Lesson Plan: Identifying Fake News Headlines

Subject
Distinguishing between Fake News headlines and real news headlines; understanding the 5 Elements of Fake News; understanding why it is important to read news with a critical mind

Audience
Ideally adults, or ages 16 and above. Any number of attendees could be accommodated.

Learning Objectives
(note: the lesson addresses ACRL Standard 3: Evaluating Sources)
- Students can accurately identify the fake news headlines from a list
- Students can articulate the aspects of a headline that seem fake

Assessment Criteria
- Successful students are able to identify at least 3 of the 4 fake headlines
- Successful students are able to identify examples of at least 3 elements in the headlines

Content Outline
I. Introduction (3-4 mins)
   a. Why is Fake News important?
   b. Preassessment: Present a list of 4 headlines. Has anyone heard of any of these news stories? How many of these 4 headlines are fake? Why do you think so?
   c. What is the point of Fake News? Entertainment and satirical commentary.
II. Five Elements of Fake News (6-7 mins)
   a. Unnecessary adjectives
   b. Too many details
   c. Vagueness
   d. Absurdity
   e. Social Commentary
III. Post-Assessment Handout (6-8 mins)
    Identify the fake headlines and the elements of Fake News
IV. Conclusion (5-1 mins)
   a. TIME PERMITTING: Example of Fake News story that fooled thousands of people to exemplify why it’s important to think critically about the news
   b. Handout for further resources and address any questions

Methods
I. Preassessment: All students participate by holding up number of articles they think are fake. Students articulate why they think so. Instructor will listen for mention of the 5 Elements.
II. Practice / Active Learning: After explaining each element, ask students to identify the element in a straight-forward example
III. Post-Assessment: Students are given 3 minutes to read a list of 8 news headlines, and mark the fake ones. They are asked specifically to look for examples of the 5 Elements of Fake News, which are projected on the screen for reference. Assessment will occur during discussion, and summatively after the lesson. During discussion, instructor will affirm critical thinking, and point out elements that are missed.
IV. Students are encouraged to continue learning about Fake News, and will receive a handout with websites for further research. One minute is reserved for questions and feedback.