Appendix II B: In the Pursuit of Knowledge, how will you evaluate information and interpretations?

The Source (person, website, news media, book, etc)

What questions do you want to ask about this (or any) source as you look for reliability and understanding?

• Why listen? Does the source contribute any special experience or expertise? Are the speaker's/writer's qualifications to speak relevant ones? (according to whom? what process gave this source any authority? )
• Is there any background information that could give me a due to the source's reputation for past accuracy and reliability? any controversy? (seemingly fair, or an attack?)
• Does this source speak from any identifiable perspective (a cultural or political perspective, maybe a theoretical one, or perhaps a special concern)? What does this perspective contribute to my understanding of the topic I'm investigating?
• Is there any reason to think this source would be calculatingly deceptive? (maybe evasion? or self-interest? hired to cover something up? ) Would it be useful to check other sources, and sources commenting on this source?
• Should I seek out other sources anyhow, just to see if they say something different?
• Is this source interesting and useful enough to note for future reference? (worth taking full information for footnotes?)

The Information and Interpretation

What questions do you want to ask about the information and interpretations given by this source? Are there features of the content or presentation that particularly prompt your questions?

• Are there knowledge claims being made here? If so, are they ones of factual information, or values, or spiritual belief?. (or a combination?)
• Does it seem as if there's a particular perspective on the information here -- in its selection and the way language is used? Does it seem to be connected with any larger worldview? (Do I need to investigate further to understand what it is being said here?)
• Is the information and its interpretation given clearly and explicitly? Or are there a lot of ambiguous statements, and ideas implied? any errors, inconsistencies. (fallacies?)
• What conveys the information and interpretation here -- language or things that do with it? images? music? statistics and graphs? (more questions to ask here..)
• What ways of knowing are involved in this news article/speech/video? Does it appeal mainly to reason in what seems to be fact and logical argument? Does it appeal to my emotions? If so, is it just trying to get me to accept an idea or buy something, or is the emotional content important to the topic and its argument? (Isn't an emotional appeal appropriate to some issues? )

Reflection:

The reflection in this final section of the framework has to be personal to the student. The kinds of student questions that are simulated above are far more generic. Students can generate these, in their own words, as they respond to particular articles, video clips, speakers, or the like and discuss them with classmates. Questions are likely to grow in their detail and complexity, as suggested by the bracketed additions above, and will outgrow and possibly reconfigure the original framework.