

## “Webmindful(l)”: Building Web Resource Evaluation Skills

- Course/Level:** lower-level English literature courses, but may be used in other disciplines
- Key Concepts:** evaluating web resources, class participation, avoiding plagiarism
- Materials:** “smart” class facilities and PowerPoint, or overheads
- Time Allocation:** approximately 35 minutes, but length may be altered easily, depending on how this activity fits with the syllabus and course material

### **Learning Goals:**

1. Students will become familiar with using web resources for course assignments.
2. Students will build skills to assess the quality and appropriate use of web resources.
3. Students will retain critical skills through individual contemplation, class participation, and follow-up evaluation(s).
4. Students will learn to value a variety of texts and different subject positions, yet also recognize that certain resources will suit some course assignments better than others.
5. Students will practice their discipline’s preferred citation style to reference web texts.
6. Students will consider the changing effects of the web texts have on intellectual property, information access/management, and plagiarism issues

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING SEQUENCE**

### **Introduction (5 - 10 minutes):**

- introduce public vs. private digital resources, academic vs. non-academic publications
- partner discussion: reasons for having used / not used web resources for assignments
- class discussion: what web features attract readers / detract from the text’s quality

### **Lesson Development (20 minutes):**

- class brainstorm: list visual and textual features of internet sites considered “academic”
- [slide] give a list of useful evaluative questions for assessing web resources<sup>1</sup>
- [slide] as a class, practice assessing four different web texts - a blog, a personal/fan website, a self-published dissertation, and an academic criticism/text database; discuss which resources would suit certain kinds of assignments, and why

### **Closure (5 minutes):**

- reinforce importance of selecting, referencing, and citing web resources carefully and correctly, along with other scholarly digital/print-based resources, in assignments<sup>2</sup>
- [slide] discuss appropriate use of “Wikipedia” and other web study guides

### **Follow-up Evaluation(s):**

- pop quiz / annotated bibliography / reference web resources in next assignment

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<sup>1</sup> Beck, Susan. *The Good, The Bad & The Ugly: or, Why It’s a Good Idea to Evaluate Web Sources*. 1997. 01 01 06. <http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/evalcrit.html>

<sup>2</sup> “Bibliography on Evaluating Web Resources.” *University Libraries: Virginia Tech*. 01 01 06. <http://www.lib.vt.edu/help/instruct/evaluate/evalbiblio.html>