Evaluating Resources Check Sheet

With an overabundance of information available you will need to make sure the resources you use are valuable and suited to your purpose. Spending a few minutes on evaluation will save you time, produce higher quality research, and with practice will become automatic. Remember there are no right or wrong answers, it all depends on the purpose of your research. You don’t need to answer every question just be aware that they may be important to your research.

☐ Is the information well suited to your research purpose? If you haven’t yet thought this out you might want to do so now. What type of information do you need? General background information? Specialized information written by experts? Both?

☐ Can you find details about the author or source of the information? What are the author’s qualifications, affiliations, or credentials? This information should be easy to find and clearly stated if the source is scholarly. If no author is listed is there some other indication that the resource/information is credible?

☐ Can you identify the purpose of the information? Is it obvious or clearly articulated in the text? Are there biases or unsubstantiated information? Look closely at the language to better understand the purpose of the information.

☐ After looking closer at the resource can you determine the accuracy and reliability of the content? What type of resources are used when facts or evidence is given? Is the source of the information cited? Can you cross check the information? Have other experts reviewed the information (peer review)? If no citations are given what is the reason (editorial, newspaper article)?

☐ How old is the resource and does this matter? Have ideas or opinions changed since the piece was written? You may need to look at more recent resources to determine if the information is still relevant to your research.