Teaching popular v. scholarly without a checklist

Student Learning Outcomes
- Students will recognize how the information creation process can serve as an indicator of authority
- Students will recognize that instant publishing found on the web (e.g., breaking news, social media) comes at the cost of accuracy, while the thorough review & revision process of a book often comes at the cost of currency. *From ACRL Framework, Revision #2, 06/17/14*
- Students will recognize that the value accorded a source's authority, accuracy and timeliness will vary based on the information need.

Preparation
- Designed for a 50-75 minutes class
- Communicate with instructor regarding class assignment and student learning outcomes
- Pre-select 4 sources based on a current event related to the class topics. Select one of each: blog post, newspaper article, magazine article, scholarly article
- Create a Google form with questions that will be discussed during the session
- Create a handout with links to all of the sources and a link to the Google form [Note: Do not disclose the types of sources on the handout.]
- Students will work in groups of 3 or 4, and each group will receive one handout. Prepare the appropriate number of handouts, and highlight a different source on each handout. In a class of 16 or more, the same source could be used twice.

Lesson Plan
1. Break students up into groups of 3 or 4
2. Give each group a handout – groups will work on whichever source is highlighted on their handout.
3. Give groups 15 minutes to investigate, discuss, and respond to the following questions about their assigned source. Ask them to enter their responses into the Google form.
   a. Team name: Ask the students to come up with a team name
   b. Research process: Ask students to describe the research process of the author/s of this source.
   c. Revision & review process: Ask students to describe any review or revision processes that this source went through before it was published or posted.
4. After 15 minutes, display student responses to these questions on the overhead, using the Google form's response spreadsheet.
5. Discuss the students' responses. Ask students to use the links on the handout to follow along on their computers. This portion of the class takes approximately 10-15 minutes.

Possible discussion questions:

Research process
> What types of sources did the author/s consult?
> How did the author/s gather their information?
> How much time did the author/s spend researching?
> What might this tell us about the authority of the source?

Why and when does authority matter?

Compare the research/creation process of the different sources

Review/Revision processes

What are the purposes of the review/revision processes?

Why do the review/revision processes matter?

What is peer-review?

Why does the frequency of publication of a publisher/creator matter? What does it tell us?

Compare the review/revision processes of different sources.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of review/revision processes?

6. For the final takeaway, give each group 3-5 minutes to formulate a response to the following question and discuss.

   a. How do your source's research, review, & revision processes impact whether you would use it for this assignment? [Note: In a 75 minutes class, you could ask "If this source is not one that you would use, describe a situation in which it would be appropriate."]

Payoffs/Challenges

Promotes more sophisticated evaluative skills

- Takes information need into account
- Doesn't rely on surface features/visual cues

Opportunity for formative and summative assessment

Limited time

As with most library instruction sessions, we are limited by time.

- Open-ended discussions take longer than yes/no questions.
- Students will most likely not have time to search for their own sources.

Fast footwork

This approach to teaching source evaluation requires fast, on-the-fly thinking and teaching. Leading an unscripted discussion that requires high-level engagement with students may cause discomfort and requires practice (unless you're a natural).