

Source Evaluation Lesson Outline

1. **Introduce yourself**, go over how to get help from Reference Librarians
2. **What are we doing?**: Evaluating sources that you find online *or* through the library

3. **Why?** For your team paper on citizen deaths during police interactions:

Students will form teams to study and write on citizen deaths during citizen/police interactions and while citizens are in police custody. Team members are the same as for the Service Learning Project. Your goal for this project is to read academic and government research on these topics to determine the size of the problem and the demographics of those involved. Further, document how police agency leaders, prosecutors, and courts have responded to these incidents, and consider the ethics of their responses. Also, compare media coverage with the research and official statistics and outcomes to analyze how the information the public is gaining from media coverage compares with actual happenings. Finally, in your conclusion tie it all together by discussing how big the problem really is and the best way to reduce these deaths, based on your research.

4. Pull up the **LibGuide**: <http://libguides.radford.edu/CRJU495Hochstein>

5. **Quick review of the Ws**

- a. **WHO?**: Who is the author? What do you know about him or her?
- b. **WHAT?**: What is the content and topic of the source? Is the content relevant? Check the abstract!
- c. **WHEN?**: When was the source written? How recent is the information?
- d. **WHERE?**: Where did you locate the source?
- e. **WHY?**: What is the intent of the source? Is it meant to inform you, persuade you, sell you something?
- f. These are all important questions to consider about any source, but today we're going to focus on the **WHO?** and the **WHY?** of the sources you find.

6. **Exercise 1**: Split the students into 4 groups. Open the sample sources from the LibGuide and assign one to each group of students. Ask each group to identify the type of source, WHO?, and the WHY? for each source. Encourage them to use Google to fill in any blanks about the authors or the purpose of the source. How might you use this source in your paper?

- a. **Source A**: Mike Brown shooting witness tweets:

<http://mashable.com/2014/08/15/live-tweet-michael-brown-killing-ferguson/>

- b. **Source B**: Time magazine coverage of the Mike Brown case: <https://lib-proxy.radford.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=97597982&site=eds-live&scope=site>

c. **Source C:** Scholarly article about racial differences in attitudes towards the police:

<https://libproxy.radford.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ahl&AN=272785&site=eds-live&scope=site>

d. **Source D:** Bureau of Justice Statistics data on arrest-related deaths:

<http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=82>

e. **Source E:** *The Guardian* database of police killings in the U.S.:

<http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2015/jun/01/the-counted-police-killings-us-database#>

7. Have a **discussion** with the students about each of the sample sources. Try to delve deeper into questions about the authors and their intent.
 - a. What is the race of the author? Gender? Age? Who do they work for? What is their educational and occupational background?
 - b. Why was the source written? What type of source is it? Newspaper? Journal?
 - c. Go over some of the typical structure in academic vs. popular publishing. Discuss some of the power dynamics dealing with race and gender. White males dominate leadership roles in both arenas. What does this mean for minorities? Why does it matter?
 - d. When would you want to use each of these sources? What purpose would they serve in your paper?
8. Go over how to get more help from a librarian and point out the APA LibGuide tab. Ask if there are any final questions.