F is for Fake: how students deal critically with post-truth

DINOSAURS!

They are Real, and the Nazis Have Them; Reptilian Horde Menaces North Africa, U.S. Army II Corp Hurtled into Action

Initial Losses Severe; Mostly to Bites and Claw Wounds

With Linda Ruas and Julietta Schoenmann

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In this presentation we will…

- explore the online media context
- briefly explain key terms
- consider two possible ways forward
- share examples of practical classroom materials
- provide insights gained from trialling the materials

post-truth

ADJECTIVE

Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief

How do our students get their news?

The online media context

Anti-journalism journalism

Sharing news as performance

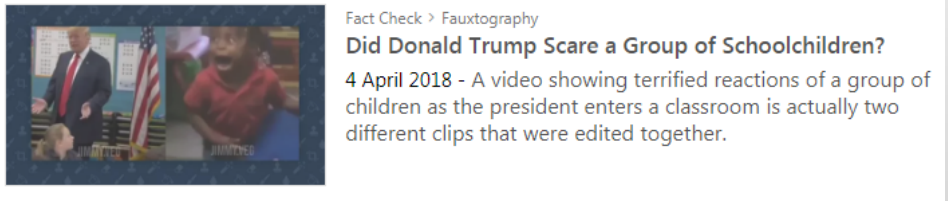
Making a good impression

Communication as ritual

Two possible ways forward…

How to spot fake news

- Take a closer look
- Look beyond the headline
- Check other sources
- Check the facts
- Check your biases
- Is it a joke?



Fact checking sites

Snopes: snopes.com/

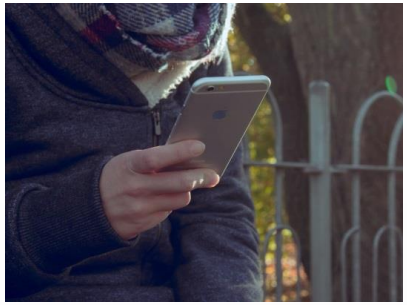
PolitiFact: politifact.com

Fact Check: factcheck.org/

BBC Reality Check: bbc.com/news/reality-check

Channel 4 Fact Check: channel4.com/news/factcheck

Reverse image search from Google: google.com/reverse-image-search



Practical classroom activities

Practical classroom tasks :

1/ **Quiz** - practice distinguishing between fake and real news

2/ **Discussions** - reasons why people (choose to) believe fake news

3/ **Ranking** - to raise awareness of why fake news

4/ **Translation** - to negotiate meaning: groups make a poster about how to recognise fake news

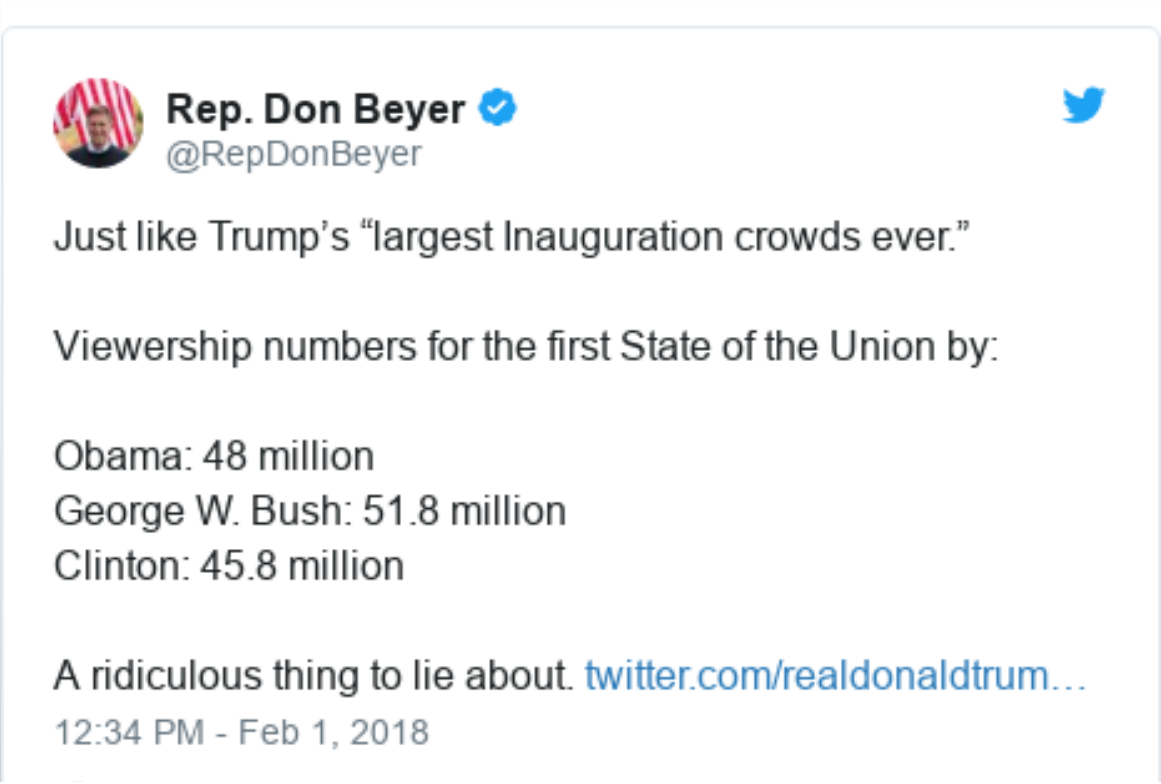
5/ **Skills development:** videos on how to spot and why people share fake news; research to find fake news; write real and fake news and guess

6/ **Infographics / graphs** to practice interpreting

7/ **Wiki / blog / Moodle -** develop News Literacy, Digital Literacy, Number Literacy, Critical Literacy

Was it true? – what do you think?

According to Nielsen data, Mr Obama's first official State of the Union speech in 2010 attracted 48 million viewers. Mr Clinton's State of the Union pulled in a record 66.9 million television viewers in 1993. Mr Bush pulled in 62.1 million in 2003, a few weeks before the Iraq War. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-42897622



Real or fake news? – what do you think (and why)?

1/ In August a devastating hurricane hit the Americas - so powerful it broke records - first category-six storm ever!

2/ Hundreds of people died in the Grenfell Tower fire: 42 people found dead in one room; baby rescued from the building 12 days after the fire; baby thrown from 10th floor during the fire survived.

3/ When Storm Harvey displaced thousands in Texas, US, in August, a Canadian Iman closed his mosque's doors to Christian victims.

4/ Last September girl called Frida Sofia trapped in a deadly earthquake in Mexico.

5/ UK Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn had to do his paperwork on the floor of a train as there were no seats.

Answers – but why would people believe the news?

1/ **False** – category 6 hurricanes don't exist!

2/ **All false** – 71 people died; no records of any babies in the stories or 42 bodies in one room

3/ **False** – the Canadian Iman had never even been to Texas!

4/ **False** - Frida Sofia never existed!

5/ **True** – Virgin boss Richard Branson (Conservative supporter) circulated CCTV footage that showed that there were seats on that train but this was later shown to be false.

Videos / listening tasks:

www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-42487425

Listen to the video and note down:

- 3 reasons why people share fake news
- 3 ways of spotting fake news

Discussion: rank these uses of fake news around the world (most 5 to least 1 dangerous) and agree on why:

a) **Control** e.g. Despots using fake news as a weapon to quell dissent

b) **Political propaganda** e.g. Campaigns to meddle with elections in the US, UK, France, Germany and Catalonia

c) **Religious propaganda** e.g. WhatsApps increasing religious tensions in India & Myanmar

d) **Ignorance?** e.g. fake news via messaging and Messenger

e) **(April Fools) Jokes?**

https://www.axios.com/trump-effect-a-worldwide-fake-news-crisis-1515110917-10ce48c4-f7f2-4b3e-81f5-b47bd6fd9125.html

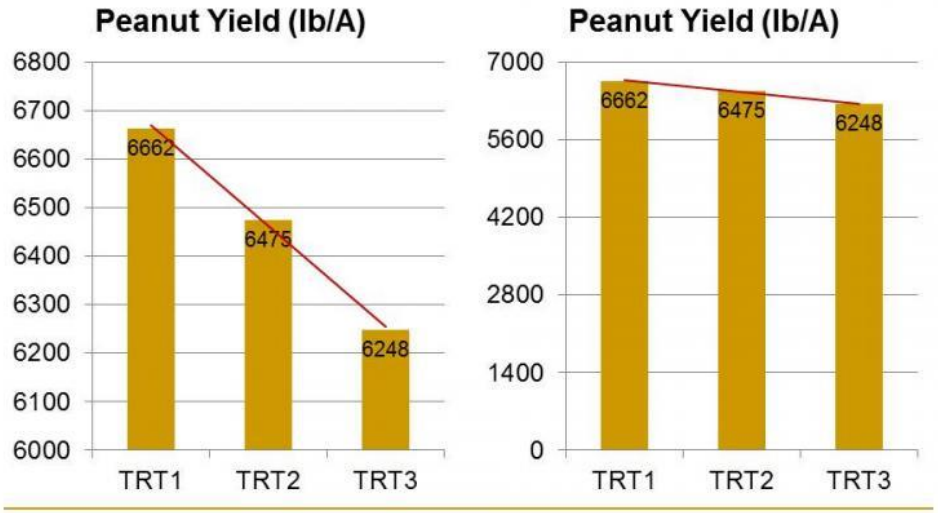
Using translation to negotiate meaning: make a poster to help others in college recognise fake news

https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11174

Graphs & statistics

Be Careful How/What You Say!

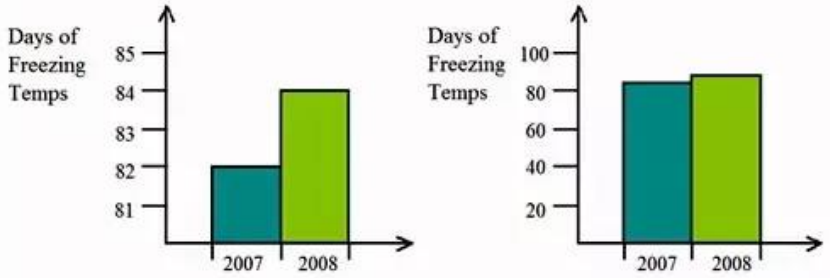
Why statistics is important!



PE-09-12
LSD 0.10 = 465

Misleading Graphs

Compare the two graphs



Both show exactly the same data. However, the graph on the left makes the change appear to be much larger than it really is because the numbers on the vertical axis do not start at 0. Each vertical mark on the left graph represents 1 and each mark on the right represents 20 (the scale changes).

Image Source: http://www.his.washk12.org/

Stage-managed photos:

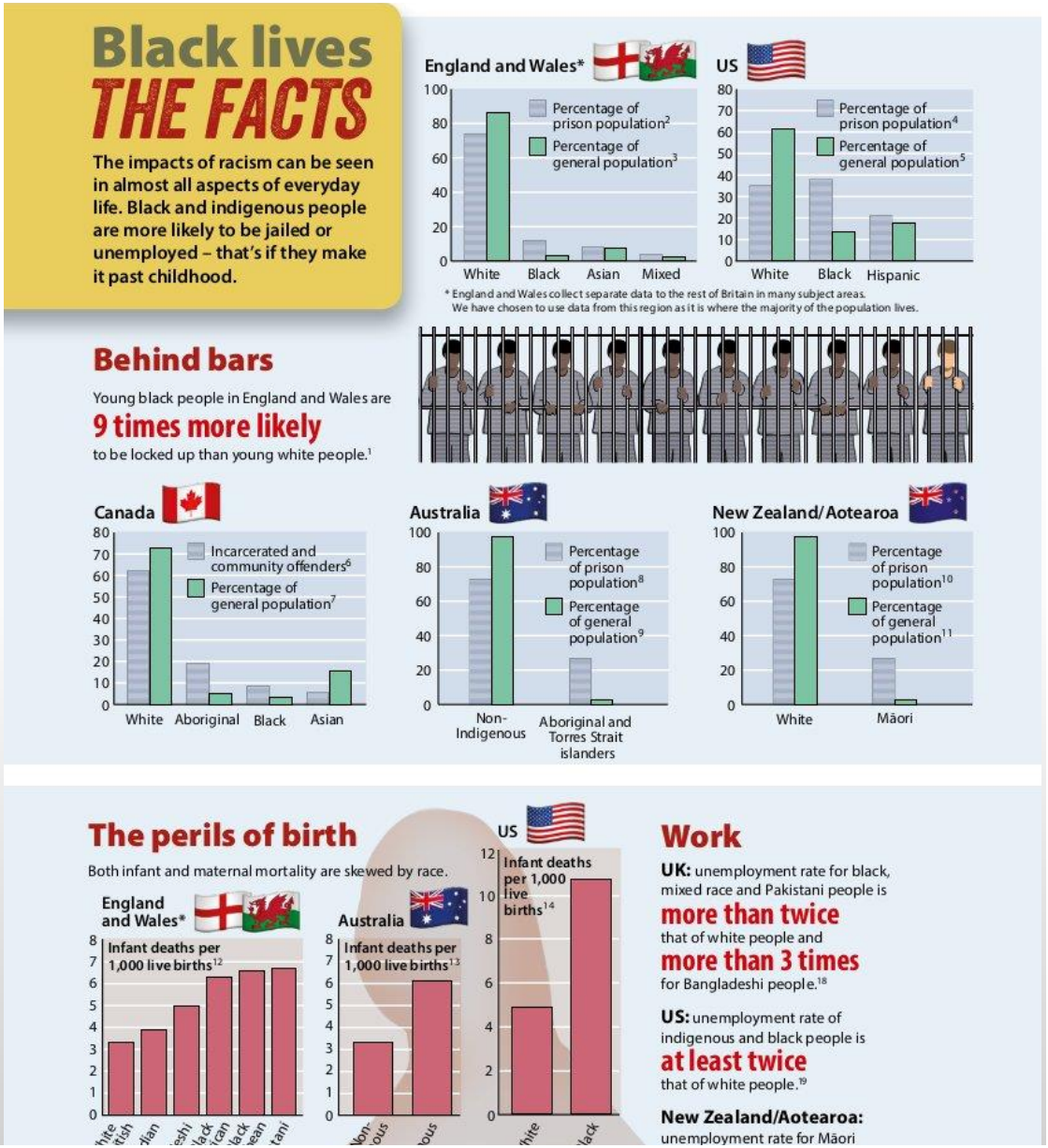
Infographics:

how many young black people are in prison in the UK compared to young white people?

https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=QUIZZES

quiz/infographic:
eewiki.newint.org

New Internationalist
The world unspun



Developing

Critical Literacy, Digital Literacy, Number Literacy, News Literacy:

‘All information is not created equal’

The News Literacy Project: www.thenewsliteracyproject.org

Benefits for multilingual ESOL groups:

- Adults: understand importance of reading news regularly to contextualise fake news and importance of talking to their children about fake news
- Teens: discuss, rank and understand propaganda and manipulation as part of safeguarding
- Translanguaging: valuing L1 to negotiate meaning in English
- Language and skills development: e.g. new sets of vocabulary; research to find fake news; write real and fake news items and guess which
- LOTS to HOTS (lower order >> higher order thinking skills)
- Critical literacy pedagogy and bringing news/global issues into class

More useful resources:

- https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/10/fake-news-social-media-current-affairs-approval
- https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/16/facebook-bias-bubble-us-election-conservative-liberal-news-feed
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yasx9utavPk&feature=youtu.be
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVBe6_o4cMI
- Post-truth: The New War on Truth and How to Fight Back (Matthew d'Ancona)
- Fake News in Real Context (Paul Levinson)

Any questions / comments?

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