Can We Teach Fake News in the Classroom With Just One Lesson?

Melissa Caruso, Adviser Dr. Lauren Burrow, College of Education
Stephen F. Austin State University Undergraduate Research Conference April 17, 2018

Purpose of Study

- The purpose of this study is to investigate if teaching one lesson about spotting “fake news” is enough to help improve elementary education majors’ ability to spot fake news.

Research Questions

- Can one lesson teach future Elementary school teachers how to spot “fake news”?
- Does one lesson about “fake news” have lasting impact on future Elementary school teachers?

Hypothesis

- Participants who received one lesson on “fake news” would be better at spotting “fake news” than those who did not receive a lesson.

Methodology

- Duration: Spring of 2017
- Participants: Approximately 75 undergraduate Elementary Education majors enrolled in three face-to-face sections of ELE 302
- Demographics: Predominately Caucasian females who are between the ages of 19-25
- Created a brief, self-created quiz of current headlines (some real, some fake).
- One “treatment group,” two controlled groups

Findings

- No course average or single student received above a “failing” grade on the quiz.
- All participants had access to I-pads to determine if their headlines were true or not, but not one participant took advantage of this.
- A one-time lesson is not sufficient enough to ensure pre-service teachers (PSTs) will be able to spot “fake news.”

Discussion

- To enhance the PSTs collegiate experience, awareness of media literacy is a necessity.
- Teaching how to spot “fake news” should not be confined to one lesson.
- Rather, media literacy should be integrated as a continuous component of the teacher education program.

References