



Ask the Better Question:

Using Bigfoot to Introduce Constructive Approaches to Authority

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Hello, I'm Kate

Liaison Areas:

- Business & Economics
- Portland Seminary
- School of Theology
- Mathematics
- Undergraduate Education
- Undergraduate Psychology
- Undergraduate Social Work

Other Hats I Wear:

- Outreach & Engagement
- Information Literacy Coordination for Undergraduate Core Classes

This is Jenny.

Jenny is the original developer for the Bigfoot activity, and laid the foundation for gen-ed collaboration that I get to build on now.

Jenny Bruxvoort, MSLIS

Visiting Research and Instruction Librarian
Hope College, Holland, MI



Today we will:

- Contrast the more common deconstructive methods of evaluation with a positive constructive approach to authority in information sources.
- Check out The Bigfoot Activity (including some of the stages of development and variations), and consider if it might be useful in your own context.
- Discuss the benefit of using fantasy example topics in classroom activity and demonstration.

Who has authority?

Who gets to decide?

Who has authority?

Who gets to decide?

And how do I teach you to answer that correctly on your own?

"I need to use good sources."

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What is a "good source" ?

"That's 'fake news'."

"That's 'fake news'."

Previous experiences reinforce a culture of hypercriticism.

"My professor says it's got to be..."

"My professor says it's got to be..."

Assignment criteria is not always
contextually appropriate to the topic.

There's a lot of noise



BEAM

Background | Exhibit | Argument | Method

"a rhetorical perspective toward research-based writing by characterizing products of research in terms of how writers use them in their texts"

Joseph Bizup (2008) BEAM: A Rhetorical Vocabulary for Teaching Research-Based Writing, *Rhetoric Review*, 27:1, 72-86, DOI: 10.1080/07350190701738858

What can I learn
from this source?

The Bigfoot Activity

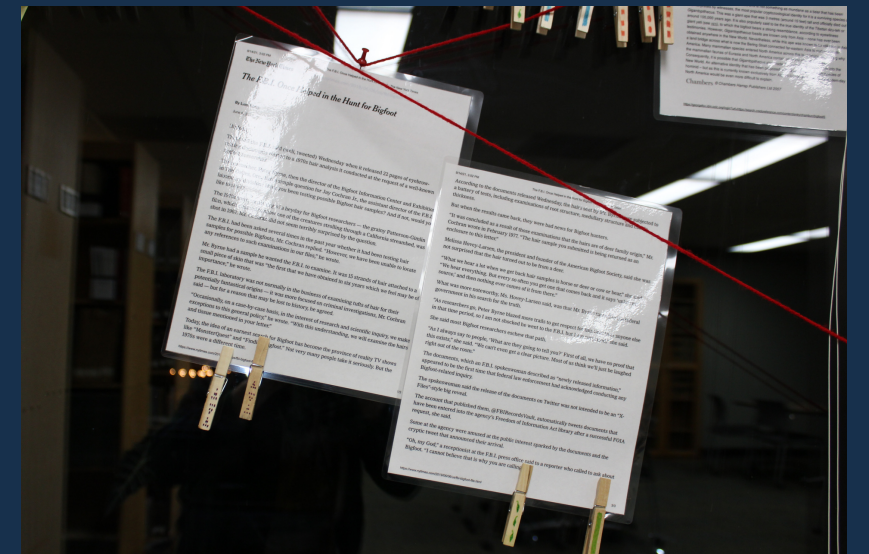
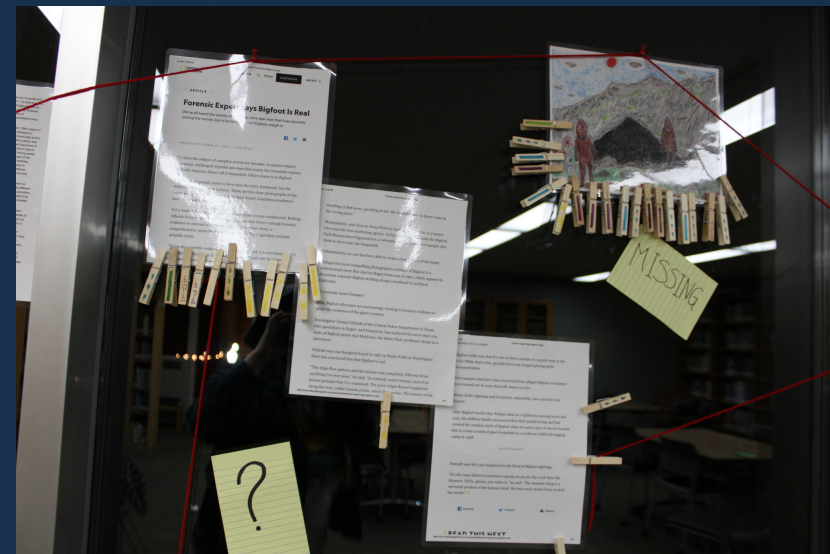
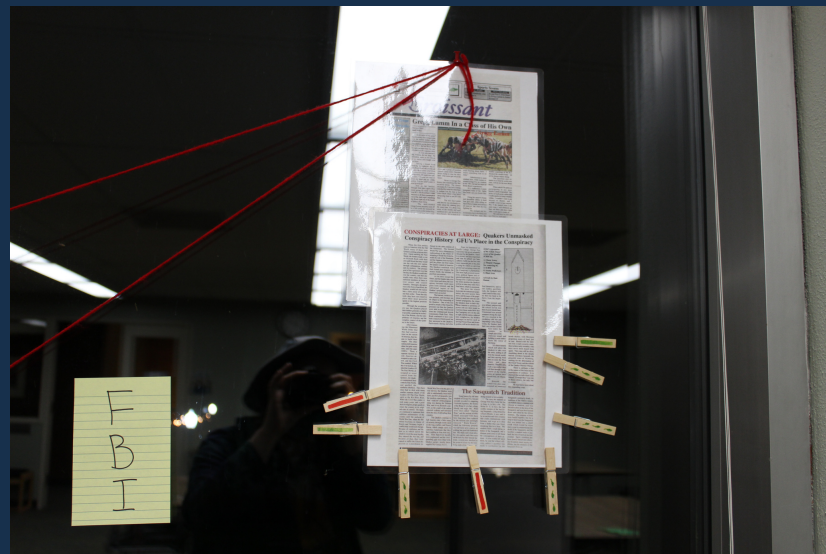
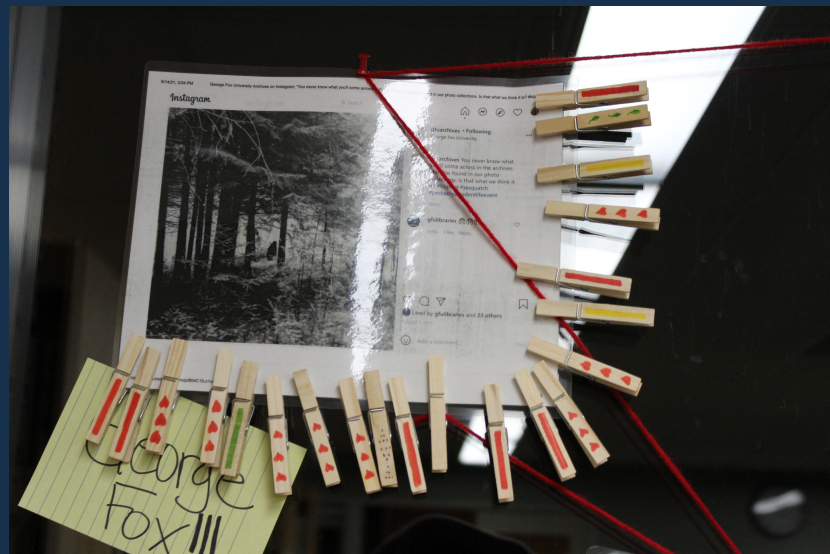
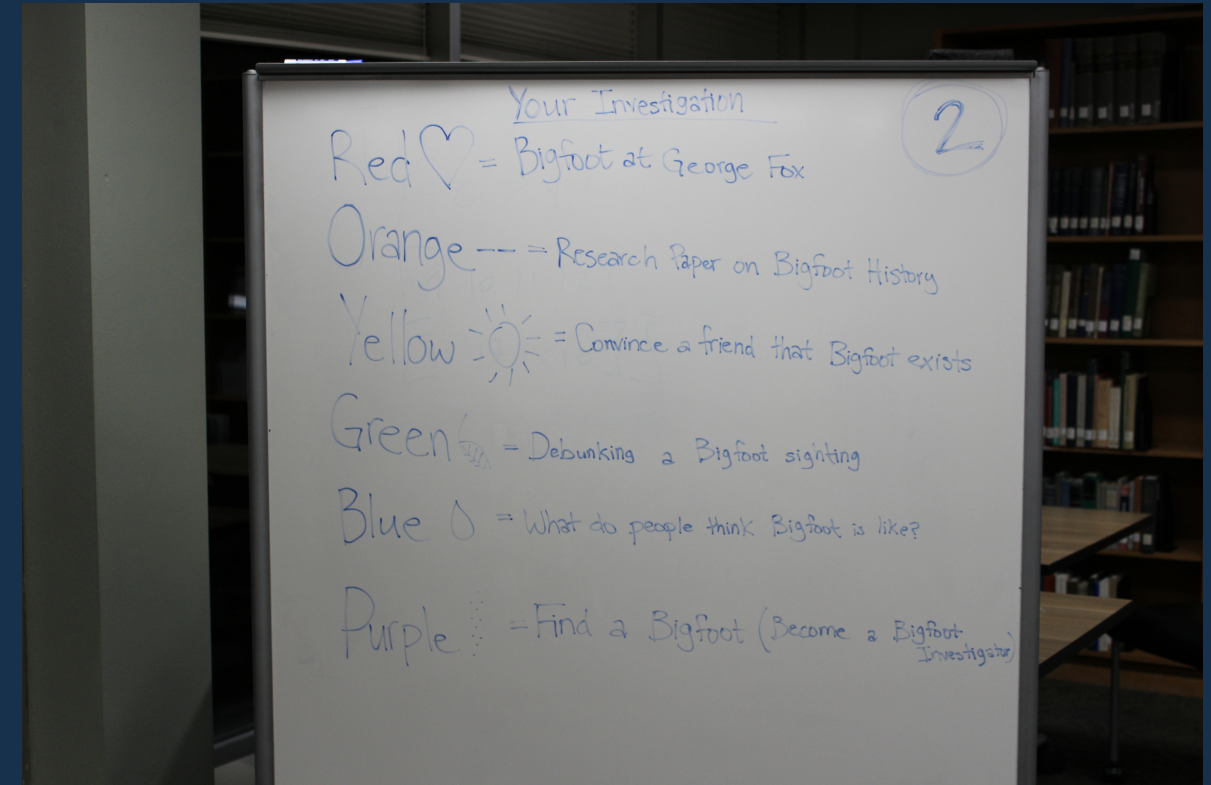
Do I have authority?

Six Investigatory Purposes

1. Provide evidence of Bigfoot at George Fox
2. Research paper on the history of Bigfoot
3. Convince a friend that Bigfoot exists
4. Debunk a Bigfoot sighting
5. Tell the class how people describe Bigfoot
6. Find a Bigfoot yourself



The Original Variation



Asynchronous Online

Sandbox

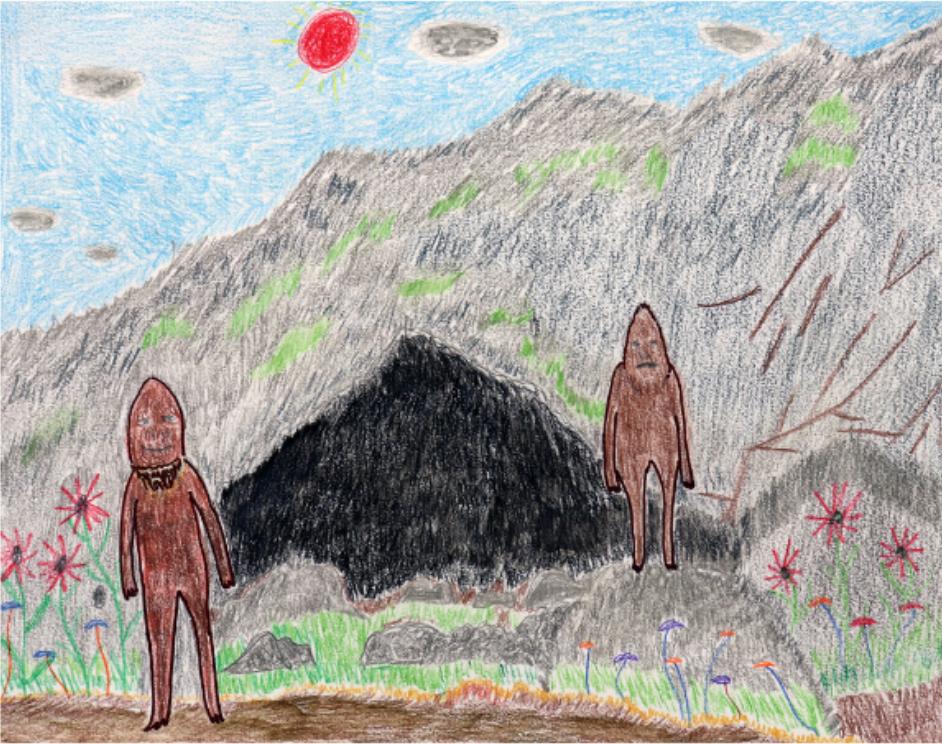
Home

Modules

Follett Discover

Drawing of Bigfoots

Artist Unknown, but suspected to be under the age of 10.



☐ Provide evidence of Bigfoot at GFU

☐ Report on how people describe Bigfoot

☐ Write a research paper on the history of Bigfoot

☐ Convince a friend that Bigfoot exists

☐ Debunk a Bigfoot sighting



Question 2

"The F.B.I. Once Helped in the Hunt for Bigfoot"

written by Liam Stack in *The New York Times*

[The F.B.I. Once Helped in the Hunt for Bigfoot - The New York Times.pdf](#) 

- ☐ Provide evidence of Bigfoot at GFU
- ☐ Explain to me in a classroom discussion setting how people describe Bigfoot
- ☐ Write a research paper on the history of Bigfoot
- ☐ Convince a friend that Bigfoot exists
- ☐ Debunk a Bigfoot sighting
- ☐ Find a Bigfoot yourself

Cognitive Overload and Fantasy in Trying Times

The transition from a state of puzzle and perplexity to rational comprehension is full of lively relief and pleasure.

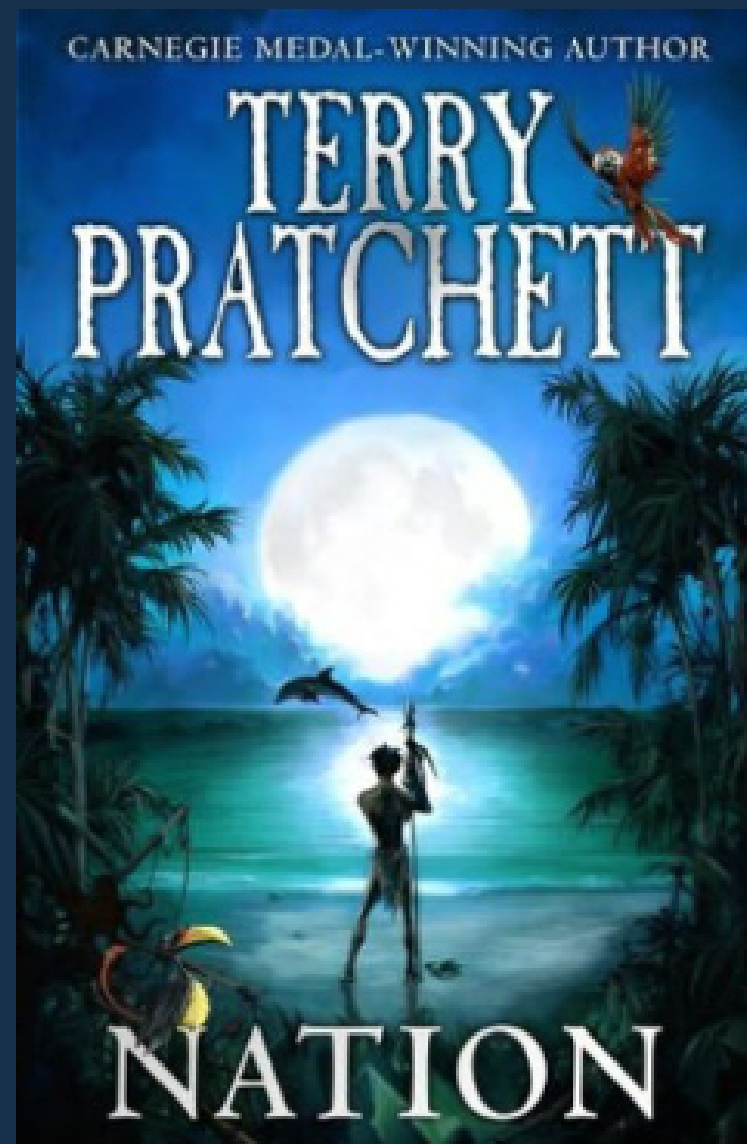
-William James (1897), The Sentiment of Rationality, in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* available from Wikisource.

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**It's uncomfortable to deconstruct
your worldview.**

Fantasy in the One-Shot



He believed in rational thinking and scientific inquiry, which was why he never won an argument with his mother, who believed in people doing what she told them, and believed it with a rock-hard certainty which dismissed all opposition.

- Terry Pratchett (2009), *Nation*.

Questions & Discussion

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