mrs. Leedom were making a website about K-State, do you think that would be a reliable source? Why?

Eventually, you will learn how to evaluate websites on your own, but today we will be looking at some together. Look with me at the 5 W's page. These are the criteria for evaluating a website, the things to look for.

- *Mrs. Leedom vs. a college professor from K-State*
- *Personal site vs. official college site*
- *Are there links to other official sites?*
- *Purpose... to inform? To persuade? To entertain?*
- *Important date info...*

The Fountain of Youth Research

Before we begin, answer this question: based on your prior knowledge, what do you think the Fountain of Youth is?

Direct students to answer independently.

Go to google.com. Search for the Fountain of Youth. How many results do you find?

Answers will vary

Now, follow the steps to go to World Book Online Encyclopedia. Search for The Fountain of Youth. How many results do you find?

Walk students through steps from the school webpage to World Book Student. There should be 9 results.

Choose the better search option to answer the following questions.

Now you will work on your own. Choose one of these two sources to answer the rest of the questions on your page. Make sure you explain what you selected that source instead of the other option.

I chose (circle one): World Book

Google search result #1

**note: Google search result #1 is Wikipedia. Check in with students as they work.*

Explain why you chose this source.

What is the Fountain of Youth?

Where did early Spanish settlers believe the Fountain of Youth was located?

What did Ponce de Leon actually discover on his search for the Fountain of Youth?

Why do you think people believe in the Fountain of Youth?

Assessment Results

Approximately 79% of students, 22 of 28, identified World Book Student as the source they would use to complete the assignment. Many students gave reasons such as: “more specific,” “not just anyone can get on and change the site,” “because it was written by a professor.” These responses show a basic but clear understanding of how to determine whether or not a website provides reliable information.

The remaining 21% of students, six of the 28, chose Wikipedia (the first Google search result) as their preferred source of information. Only two different reasons were provided by these students for their choice: it has more information and it is what I have always used or have used in the past. While these are valid reasons for selecting a certain source, especially at the sixth grade level, they bring up misconceptions that must be corrected by the teacher in order for students to move to a deeper understanding of webpage reliability.

Following are two examples of student work for this assignment.

The Fountain of Youth Research

Before we begin, answer this question: based on your prior knowledge, what do you think the Fountain of Youth is?

a fountain that make you young.

Go to google.com. Search for the Fountain of Youth. How many results do you find?

4,400,000

Now, follow the steps to go to World Book Online Encyclopedia. Search for The Fountain of Youth. How many results do you find?

9

Choose the better search option to answer the following questions.

I chose (circle one): World Book

Google search result #1

Explain why you chose this source.

more info

What is the Fountain of Youth?

it is a legendary spring that reputedly restores youth of anyone who drinks it.

Where did early Spanish settlers believe the Fountain of Youth was located?

in the land of Bimini.

What did Ponce de Leon actually discover on his search for the Fountain of Youth?

discovered florida

Why do you think people believe in the Fountain of Youth?

because it make you.

The Fountain of Youth Research

Before we begin, answer this question: based on your prior knowledge, what do you think the Fountain of Youth is?

you'll live forever. If you drink the water

Go to google.com. Search for the Fountain of Youth. How many results do you find? 9,410,00

Now, follow the steps to go to World Book Online Encyclopedia. Search for The Fountain of Youth. How many results do you find? 9

Choose the better search option to answer the following questions.

I chose (circle one):

World Book

Google search result #1

Explain why you chose this source.

I chose this one because some and your not searching websites. Phd. processors wrote through 9,410,000 differa

What is the Fountain of Youth?

An imaginary spring, it was supposed to make old people young.

Where did early Spanish settlers believe the Fountain of Youth was located?

On a small island called Bimini, close to Florida

What did Ponce de Leon actually discover on his search for the Fountain of Youth?

He discovered Florida.

Why do you think people believe in the Fountain of Youth?

I think they believed in it because alot of people want to live forever so this is a solution

Collaboration with Teacher

The classroom teacher and I worked together to plan the lesson. She had previously identified a need for students to learn basic internet evaluation skills. Her next unit is over the

novel *Tuck Everlasting*, which centers on the concept of the Fountain of Youth. Using the background information she gave me and taking into consideration her wishes, I planned this particular lesson to meet the needs to her students. This lesson is both a research introduction and an introduction to the novel.

During the lesson, the classroom teacher wanted to observe to see how her students responded to the instruction and to a different adult teaching the lesson. She mainly observed and helped by making connections to other learning concepts they have covered in class.

After I finished teaching my lesson, we discussed the students' work. I suggested that, because the students who chose Wikipedia over World Book did so because the site included more information or was more familiar, that she continue to work on source reliability, including an emphasis on the idea that more information or familiarity is not always better.

Future lesson possibilities I suggested to the classroom teacher include:

- Extended reliability evaluation
- Selecting sources independently
- Note taking, summarizing, and paraphrasing
- Citing sources
- Research projects and papers to incorporate all concepts

Reflection

This lesson went very well. Students appeared to have a strong background in internet searches and most understood source reliability. There were a few things that I noticed. Classroom management is very different when the class is not technically yours. As a librarian, not a classroom teacher, it will be very important for me to establish expectations early and enforce them throughout the year, during all library lessons, regardless of the time, content, or

location (we worked in the computer lab, which was a slightly different environment for their library lessons). Part of the issue may have been that I was a new person to them, which would make the students slightly more wound up than they would have been normally.

I enjoyed walking students through each step in searching and pointing out information as we worked our way through the process. I found a 5 W's source reliability guide that I really like, but I may adapt it in the future to make each of the questions a little easier to explain to middle school students.

Overall, the sixth grade students did very well selecting the reliable source to answer their questions over the Fountain of Youth. The contrast between Wikipedia and World Book online is fairly obvious, which is why I wanted to start their research lessons with these two options. I was surprised that six of the 28 student actually selected Wikipedia. Each of these six students did write that they made this particular selection because it had more information or because they always use Google search results to answer their questions. This is why I recommended to the classroom teacher that she work with students on identifying that more information is not always better.

I wanted to find a source that had inaccurate information on the Fountain of Youth, but I was not able to come up with one. For a future lesson I would use a topic that would be more likely to have internet sites with incorrect information, especially if it is for an extended series of lessons when we would have time to go through the correct and incorrect answers and information.

My experience teaching this lesson makes me want to seek out every opportunity I can find to collaborate with teachers, once I am a librarian. I believe it would be much more enjoyable for me to work closely with different classes to teach skills and standards as part of a

larger unit rather than as isolated or individual lessons. It would also be a great way to stay connected to my background as a classroom teacher. This can be done with both a flexible and a set library schedule, but it would be easier to work in with a flexible schedule.

Conclusion

My secondary practicum was a wonderful experience. I had opportunities to work with students and teachers as well as perform regular library duties. I do believe that a middle school library would be a great fit for me, personally, and my experiences confirmed this to me. While there will always be a learning curve, I feel as though the chance to observe and teach at this level provided me with valuable experience that will only help as I continue to prepare for my career as a library media specialist.

Appendix

These are copies of the handouts I created for the students.

5 W's for Evaluating Web Sites

- **Who** is responsible for the site?
- **What** type of site is it?
- **Where** can you find more information?
- **Why** was the site created?
- **When** was the site last updated?

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Explain why you chose this source.

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Why do you think people believe in the Fountain of Youth?