Summary of Assessment Results: The Checkology® Virtual Classroom 2022-2023

The News Literacy Project (NLP) is a national nonpartisan education nonprofit that empowers educators to equip students with the tools to be smart, active consumers of news and other information and engaged, informed participants in civic life. NLP's Checkology virtual classroom is an immersive resource through which students learn how to navigate today's challenging information landscape by mastering the core skills and concepts of news literacy so they can make informed decisions about what to trust, share and act on.

The Checkology virtual classroom is used primarily by middle and high school students and has been used in college classrooms as well. Given its online delivery system, Checkology can be used by educators anywhere. Educators can tailor the experience to fit their students' abilities, resources, and schedules, electing to implement the platform's multiple lessons as they see fit. The curriculum includes lessons requested by educators, enhanced interactivity and design, and game-like exercises where students can practice their skills. These interactive lessons use real-world examples of news and other information to test students' emerging skills and move them toward mastery. In 2022-2023, Checkology could be accessed by teachers and students using the platform in schools and classes (for education) or by independent learners (for the public). The focus of this report is on students using the platform for education.

A total of 87,749 people completed at least one question from the post-assessment survey at least one week after completing the pre-platform survey, while 75,836 students provided their grade (5-12) and were considered for future analysis.

Results show that students who completed the Checkology lessons improved their accuracy in responses for nine metrics, remained relatively stable for four metrics[1], and decreased in accuracy for one metric. Looking at point growth shows that students made significant gains on nine metrics with growth ranging from 8.3 points to 30.7 points. The metrics are grouped into five standards with each standard containing three metrics.

For **Standard 1**, we were unable to analyze data for the question that asked students to match information types. The current dataset is lacking a codebook to allow us to interpret which responses students provided are the correct answers. Information regarding this metric will be added to the report if it becomes available. The other two metrics for Standard 1 showed limited accuracy in the pre-survey and post-survey, remaining relatively stable.

Standard 2 showed significant improvement on two of three metrics. An item that asked students to select three examples of a watchdog press increased by 30.7 points, but only achieved 49.1% accuracy. The item that asked students to rate the importance of a free press to a democracy showed substantial growth (23.2 points) and increased to nearly 81%. An item that asked students to identify the two scenarios that violate the First Amendment decreased in accuracy by 3.6 points to 45.3% in the post-test.

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[1] Stability is defined as any change of less than two points in either direction.

Standard 3 also showed significant improvement on all three metrics with 18.5-, 10.7- and 19.8-point growth respectively. An item that asked students to identify five standards of quality journalism increased by 18.5 points and improved to 63.3% accuracy. An item that asked students to correctly select three statements that demonstrate understanding of bias rose to 60.7% accuracy.

Standard 4 showed improvement on all three metrics as well with 8.3-, 21.3- and 14.7-point growth respectively. The percent of students who recognized reasons why conspiracy theories appeal to people rose from 30.4% in the pre-survey to 51.7% in the post-survey, reflecting substantial growth but also room for improvement in final accuracy. The percent of students who identified the best way to verify whether website is credible increased by 14.7 points to a final accuracy of 65.3% in the post-survey.

Finally, **Standard 5** showed substantial improvement for one metric. The percent of students who correctly identified three common characteristics of misinformation increased by 13.8 points from 32.4% in the pre-survey to 46.2% in the post-survey. The other two items remained relatively stable.

New Items

This year, NLP added 6 new items to the pre- and post-survey (indicated in blue in the table below). Five of the new items are designed to focus on application of concepts and recognition of scenarios that apply key concepts. One of the new items captures attitudes toward press freedom. Four of the items showed substantial growth from pre- to post-survey.

The item that asked about attitudes toward press freedom had impressive growth with 80.9% of students responding with a least a "7" on a 10-point scale with "1" indicating not at all important to "10" indicating extremely important. The item about conspiracy theories is particularly interesting as it showed substantial growth (21.3 points), but accuracy remained relatively low (51.7%). The item that asked students to identify three common characteristics of misinformation followed a similar pattern of substantial growth (13.8 points), but still low accuracy in the post-survey (46.2%). The other new item about verifying credibility had both impressive growth and final accuracy (14.7 points; 65.3%).

Only one item, which asked students to identify scenarios that violate the First Amendment, showed a decrease in accuracy from pre- to post-survey (3.6 points), while a second item asking people whether they verify before sharing on social media remained relatively stable (0.6-point growth). Revised measures of civic activities also showed little change between pre-platform and post-platform use (-0.35 fewer activities).

Standard	Metric	N*	Pre-Platform Responses	Post-Platform Responses	Change
Standard 1	Metric 1.1	--	--	--	--
	Metric 1.2	1,909	23.8%	22.7%	-1.1
	Metric 1.3	6,275	52.4%	52.8%	0.6
Standard 2	Metric 2.1	4,662	48.9%	45.3%	**-3.6**
	Metric 2.2	3,878	18.4%	49.1%	**30.7**
	Metric 2.3	1,259	57.7%	**80.9%**	**23.2**
Standard 3	Metric 3.1	6,910	44.8%	63.3%	**18.5**
	Metric 3.2	7,429	50.0%	60.7%	**10.7**
	Metric 3.3	6,279	30.1%	49.9%	**19.8**
Standard 4	Metric 4.1	4,931	62.8%	71.1%	**8.3**
	Metric 4.2	4,394	30.4%	51.7%	**21.3**
	Metric 4.3	7,322	50.6%	65.3%	**14.7**
Standard 5	Metric 5.1	4,928	4.43	4.08	-0.35
	Metric 5.2	11,206	31.9%	32.5%	0.6
	Metric 5.3	327	32.4%	46.2%	**13.8**

Students in grades 5-12, gap between pre-survey and lesson at least 7 days
New items added this academic year

Metric	N*	Pre-Platform Responses	Post-Platform Responses	Change
Standard 1: *Students distinguish news from other types of information and can recognize both traditional and non-traditional ads.*				
% of students who correctly match the information with its type (1.1)	--	--	--	--
% of students who correctly identify two advertisements on webpage (1.2)	1,909	23.8%	22.7%	-1.1
% of students who recognize not all information is designed to mislead (1.3)	6,275	52.4%	52.8%	0.6
Standard 2: *Students acknowledge the importance of the First Amendment and a free press to an informed citizenry in American democracy.*				
% of students who correctly identify the two scenarios that violate the First Amendment (2.1)	4,662	48.9%	45.3%	**-3.6**
% of students who recognize three examples of the press playing a watchdog role (2.2)	3,878	18.4%	49.1%	**30.7**
% of students who rate importance of a free press to democracy at least "7" (2.3)	1,259	57.7%	**80.9%**	**23.2**
Standard 3: *Students understand the standards of quality journalism and can use them to identify credible information and sources.*				
% of students who correctly identify five standards of quality journalism (3.1)	6,910	44.8%	63.3%	**18.5**
% of students who correctly select three statements that demonstrate understanding of bias (3.2)	7,429	50.0%	60.7%	**10.7**
% of students who select the more credible item (3.3)	6,279	30.1%	49.9%	**19.8**
Standard 4: *Students demonstrate increased critical habits of mind, including effective verification skills and the ability to detect misinformation and faulty evidence.*				
% of students who recognize that the post does not provide credible evidence (4.1)	4,931	62.8%	71.1%	**8.3**
% of students who recognize the reasons why conspiracy theories appeal to people (4.2)	4,394	30.4%	51.7%	**21.3**
% of students who identify the best way to verify whether website is credible (4.3)	7,322	50.6%	65.3%	**14.7**
Standard 5: *Students express a sense of responsibility for the information they share and increased interest in civic engagement.*				
Average # of civic activities students say they will engage in (5.1)	4,928	4.43	4.08	-0.35
% of students who say they verify before sharing on social media (5.2)	11,206	31.9%	32.5%	0.6
% of students who identify three common characteristics of misinformation (5.3)	327	32.4%	46.2%	**13.8**