**EXAMPLE OF A SOURCE ANALYSIS**

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| **Citation** – this means all the details about the source that you would put it into the bibliography | Schwingel, A 2009 *Continued work employment and volunteerism and mental well-being of older adults: Singapore longitudinal ageing studies.*, US national Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health, accessed 13 October 2013, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19474036>. |
| **What sort of source is it**? Online academic article, face-to-face interview, informational website etc? | This source is an article that has been written by A. Schwingel on the US National Library of Medicine, National Institute of Health website. This is an academic article and contains an abstract to a testing that was conducted in Singapore. |
| **Where did you get the source from?** **How did you find it?** | When interviewing a psychologist, Grant Blashki, he provided me with a link to this particular article as he thought that I might find it useful for my research. |
| **Introduction:** give a summary of the source – the purpose of it. Relevant background information | This source provides an abstract to a testing that was conducted in Singapore on the well being of seniors that have retired. The objective was to examine the effect of late life engagement in continued work involvement or volunteer activities during retirement on mental well being. |
| **Reliability of source** – can it be trusted? Why? Why not? | Professor Schwingel works at the University of Illinois and, although this source is published on a website and could not be 100% reliable, it was referred to me by an expert psychologist so he must think it is reliable and relevant. It also contains high detail into the results that were discovered through this testing. This source tends towards the factual, as opposed to opinion. |
| **Usefulness and limitations of source** | This source is extremely useful in providing me statistics on what volunteering can do to your mental well-being in comparison to not volunteering. However, some limitations include the test only being conducted in Singapore, so therefore it isn’t a global representation. It also doesn’t focus the volunteering side on working in third world countries, rather just volunteering in general, whether it be in the community or elsewhere in your country. |
| **Findings** – what are the most important things you found out in relation to your question? | * Volunteering retirees and working seniors gave significantly better MMSE cognitive performance scores, fewer depressive symptoms, and better mental well-being and life satisfaction than non-volunteering retirees. * The results of this study suggest that continued work involvement or volunteerism provides opportunities for social interaction and engagement and may be associated with enhanced mental well-being. |
| **What needs to be followed up on?** What questions or directions have emerged? | Further research that could possibly go into this source is seeing if they have conducted similar tests in other countries around the world. |

IDEAS TO CONSIDER:

Responsibility

* Is there an author statement? Is any information about the author provided?
* Which company or organisation is responsible for placing the information on the website? Read the About Us and Home pages, and the footer.
* Has the article previously been published (e.g. a newspaper article that is provided on special interest site, that acknowledges the author and newspaper)? What were the original publication details? What can you find out about authority and bias of the newspaper?

Credibility

* Does the website provide information about the author (e.g. qualifications, where he works or has worked)?
* What do others say about the author or organisation? Search the Internet.
* What is the author’s relationship to the subject? Can this be verified?
* Is the organisation legitimate?
* Are there contact details for the author or organisation (especially a physical address or phone number, not just an email address)?
* Can the information be verified? Are there references, footnotes explaining where the author got his or her information, or links to sources that can back up statements?
* Is there a header or logo that indicates the document was produced by an organisation? Do the pages on the website have a similar look? Are they full of spelling and grammatical errors, or do they appear to have been proofread?

Is the purpose of the web page to:

* inform, give facts or data, teach, explain
* persuade
* sell
* share
* entertain?

Bias

A source that is biased may still be useful. Balance your own argument with information from credible sources with different viewpoints. But consider:

* Does the author use stereotypes, generalisations, or exaggeration?
* Is it a commercial site? Is it trying to sell you something? What is its message?
* Does the author or organisation have a political, commercial, or philosophical purpose?
* Are there other points of view?
* Does it present a balance of views?
* Does the web page provide links to other sites that can back it up?
* Despite bias, is the information still credible and useful?

Currency

Does the issue/topic you are researching require up-to-date information? (Are you researching historical or recent events?) If so,

* Is the information outdated?
* Is there a date on the article?
* When was the page last updated?
* Are the links still active?
* Is the site well maintained? Look for current news, dates, etc.

Relevance

* Are the first few lines (which are picked up by search engines) describing the page relevant to your topic?
* Can you understand the text?
* Does the information help to answer your research question?
* Do the links take you to relevant information?
* Are there clear guides to the content?