



How to know what to believe.

OVERVIEW OF NLP'S CHECKOLOGY® VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

The News Literacy Project (NLP) has developed a cutting-edge e-learning platform that is a first-rate resource for teachers and provides engaging, real-world lessons for students that foster critical-thinking skills.

The **checkology**® virtual classroom incorporates many of the best practices in e-learning, including self-pacing, blended and experiential learning, personalization, rich formative assessment, remediation, student challenges, points and digital badges to incentivize and reward engagement and the application of new skills, and a class discussion area where students share and comment on work, reflect on key questions and initiate their own conversations about the news and information they encounter in their daily lives. Leading journalists from The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, NBC News, Bloomberg and the Chicago Sun-Times are joined by subject matter experts on the First Amendment and digital media as virtual teachers and video-based guides throughout the core lessons. The virtual classroom is aligned to 21st-century state standards.

The core unit includes 12 lessons and four interactive modules that incorporate NLP's four pillars, or enduring understandings:

- The ability to filter information is an essential skill for journalists and consumers.
- The First Amendment is vital to American democracy.
- Today's news and information ecosystem presents great challenges and enormous opportunities.
- Knowing the standards of quality journalism empowers students as consumers and as citizens.

The e-learning experiences in these four modules emphasize social and other digital media, and include such topics as the role of algorithms in personalizing news and information and ways to identify and evaluate viral rumors.

The current core collection of lessons can be completed in about 15 hours by students with access to a high-speed internet connection. Teachers can draw from several models of implementation — including one-to-one in the classroom, select independent assignments (e.g., as homework) and flipping — to structure the use of the virtual classroom in the way that best fits their students' abilities, resources and schedules.

The core lessons culminate in NLP's "Check Tool," a digital resource that guides students as they synthesize and apply the unit's concepts and skills to evaluate a piece of information they have selected from an online source. NLP will be adding more e-learning content to the virtual classroom over time, optional student challenges and supplemental lessons.

The virtual classroom is the culmination of all of NLP's classroom and digital work to date and will be the key to making NLP's model both scalable and sustainable while retaining the demonstrable impact that has been a hallmark of NLP's success since it was founded in 2008.

NLP is making the virtual classroom available on a "freemium" basis that provides educators basic access to the platform at no cost, allowing them to deliver the lessons in a one-to-many format (such as on an LCD projector to a group of students). Premium access provides subscribers with individual student logins to unlock the full virtual classroom experience, including one-to-one delivery, self-pacing, saved progress, individual assessments, points, badges and student discussion. Teachers with premium access are able to track student progress, view quantitative formative assessment data and offer personalized feedback on qualitative assessments, including short-answer responses, discussion posts and student-created mini-projects (memes, digital trading cards, PSAs, etc.). NLP is offering mini-grants for the 2016-2017 school year that will allow teachers to pilot the premium virtual classroom at no cost. Teachers and administrators can apply at www.thenewsliteracyproject.org/checkology.

NLP contracted with the digital media agency Actual Size to help develop this platform. Major funders are the Dow Jones Foundation, Bloomberg, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, the Hive Chicago Learning Network and AT&T.