Critical Media Literacy Lesson Plan

1. **Target Audience:**
   a. This lesson will be taught to ninth-eleventh grade students during three days in their history course.

2. **Learning Objectives:**
   a. At the end of the class, students will be able to properly analyze and compare old and current news media sources, and identify a similarly polarizing historic event.
   b. At the end of the class, students will be able to examine and weigh the differences between primary and secondary sources.
   c. At the end of the class, students will be able to recognize media biases and extract the truth from any source.

3. **Instructional Activities:**

   **Day One**
   a. Icebreaker Activity *(20 minutes)*
      i. The teacher will first show students the Trevor Noah segment, *“Everything Is Stupid- Coronavirus Edition.”*
      ii. The teacher will then prompt a discussion with the students using the following guiding questions:
         1. What did you notice about the news media during the COVID-19 pandemic?
         2. Have you heard of the term “fake news?” How much of a role do you think fake news plays in current news media?
         3. Do you think Americans were influenced by the fake news present during the COVID-19 pandemic? In what ways?
   b. Analyzing News Source and the Difference Between Primary and Secondary Sources *(40 minutes)*
      i. The teacher will introduce primary and secondary news sources, and give examples of each.
ii. The teacher will walk students through how to analyze news sources and spot “fake news” using the following steps. The teacher will then walk students through how to apply the steps to an example article from Fox News, and the class will decide if the article and source are credible.  

c. Tips for Detecting Fake News Handout:  
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nWOQtGEfzOfuUDXoLj11Her3PZ1dqPiV/view?usp=sharing

Day Two

d. Group Analysis of News Sources (60 minutes)

i. Once the students have shown that they’ve mastered the steps of analyzing a news source, they will break into groups of 3 and each be given articles from either the older time period or more current time period of a historical event. For example, one group will have an article that circulated in 1918 during the Spanish Flu, and another group will have an article from 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ii. Students will have 20 minutes to apply the steps to their article, decide if the article and source are credible, and then designate who from their group will be sharing with the rest of the class.

Students will have the option to use the fact-checking websites to verify their conclusion:

a. FactCheck.org: http://factcheck.org/

b. International Fact-Checking Network:  
http://www.poynter.org/category/fact-checking/


d. Snopes.com: http://snopes.com/

iii. Examples of articles that students will be given:

1. A great depression and current economic recession:  
   a. https://www.newspapers.com/topics/great-depression/great-depression/  
      (scroll down for articles and clippings grom the great depression)

2. Articles that compare rhetoric used to talk about mexican migrants (current) vs. italian migrants (1880-1920):  

3. Political news then vs memes now:
   c. https://online.norwich.edu/academic-programs/masters/history/resources/infographics/history-of-american-propaganda

iv. After 20 minutes, each group will present their findings to the class for two minutes.

**Day Three**

e. Individual Evaluation of Student Identified News Sources (40 minutes)
   i. Students will now be given 40 minutes to find something that happened within the last 100 years and draw parallels to current new media. They have the ability to pick any topic of their choosing as long as it has usable news coverage that can be analyzed.
   ii. Once students have identified their two news sources, they will apply the media analysis steps and decide if the article and source are credible.
   iii. After completing the analysis, students will begin brainstorming for their critical news project. For the project, students will have until Friday to create a product sharing their historical event, the articles chosen, and the analysis completed on both articles to decide if they’re credible or not.
      Examples of products can be:
      a. YouTube Videos
      b. Podcasts
      c. Drawings/Comic Strips
      d. Posters
      e. Essays
      f. Songs/Raps

f. Wrap Up (20 minutes)
   i. The teacher will take the next ten minutes to answer any pressing questions students may have, and guide an open-ended discussion with the following guiding questions:
      What have you learned about news media?
How do you plan to apply the steps for analyzing news sources to your own media consumption?
Was there anything you were surprised by?
Do you feel confident in creating your own analysis assignment at home? Do you have access to the materials you need to complete the project?

4. Means of Assessment:
   a. Summative:
      i. The teacher will evaluate the group presentations of their example news sources and confirm that they’ve completed each of the steps to analyzing a news source. Extra points will be given for groups that used the fact-checking websites.
      ii. The teacher will also evaluate each student’s critical news project.
   b. How will you know students have learned what you wanted them to learn, that the objectives have been accomplished, and that the goals have been achieved? What will count as evidence of learning? How does this summative assessment of the lesson link to your summative unit and/or curriculum assessments?
      i. Tests, assignments at the end of the class
   c. Formative:
      i. Teachers will observe the student’s performance, discussion involvement, and overall classroom engagement.
   d. How will your assessment inform instruction on an ongoing basis? How will you assess in the process of student learning throughout the lesson and how will you make adjustments? Contextualize the response to this question to include possible scenarios that could take place during the lesson
      i. Ongoing assessment.

5. Resources:
   a. Materials/Resources Needed:
      i. Tips for Detecting Fake News Handout: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nWOQtfGEfzOfuUDXoLj11Her3PZ1dqP1V/view?usp=sharing
      ii. Computers for both students and teachers to access online resources
      iii. Classroom Projector and Speakers
   b. Links:
      i. Everything is Stupid, Trevor Noah: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Jn03wW0Slw
ii. This isn’t the first time a virus caused social panic. The Spanish flu did too, Los Angeles Times: https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-03-16/los-angeles-spanish-flu-coronavirus

iii. Clippings from Great Depression newspapers: https://www.newspapers.com/topics/great-depression/great-depression/


ix. History of American Propaganda Posters, Norwich University https://online.norwich.edu/academic-programs/masters/history/resources/infographics/history-of-american-propaganda


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