TEACHING TIP

Social Media Literacy in an Infodemic

COVID-19 misinformation, conspiracy theories, and fake news have spread rapidly through social media channels, contributing to an unparalleled “infodemic.” Although entry-level nurses should be prepared to use information and communication technologies—especially social media—ethically and professionally, information literacy instruction is generally limited to peer-reviewed and gray literature. To supplement traditional instruction, RN-to-BSN students taking an introductory information literacy course learned to navigate online misinformation using lateral reading, a powerful digital source evaluation strategy used by professional fact-checkers that requires leaving an online source to evaluate it.¹ SIFT represents 4 overarching lateral reading strategies: Stop, Investigate the source, Find trusted coverage, and Trace claims to their original context. Using examples from the web, the SIFT method introduces college-level lateral reading skills in 5 open-source online modules.¹ Throughout the course, students completed the SIFT modules and accompanying reflection journals. In a final in-class exercise, students chose a controversial, popular COVID-19 claim and, in small groups, used lateral reading strategies to investigate digital sources to evaluate the claim. Overall, students reported increased confidence in investigating social media claims. Nurse educators can teach proven lateral reading techniques to evaluate digital sources necessary to combat the COVID-19 infodemic.

Reference

1. Caulfield M. Check, please! Starter course. *Notion*. Published August 12, 2019. Available at <https://www.notion.so/ae34d043575e42828dc2964437ea4eed>. Accessed June 25, 2020.

By **Christine R. Espina**, DNP, MN, RN, Health & Community Studies Department, RN-to-BSN Program, and **Emily Spracklin**, MLIS, Western Libraries, Western Washington University, Bellingham, EspinaC@wwu.edu.

DOI: 10.1097/NNE.0000000000001115