WORKSHOP OUTLINE: Evidence & Expertise – Using the Best Sources for Your Argument

**I. Basic Description: In 2-3 sentences, describe the workshop.**

Students will learn how to assess sources for evidence and expertise so as to more convincingly support claims in an argumentative essay or speech. Indicators will be reviewed for two key measures of expertise (a.k.a. authority: author experience that is relevant to the topic under consideration) and evidence (such as documented methods, cross-references, or quotations from subject experts). Students will be encouraged to consider these indicators in evaluating and choosing sources wisely to strengthen the credibility of their own arguments.

**II. Workshop Entry Expectations**

Skills Level Ranges: Reading 4; Writing 4; Listening/Speaking 4; Math 1

**III. Workshop Exit Standards**

Upon successful completion of this workshop, the student will be able to:

1. Evaluate a source for its authority (demonstrated expertise relevant to the topic);
2. Evaluate a source for its evidence (verify that claims are supported by methods, quotations, and/or cross-references).

**IV. Workshop Content**

The following concepts, ideas, or topics must be covered:

1. Nature of authority/expertise (the source has a named author, who holds experience relevant to the topic under consideration via education, publication history, or career work)
2. Nature of evidence (empirical vs. personal, objective vs. subjective - methodology, quotations, cross-references)
3. Nature of Wikipedia (crowd-sourced with anonymous contributors and therefore zero expertise/authority; evidence is inconsistent from one entry to another)
4. Nature of news/journalism sources (written by trained journalists and fact-checked before publication: limited expertise, but often strong evidence)
5. Nature of peer-reviewed publications (written by subject specialists and reviewed by their own peers before publication: very strong expertise, very strong evidence)

**V. Methods of Presentation**

The following methods of instruction may be used in the workshop:

1. Model sources for review and consideration – Wikipedia entry, aggregator source (i.e. Huffington Post), news source, and peer-reviewed journal source (may be available on open internet or via GCC Library databases);
2. Audio-visuals, slides, and hand-out materials may be used to supplement discussion;
3. Directed class discussions, small-group discussions;
4. Debate, role-playing activities, or other active learning.

**VI. Methods of Evaluation**

The following methods of evaluation may be used in the workshop:

1. Pre- and Post-tests.

 **VII. Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this workshop, the student will be able to demonstrate his/her ability to:

1. Identify indicators of expertise/authority in a source;
2. Identify indicators of evidence/objectivity in a source;
3. Utilize sources with stronger expertise and evidence instead of sources with weaker expertise and evidence.