BEYOND THE CHECKLIST

Interactive Lateral Reading Activities
Jenny Dale | ACRL 2021 Virtual Webcast

Welcome and acknowledgments

I'm Jenny Dale (she/her) and I'm the Information Literacy Coordinator at UNC Greensboro. Thanks for joining me for this recorded webcast!

I'd like to acknowledge the lasting legacies of slavery and settler-colonialism on the land on which I live and work in what is now Greensboro, North Carolina.

Goals for this session

1. Define lateral reading as a strategy for evaluating online information sources
2. Explore interactive classroom activities focused on practicing lateral reading skills
3. Consider opportunities for integrating lateral reading activities into your own teaching

A note on interactivity

Throughout this webcast, you'll have opportunities to engage asynchronously. These interactivity breaks are completely optional, but I encourage you to pause the recording and participate in these short activities to stay engaged while watching.

The first activity is a two question poll at **go.uncg.edu/btc1** - feel free to pause and answer!

Lateral reading: Background and context

How it started

I learned about lateral reading from Mike Caulfield, in the context of the "Four Moves and a Habit" approach that he introduced in his 2017 open textbook, *Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers.*

Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers
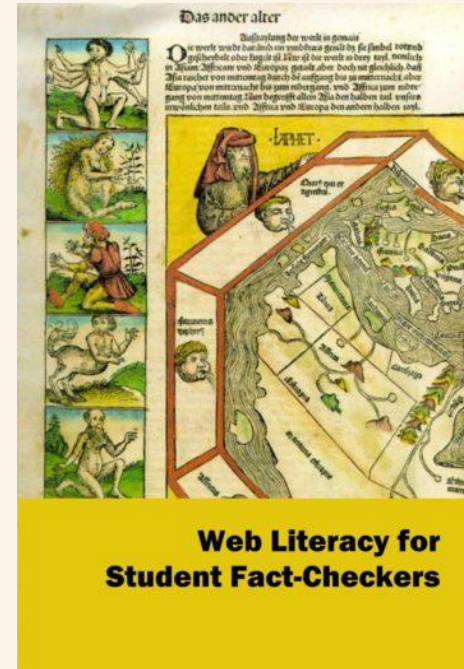
The Four Moves (and the habit)

1. Check for previous work
2. Go upstream to the source
3. Read laterally
4. Circle back

The habit: check your emotions.

What is lateral reading?

Caulfield (2017, ch. 16):

- "...good fact-checkers read 'laterally,' across many connected sites instead of digging deep into the site at hand."
- "Lateral readers don't spend time on the page or site until they've first gotten their bearings by looking at what other sites and resources say about the source at which they are looking."

Then what?

Caulfield and others don't suggest that researchers should stop after engaging in lateral reading and either accept or reject the source.

"Only when they've gotten their bearings from the rest of the network do they **re-engage with the content.** Lateral readers gain a better understanding as to whether to trust the facts and analysis presented to them" (Caulfield, 2017, ch. 16).

Checking Caulfield for previous work

In *Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers*, Caulfield specifically references "Sam Wineburg's Stanford research team" as the original group recommending lateral reading (2017, ch. 16).

"Sam Wineburg's Stanford research team"

- Sam Wineburg
  - Education and History professor at Stanford
  - Founder and Executive Director of the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG)
- "SHEG seeks to improve education by conducting research, working with school districts, and reaching directly into classrooms with free materials for teachers and students" ("About").

Wineburg & McGrew (2019)

- Working as part of the Stanford History Education Group, these researchers designed a study "to investigate how experienced Internet users arrive at judgments of trustworthiness online," with the goals of determining how these users judge credibility of unfamiliar sources as well as the "strategies or heuristics" these users employ "to effectively find reliable information" (p. 5).

Wineburg & McGrew (2019)

- Research design
  - Three participant groups: PhD Historians, Stanford University undergraduates, and professional fact-checkers.
  - All participants were asked to engage in six online tasks focused on "evaluating digital sources that addressed social and political issues" (p. 6).
  - Researchers captured audio from participants as well as screen captures of their approaches.

Wineburg & McGrew (2019)

- Key findings
  - Fact-checkers were more effective and more efficient when comparing websites for reliability and when evaluating individual sources.
  - "They employed a powerful heuristic for taking bearings: *lateral reading*. Fact checkers almost immediately opened up a series of new tabs on the horizontal axis of their browsers before fully reading the article" (p. 19).

Caulfield (2019)

"The Four Moves have undergone some tweaking since I first introduced them in early 2017. The language has shifted, been refined. We've come to see that lateral reading is more of a principle underlying at least two of the moves (maybe three)."

How it's going

Caulfield (2019) recommended updated language around the four moves, now preferring the acronym SIFT:

- Stop
- Investigate the source
- Find better coverage
- Trace claims, quotes, and media back to the original context

Vertical reading and checklists

- Vertical reading - staying on the source itself - leaves you limited to how the source chooses to present itself and its qualifications.
- Checklist approaches (ABC, CRAAP, etc.) pair well with vertical reading, but aren't enough to provide a holistic perspective of an online source.
- According to Caulfield (2018), "In fact, what we know from studies of expertise in many fields is such exhaustive holistic assessments can make the evaluator *more* prone to error."

Librarians love lateral reading!

- Lateral reading shows up on lots of LibGuides, especially those about "fake news" (Lim, 2020).
- Fielding (2019) has written about shifting from the CRAAP method to lateral reading in some library instruction sessions, noting that this shift "visibly engaged students more thoroughly in the process," connected to the ACRL Framework, and led to "robust and student-driven" in-class conversations (p. 621).
- Check out other lateral reading sessions at ACRL 2021!

Teaching strategies and interactive activities

Lateral reading workshop structure

1. Reflective question: "What have you been taught in the past about evaluating online sources?"
2. Group brainstorming activity to identify shared evaluation criteria
3. Introduction to the concepts of lateral and vertical reading
4. Whole class lateral reading example
5. Small group activities
6. Activity debrief & lateral reading resources
7. Assessment/reflection

Interactivity break

Head to **go.uncg.edu/btc2** to add to a large group brainstorming document! This will also give you access to an example of the "Group brainstorming activity to identify shared evaluation criteria" that I referenced in the previous slide.

How I introduce lateral reading

- Usually within the context of Caulfield's Four Moves and a Habit or SIFT approach.
- Focus on lateral reading as a behavior, something that we can *do* rather than just consider.
- Summarize Wineburg & McGrew's findings as evidence of the success of this approach.
- Let others carry some of the load for me!

Explanatory video example #1
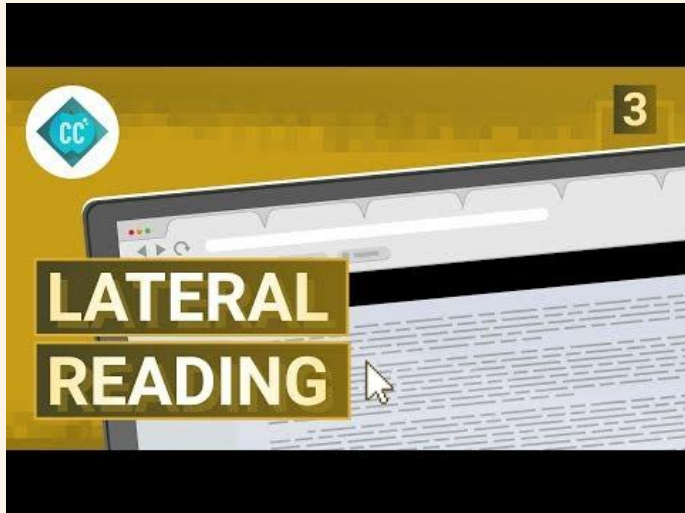
Clips from <u>Check Yourself with Lateral Reading</u>

- Clip from 03:12 to 05:30 before activity
- When there's time, clip from 05:30 to 07:31 for an additional example
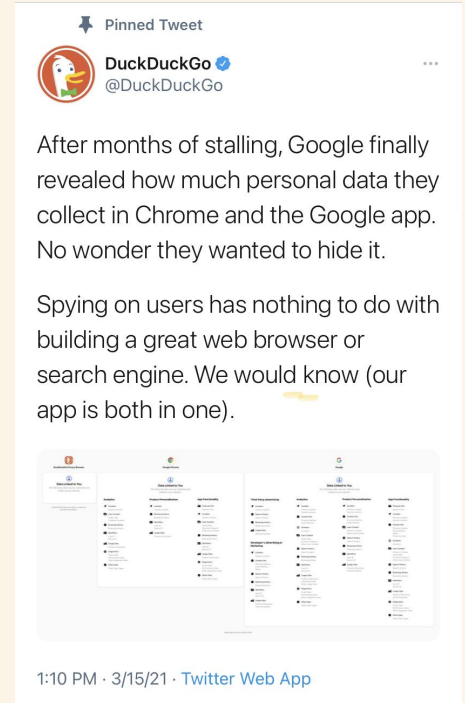
Explanatory video example #2

Sort Fact from Fiction Online with Lateral Reading

Full video from Stanford History Education Group, describing Wineburg and McGrew's study with examples of lateral reading strategies used by fact-checkers

Whole class activity

SIFTing through Tweets

1. Stop.
2. **Investigate the source.** Learn what you can about DuckDuckGo from sites other than the company's own.
3. **Find trusted coverage**. Can you find other trusted sources that talk about Google collecting personal data?
4. Trace claims, quotes, and media back to the original context.

📌 Pinned Tweet

DuckDuckGo ✔
@DuckDuckGo

After months of stalling, Google finally revealed how much personal data they collect in Chrome and the Google app. No wonder they wanted to hide it.

Spying on users has nothing to do with building a great web browser or search engine. We would know (our app is both in one).

1:10 PM · 3/15/21 · Twitter Web App

Interactivity break

Your turn to try! Pause this recording and and head to go.uncg.edu/btc3 to do a lateral reading micro-activity!

Small group activity basics

- Split students into an even number of groups - half will read laterally, and half will read vertically.
- Introduce the activity and ask students to read their group instructions carefully.
- Can work as a completely paper-based activity if students are not synchronous online/in a computer classroom.

No tech activity example

- Example packets at go.uncg.edu/btcnotech
- Print all documents ahead of time and collate into packets.
- Keep instructions up on screen during the activity.

Synchronous/computer classroom activity example

- Example at go.uncg.edu/btctech
- Works well in breakout rooms in a synchronous learning tool or in a classroom with computers.
- Students navigate to their group's document and follow the instructions.

Large group share-outs

- What did you learn about your source by reading vertically?
- What did you learn about your source by reading laterally?

Wrap-up

- Why read laterally?
- Lateral reading resources
- Reflective assessment

Why read laterally?

"Lateral reading helps the reader understand both the perspective from which the site's analyses come and if the site has an editorial process or expert reputation that would allow one to accept the truth of a site's facts" (Caulfield, 2017, ch. 16).

Lateral reading resources

- Google
- Wikipedia (really!)
- Fact-checking websites
  - Snopes (wide coverage)
  - Factcheck.org (political focus, though they have added a "SciCheck" feature)
- What else? (feel free to share your ideas at go.uncg.edu/btcresources)
- I usually share a course LibGuide if applicable!

Reflective assessment

Via Google form or on paper:

1. What do you think is the biggest difference between lateral and vertical reading?
2. How did lateral reading work for you, either in the large group tweet evaluation or the small group activity?
3. How or when might you use this approach (lateral reading) in your life?

Integrating lateral reading into your own practice

Where have I used these activities?

- In course-integrated instruction, including:
  - Gender and Media Culture
  - Spanish Composition
  - The Classical Art of Persuasion
  - College Writing I
- In co-curricular workshops (for groups like UNCG's Civic Engagement Academy)
- With community groups (like the League of Women Voters)

Looking for inspiration?

- "Teaching Lateral Reading"
  - Lesson plans and activities from the Stanford History Education Group's Civic Online Reasoning curriculum
- Check, Please! Starter Course
  - Work through Mike Caulfield's self-paced online course to get ideas for synchronous or asynchronous activities involving lateral reading and related skills
- Search repositories like Project CORA, the ACRL Framework Sandbox, or Canvas Commons

Where could you use these activities?

Take a moment to reflect on this question. If you're willing to share, please add to the collaborative Google Jamboard for this talk: go.uncg.edu/btcjam

Thank you!

- The Jamboard mentioned on the last slide also has space for you to share your takeaways from this session, so please add your thoughts there! (go.uncg.edu/btcjam)
- Please feel free to comment and ask questions through the ACRL on-demand interface, or contact me directly at jedale2@uncg.edu.

Slides and links

- You can get back to these slides at https://go.uncg.edu/btcslides
- You can find the sample activities in a shared Google Drive folder at https://go.uncg.edu/btcactivities

References

Caulfield, M. (2017). *Web literacy for student fact-checkers*. Self-published.
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