

RADCAB #1: Introduction to the RADCAB Model

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Lesson Overview:

In this lesson, students learn a model for evaluating an information source. Although designed by the author to evaluate online sources, I have found it equally useful in evaluating print sources. The model is simple to remember, easy to teach, and kids love it! I've had great success using Karen Christensson's RADCAB model.

Lesson Plan:

Suggested Grades:

4-5 and above. RADCAB can be used for all students.

Objective:

To understand and be able to explain the components of the RADCAB model.

AASL 1.1.4: Find, **evaluate**, and select appropriate sources to answer questions.

Suggested Time:

40-50 minutes

Success Criteria:

Students will be able to explain what each letter in the RADCAB model stands for and how the concept relates to evaluating an information source.

Lesson Outline:

1. Introduction:

Show the bogus website about the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus. Ask them if they think that the Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus is a real creature. Most of them will be fooled! Explain that we must know if we can trust our information sources, and there is something we can use to help us figure that out!

"Fake News" has been in the media a lot because so many people are so easily tricked. Don't let yourself be tricked! Be careful about sources you trust and always check your sources to see if they are credible.

2. Main:

Teach the RADCAB model using the handout to help students capture the information. Select information sources to illustrate each of the concepts.

3. Conclusion:

We'll be using the RADCAB model to evaluate books and websites, but it can be used to evaluate any source of info. We'll refer to it throughout the year.

additional Resources:

1. RADCAB Model, developed by Karen Christensson: <http://www.radcab.com/>
2. RADCAB note capture handout. (see attached).
3. Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus website: <http://zapatopi.net/treeoctopus/>
4. Enough books or materials to illustrate each of the RADCAB concepts. I often use things like these:
 - Relevancy: Choose a book on swimming. Tell the kids that the guiding question is "How to learn to dive."
 - Appropriateness: Choose a Winnie the Pooh book and ask how many of them would like to read it for themselves.
 - Detail: Choose two books on the same subject, one too simple and one overwhelmingly complex. The last time I taught this concept I used Red Food Fun (Eat Your Colors) by Lisa Bullard and The Way to Cook by Julia Child.
 - Currency: Choose a book about a political leader no longer in power, an outdated technology book, or a book about a pop star from previous years. Be sure to point out that sometimes older material is best for historical research. Materials must not always be current, but the date of publication must be considered.
 - Authority: Choose a website from a celebrity who is commenting on a scientific topic. Or, a hobby blogger trying to pass him or herself off as an expert. My students have a hard time understanding the idea of credentials and degrees. Kids often relate best to their teachers. Example: Whitaker is a reliable resource for anything about the circus and clowns because he has this training, whereas Miss Betty, no matter how enthusiastic she may be about the subject, has never studied this field. Which of them would be the best source for a guiding question about life in the circus?
 - Bias: Bias is possibly the most difficult to teach because most children have never considered it before. I use travel books or brochures or car sales materials. Point out that a travel guide for Sri Lanka will never encourage anyone to go to India! Sales material for Ford will never recommend that a prospective customer check out Subaru vehicles. Emphasize that biased materials are often helpful for research as long as you are aware of the bias and take it into account.

Select materials and examples that will make the most sense to your students.

Notes:

Karen Christensson, a library media specialist in the U.S.A., developed the RADCAB model for her lessons in 2002. I have found it to be an excellent tool for teaching these concepts, and I've never found a model I like better than hers. Kids can and do remember the RADCAB model. Learning the model is an easy lesson and goes well. The far bigger challenge is getting the kids to apply the model.

I always follow up this lesson with two others:

- Using the RAD CAB model to evaluate a print information source.
- Using the RAD CAB model to evaluate an online information source.

I have purchased posters and bookmarks of the RAD CAB model and my students and teachers have loved them. I have yet to find a literacy curriculum or language curriculum which teaches these concepts better than Karen's model, so I encourage you to get familiar with it and place an order for some of the supporting materials.

RAD CAB Website: <http://www.radcab.com/>

Key Terms:

Information Literacy, Information Source Evaluation, RAD CAB, Relevance, Authority, Detail, Currency, Appropriateness, Bias

student handout:

RAD CAB Introduction Student Handout