Teaching Evaluative Criteria to Increase Critical Thinking: Infographics 101

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Teaching Evaluative Criteria to Increase Critical Thinking: Infographics 101

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NUTRITION INFORMATION
This one-shot instruction session is intended to increase students’ critical thinking and visual literacy skills by teaching students how to evaluate and create infographics using specific, evaluative criteria.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Students will be able to
• evaluate infographics by checking for meaningful and accurate textual and visual content and
• create their own infographic using evaluative criteria to guide their editorial and creative choices

COOKING TIME
The cooking time for this activity is 50–75 minutes.

NUMBER SERVED
This recipe serves no more than 40 students.

DIETARY GUIDELINES
• ACRL Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education
  ◊ Standard Four: A visually literate student evaluates images and their sources
• ACRL Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education

INGREDIENTS AND EQUIPMENT
• Computers with web access for students
• Instructor workstation with a projector for librarian

PREPARATION
Create a presentation with examples of “bad” infographics and a handout that outlines the CRAAP test for textual analysis and the principles of design for visual analysis (see Chef’s Note 1). If you want the students to evaluate an infographic on their own, it is highly recommended that you develop a handout with 3–5 questions for them to answer, specifically referencing the CRAAP Test and the principles of design.

COOKING METHOD
1. Introduction (10 minutes)
   a. Begin with a short introduction of the topic and the goals of the session.
   b. Introduce students to the CRAAP test in the context of textual analysis and the principles of design in the context of visual analysis for infographics.
   c. Provide a short lecture of what “bad” infographics look like and explain your reasoning.

2. Group discussion (5–10 minutes)
   a. Analyze the “bad” infographics using the CRAAP test and the principles of design as a group.

3. Individual work (25–35 minutes)
   a. Direct the students to find and evaluate an infographic they find on the internet according to the specific, evaluative criteria you have discussed. Pass out the handout with the 3–5 questions for them to answer, if including.
   b. Direct the students to create an
infographic using Canva, Piktochart, or Infogram (choose one web-based software for everyone to use, depending on preference) while keeping the CRAAP test and principles of design in mind. Provide the students with a set of standard information or data points you would like them to include in the infographic (5 or fewer is recommended; see Chef’s Note 2). Remind them that that this is a quick, low-stakes assignment and will not be graded (see Chef’s Note 3).

4. Group report (10 minutes)
   a. Have students upload their infographic to the LMS or padlet.com and ask students for volunteer presenters to share their infographic with the group. If no one volunteers, the librarian can select a few lucky winners!

5. Conclude (5–10 minutes)
   a. Restate the learning outcomes and check for comprehension. Summarize the lesson and allow for some Q&A time, if possible.

ALLERGY WARNING
Students may feel unsure of using new, unfamiliar software. If possible, partner with the professor before the lesson and direct students to online tutorials for the software. Students may also have no familiarity with the principles of design, leading to some frustration or “I can’t do it” moments. Remind the student(s) that they are constantly, unconsciously evaluating their everyday surroundings and to tap into that skill set.

CHEF’S NOTE
1. Be sure to explain to the students that since infographics contain both text and visuals, both types of information need to be evaluated. Because infographics frequently utilize information found on the internet and are also found on websites themselves, the CRAAP test provides a sound method for determining how accurate and reliable an infographic is. Likewise, infographics rely on visual information, so utilizing the principles of design is equally important.

2. Depending on the course content, it may be appropriate to bring in aspects of data literacy here. Speak with the professor beforehand to determine how much time to devote to data literacy, if needed.

3. If the session feels rushed or the students need more time to evaluate their found infographics, students are welcome to create their infographic independent of the session or after the session concludes. The infographics can then be graded by the professor as a low-stakes assessment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Examples of Student-Created Infographics With Learning Evaluative Criteria

**The Great American Eclipse**

The eclipse is accessible for most Americans because the path traversed the nation from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean. The last total solar eclipse to cross the United States from coast to coast was 99 years ago in 1918.

**Total population of states closest to totality**

- 96,000,000
- 71,250,000
- 47,500,000
- 23,750,000
- 0

Compiled by Emily Williams
JMC 305 Participant

324 million Americans, or 99 percent of the nation, live within 900 miles of total eclipse.

Between 1.85 million and 7.4 million people will visit the path of totality on eclipse day.