

NOT ANOTHER FAKE NEWS LESSON PLAN: INSPIRING CRITICAL INFORMATION LITERACY

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CONTEXT

- University of Lethbridge Library
 - Co-op student placements
 - 8 months
 - Variety of experience: member of teams and work groups, collection management, reference, instruction, professional development opportunities
- LBSC 2000 Library Research and Information Systems and LBSC 0520 Information Literacy
 - Credit courses
 - Taught by librarian

EVALUATING SOURCES, FAKE NEWS, AND NEWS LITERACY – OH MY!

Critique of acronym and checklist models

- A) Failed connections to daily life practices, especially in social media environments – still too cumbersome
- B) Centered on traditional publishing and dissemination
 - I. Use of diverse primary source material
 - II. Different degrees of quality within different source types
- C) Psychological and social component of information consumption underemphasized

TEACHING THE PERSONAL PRACTICE OF EVALUATING SOURCES

Active learning strategies

- Demonstrable engagement with lesson
- Practice applying new approaches
- Learning from peers/ teaching peers

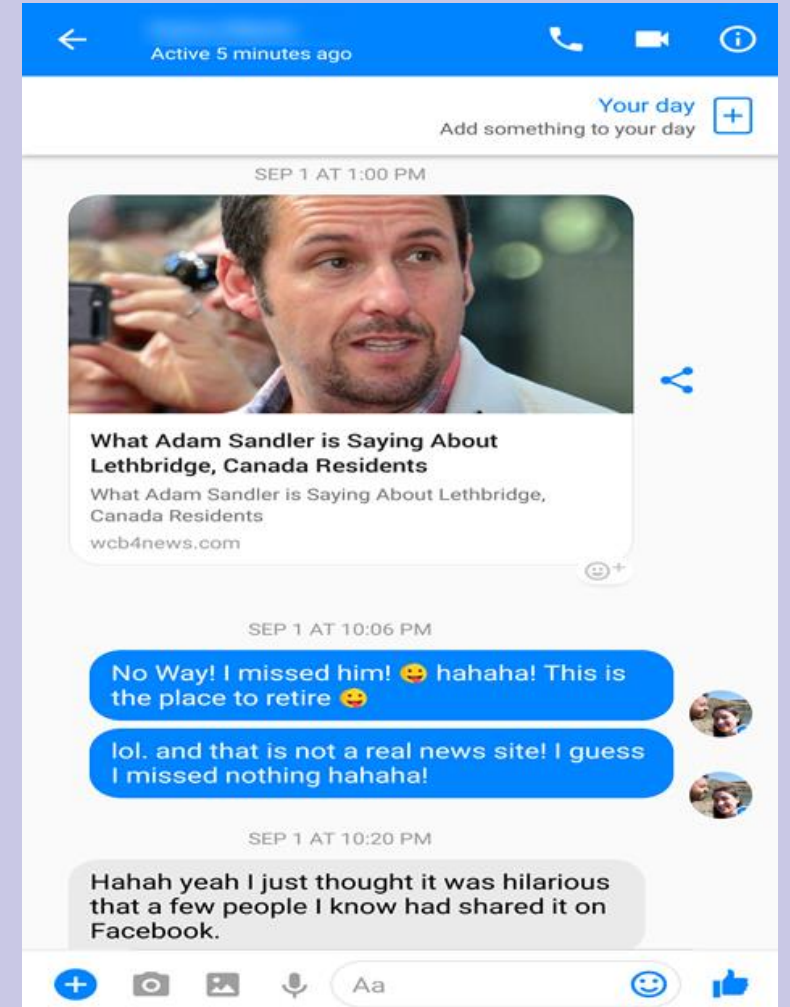
Reflection

- Focus attention on own process and assumptions
- Understanding and creating meaning from experience
- Identification of critical questions

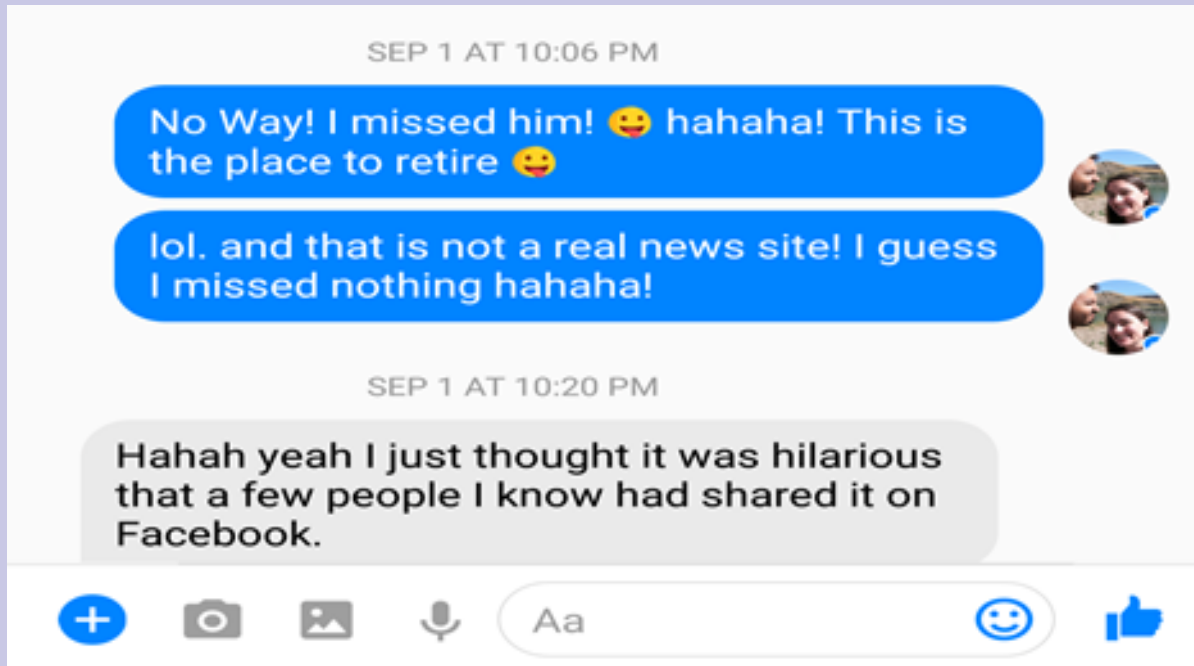
"Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students." (Freire, 1970, 59)

LESSON PLAN: INTRO SETTING THE RIGHT TONE

- Disrupt “expert” authority
- Modelling
 - Context as influence
 - Process of analysis
 - Not always right 100% of the time
 - Critical self-reflection and learning



LESSON PLAN: INTRO SETTING THE RIGHT TONE



- Narrative that reflects common experiences
- Highlights social and psychological factors
- Models process of self-reflection and ongoing learning
- Prepares for pre-test

LESSON PLAN: PRE-TEST

2 minute response writing

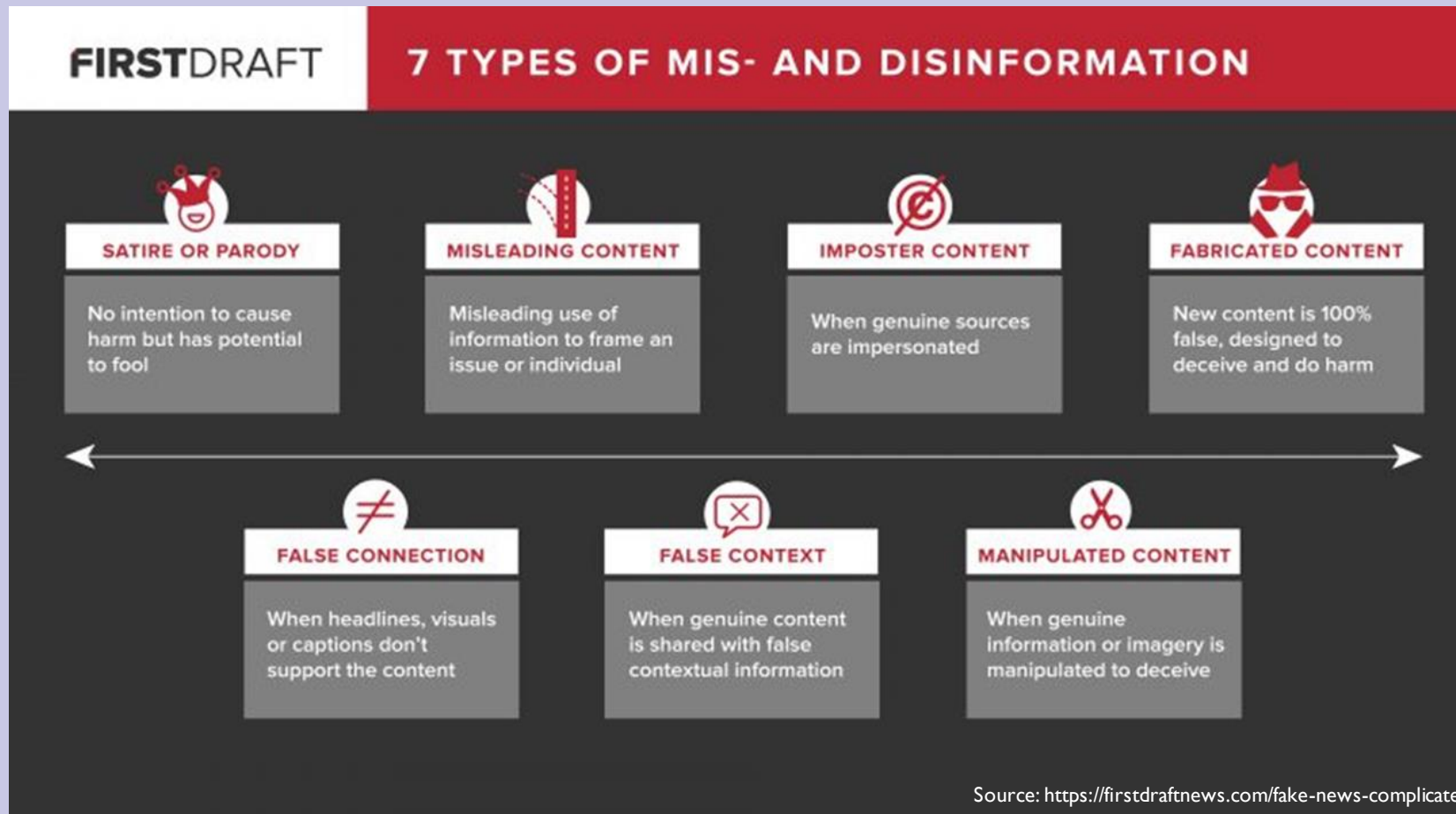
- Voluntary group share

Have you fallen for a fake news story?
Do you think that you can spot fake news effectively? Why or why not?

LESSON PLAN: ACTIVITY

I) Background information

- Short lecture with illustrative slides



LESSON PLAN: POST-ASSESSMENT

- Write-Pair-Share
 - Quick write “What criteria or strategies can you use to evaluate a news source?”
 - Share with a partner
 - Share with the group to create a comprehensive list of strategies we can use

ANALYSIS OF STUDENT RESPONSES

Confirmation bias

- "I fall hook, line and sinker for stupid stories, especially positive ones because I want to believe there is good in the world."

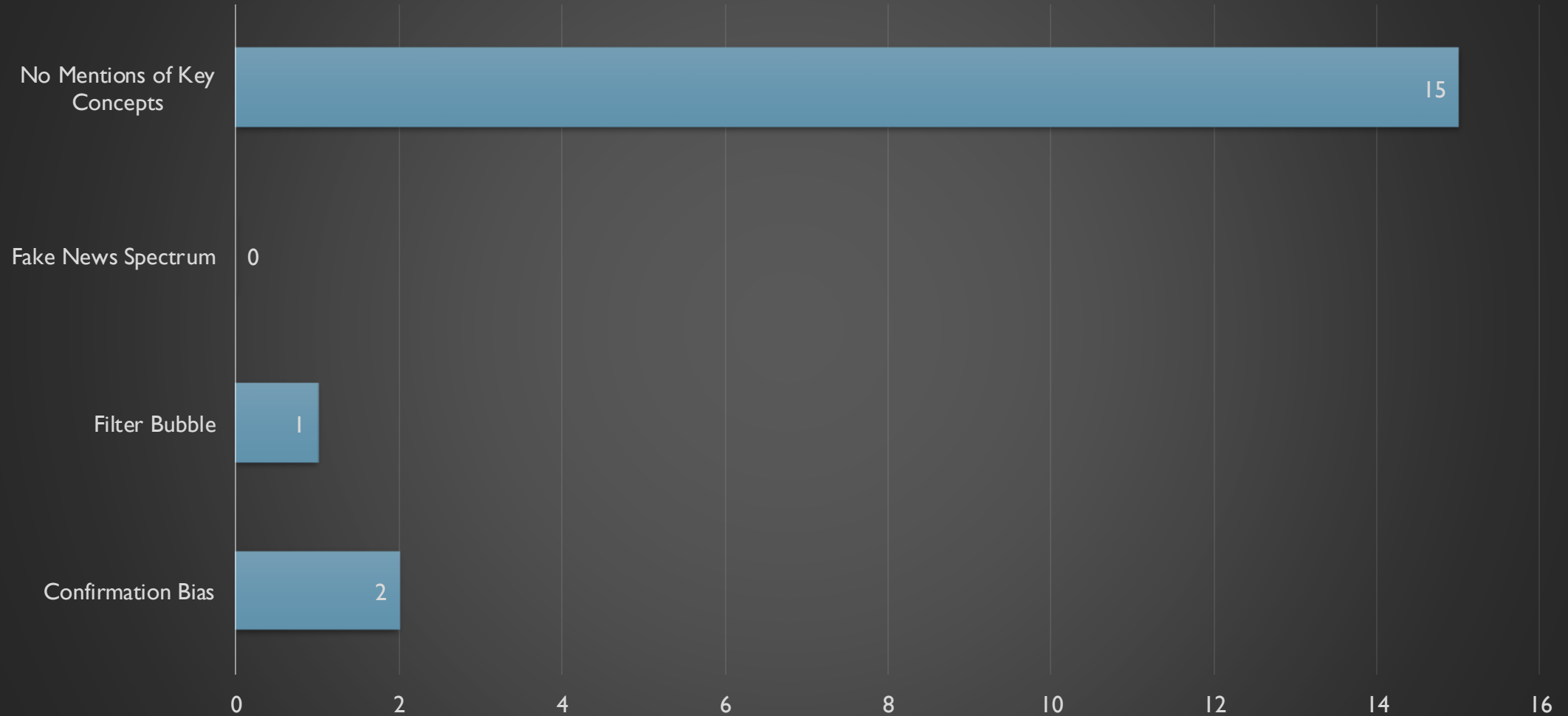
Filter bubble

- "They try to personalize the information to something related to me."

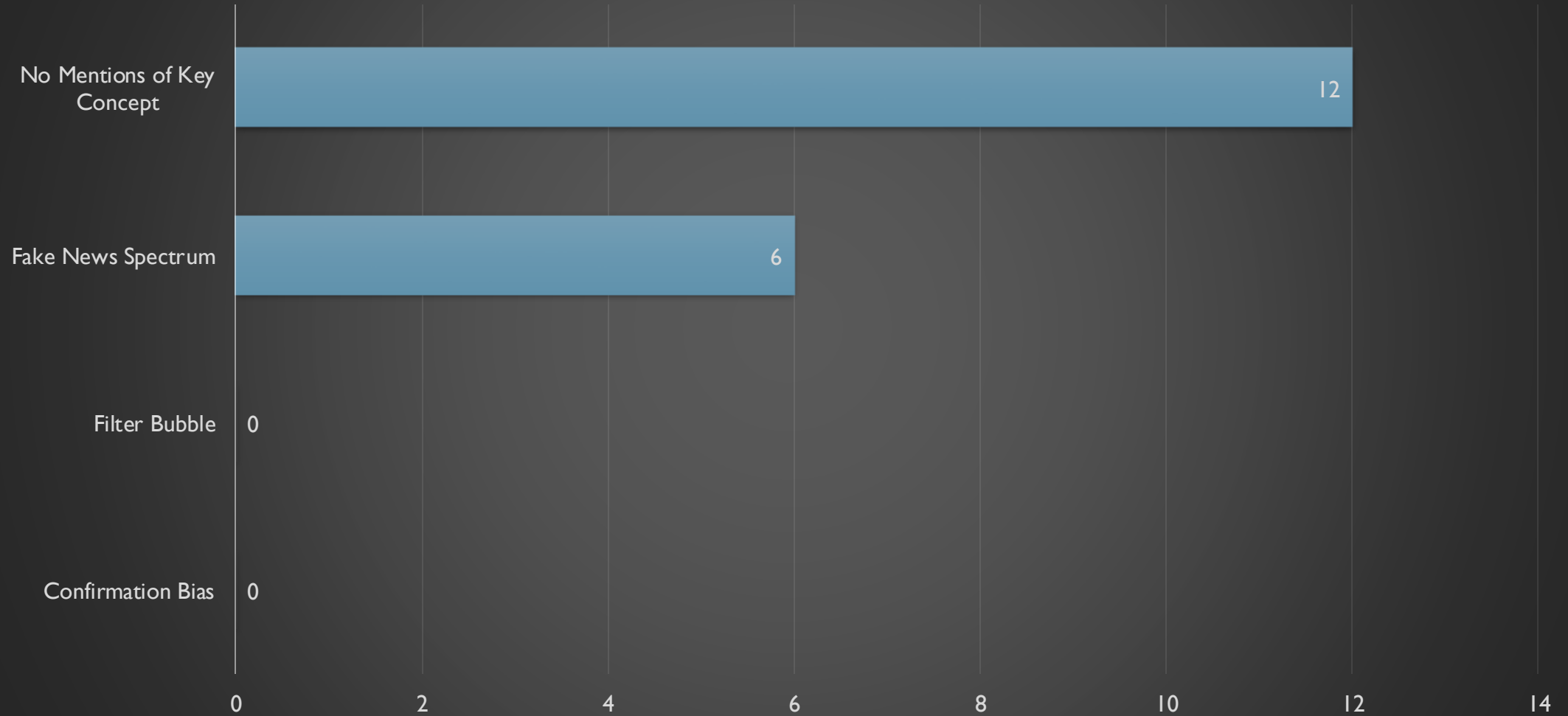
Spectrum of misinformation

- "I feel people are getting a lot smarter and clever about how to write article headlines that seem 'real.'"

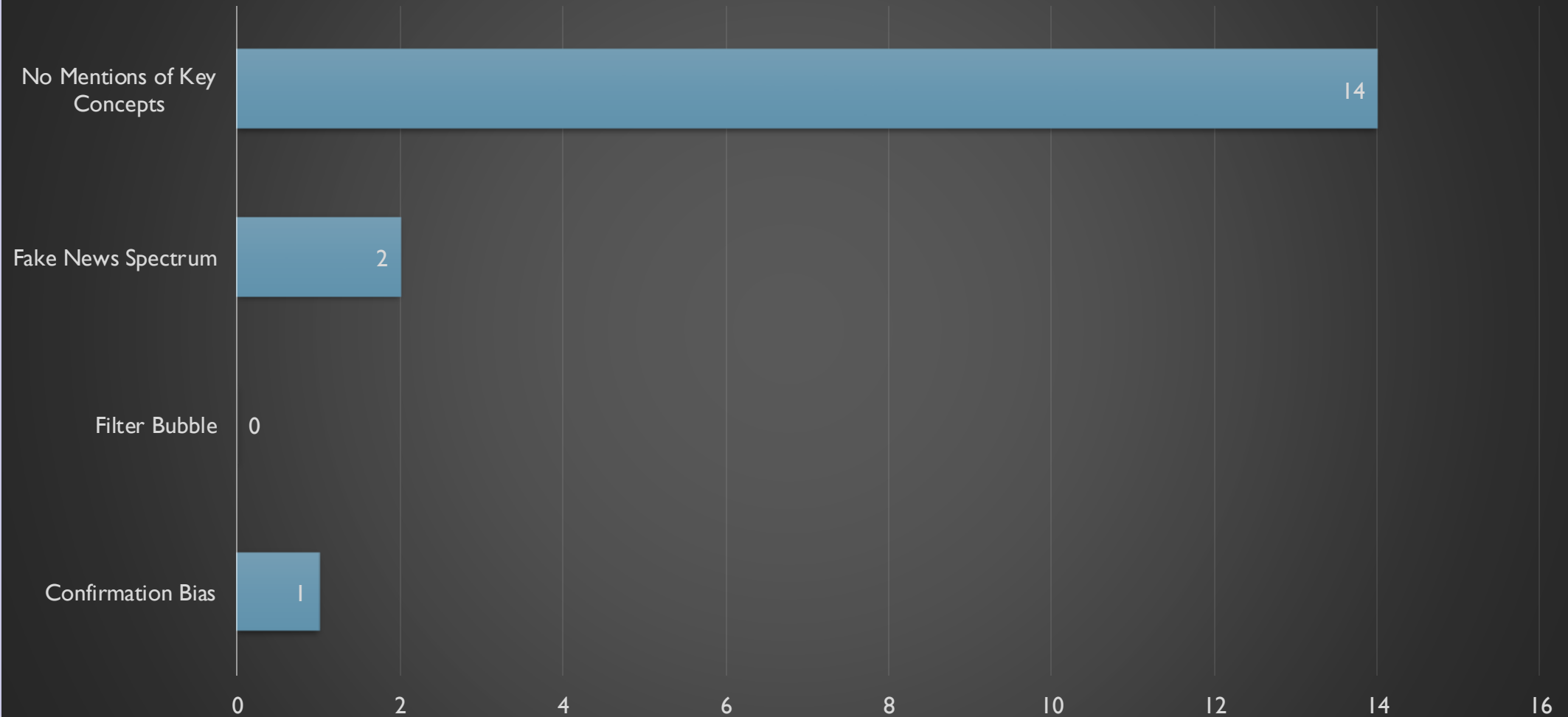
Student Write-Ups: LS 0520



Student Write-Ups: LS 2000 #1



Student Write-Ups: LS 2000 #2



- check authority of publishing source
- look up the author
- look up the original sources
- TRIANGULATION - looking up other version of the story
- Fact checking ex. timeline.
- look @ comments

- VOCABULARY — slang + profanity
- SOURCE BIAS — "MAY"
- POPUPS + ADS — inappropriate
- TRIANGULATION — other sources confirm
- LOGIC — does it make sense?
- Confirm source legitimacy
- KNOWLEDGE OF NEWS INDUSTRY — ex. Syndicator

who shared it? friend? colleague?...

CRAAP

ideol^olect

language

typos
spelling

syntax
rhetoric

The source credibility
website, journal, ...

Author credentials

Cross-reference

Funding? where's the money?

COMPARING RESPONSES

Confirmation Bias/Filter Bubble:

- Focus on significance of critically evaluating not only the source of an article itself, but the source within one's own social media context
- Importance of triangulation

Fake News Spectrum:

- Students could view articles with nuance (i.e - source is legitimate, but there are bias issues; article seems slightly sensationalist, but other sources confirmed the story's information)

INSTRUCTOR REFLECTIONS

Strengthening emphasis on key concepts through the writing prompt

- Make direct connections to psychological biases through the prompt question

Students sometimes needed a push to move beyond "good enough" evaluation

- Making information literacy more of a holistic process

ACTIVATING PRE-EXISTING SKILLS

- Many current undergraduates are digital natives – they are very familiar with the internet
- Students are already researchers with unique experiences – asking them to incorporate their backgrounds into the research process can be very effective
- Activating and building on skills students already have encourages critical evaluation of sources in their daily lives

TO SUM IT ALL UP...

- Checklists, while a useful tool, do not account for **psychological** reasons that people fall for fake news, such as the confirmation bias and social media filter bubbles.
- Checklist usage does not mimic real life internet behavior.
- Students aren't blank slates – they come to class with their own backgrounds and set of skills. Active learning strategies and class collaboration helps students build on their own budding research capacities.

Thank you for listening!

Questions?

REFERENCES

Cooke, N.A., Barclay, D., & Burkhardt, J. M. (Panel). (November 1, 2018). *Tackling fake news: An American Libraries Live webcast* [Webinar]. Retrieved from <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/al-live/>

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IMAGE SOURCES

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