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### The How-to of Biased Information: Teaching engineering students about knowledge creation and the scholarly conversation

Susan K. Boyd

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ASEE Engineering Libraries Division, June 25, 2018

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# **The How-to of Biased Information: Teaching engineering students about knowledge creation and the scholarly conversation**

**ASEE Engineering Libraries Division**

**June 25, 2018**

**Susan Boyd**

Engineering/Math Librarian



# **Instruction for Civil Engineering Class**

## **CENG 161/261 – Sustainable Water Resources**

**Addressed professor's concern that students have difficulty differentiating between factual vs. biased sources.**

**Professor and librarian collaborated on selecting sources - used climate change websites and a document from Turning Point USA for evaluation exercises.**

**Provided evaluation criteria for both exercises.**

**Publication produced by a controversial campus organization captured students' initial attention, and sparked lively discussion.**



## Teaching Plan

- **Students are introduced to the evaluation process using climate change websites with standard criteria such as authority/trustworthiness, credentials, purpose, factual/opinionated, etc.**
- **Then each student takes one of the arguments supporting fossil fuels in the Turning Point document, reads it through, and checks on the references used to make the each point.**
- **Students answer questions on a worksheet (Google forms).**
- **The teachable moment: Students discovered how bias can derail the creation of factual knowledge, and “stack” the scholarly conversation to agree with organizational beliefs.**



# Setting Up Your Own Bias Evaluation Session

- Provide evaluation guidelines.
- Evaluate websites from differing perspectives.
- Evaluate a document from a controversial source.
- The document must have references for students to analyze.



# For Slides, Resources & Worksheet

LibGuide:

<http://libguides.scu.edu/CENG161>

Questions: [skboyd@scu.edu](mailto:skboyd@scu.edu)