HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW? EVALUATING AI & OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

SHARING & REFLECTING ON A MODULE AND ASSIGNMENT EXPERIMENT FROM SW 4020, SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH METHODS, FALL 2023

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WHAT I THINK WE WILL COVER IN THIS SESSION

Framing & context

Brief overview of the module

The culminating assignment

Student feedback & responses

Discussion & reflection

Application to our practices

WHAT I'M PRETTY SURE WE WILL NOT COVER IN THIS SESSION
(UNLESS ONE OF YOU KNOWS HOW TO DO IT)

HOW to use generative AI (like Chat GPT) to gather information or make a request for an essay or anything like that.

HINT: That's part of how I structured the module.
I purposefully demonstrated being willing to fail as part of the process.

REFLECTION (THINK-PAIR-SHARE OR OTHER)
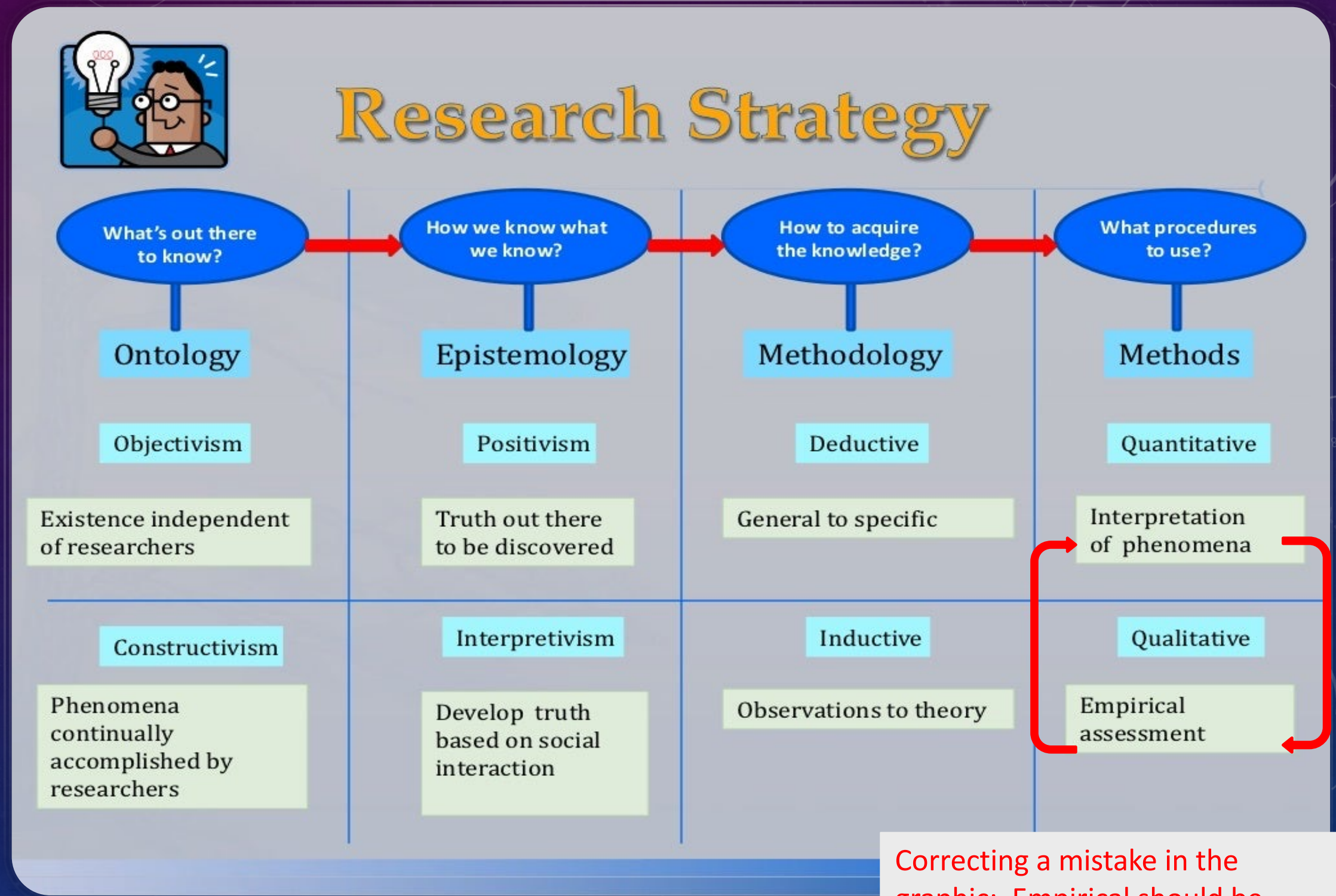# HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW?

A moment for reflection:

- What is/are your "go-to" source(s) for information when you want or need to learn about something?
- Do those sources differ if your need for information is academic/ professional versus personal/social? If so, how & why are they different? If not, what makes your source(s) reliable for both purposes?

KEY VOCABULARY: ONTOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE

"ALL RESEARCH EXPRESSES SOME POSITION ABOUT EFFECTIVE WAYS OF DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE."

JEANNE ANASTAS

Research Strategy

What's out there to know?	How we know what we know?	How to acquire the knowledge?	What procedures to use?
Ontology	**Epistemology**	**Methodology**	**Methods**
Objectivism	Positivism	Deductive	Quantitative
Existence independent of researchers	Truth out there to be discovered	General to specific	Interpretation of phenomena
Constructivism	Interpretivism	Inductive	Qualitative
Phenomena continually accomplished by researchers	Develop truth based on social interaction	Observations to theory	Empirical assessment

Correcting a mistake in the graphic: Empirical should be with quantitative, and vice versa

Anthony Yeong, 2011. https://www.slideshare.net/anthonyyeong/introduction-to-business-research-methods

DEFINING TERMS
(I THREW IN A COUPLE EXTRAS JUST FOR FUN)

Ontology: The study of what exists; What is out there to be studied?

Epistemology: The study of knowledge; How do we know what we know?

Epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007): In a nutshell, if we don't know something exists, how can we study it?

Paradigm: A standard; a perspective; a set of ideas; a model. When you change your paradigm, you are changing how you think about something.

Theory: A logically related set of propositions that help explain a phenomenon; A set of guiding principles. Our theories are our explanatory wrappers.

TYPES OF UNDERSTANDING: ISSUES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

- One's judgment about what is important; one's principles
- SW Core Values
  - Service
  - Social justice
  - Dignity & worth of the individual
  - Importance of relationships
  - Integrity
  - Competence

- "Gut feeling"
- Often worth paying attention to our instincts and intuitions, but not as the sole source of information

Values

Intuition

**Common Types of Understanding**

Authority

- Having done it before, seen it before
- Drawing on past events to inform current or future actions & decisions
- In SW, we refer to "practice wisdom"

Past Experience

Scientific Approach

- Having the position to be able to influence, command attention, & lead discussion in your field;
- Expertise means mastering your subject area; Authority means having the power & position to shape the conversation (hopefully based on expertise)

MEDIA BIAS CHART
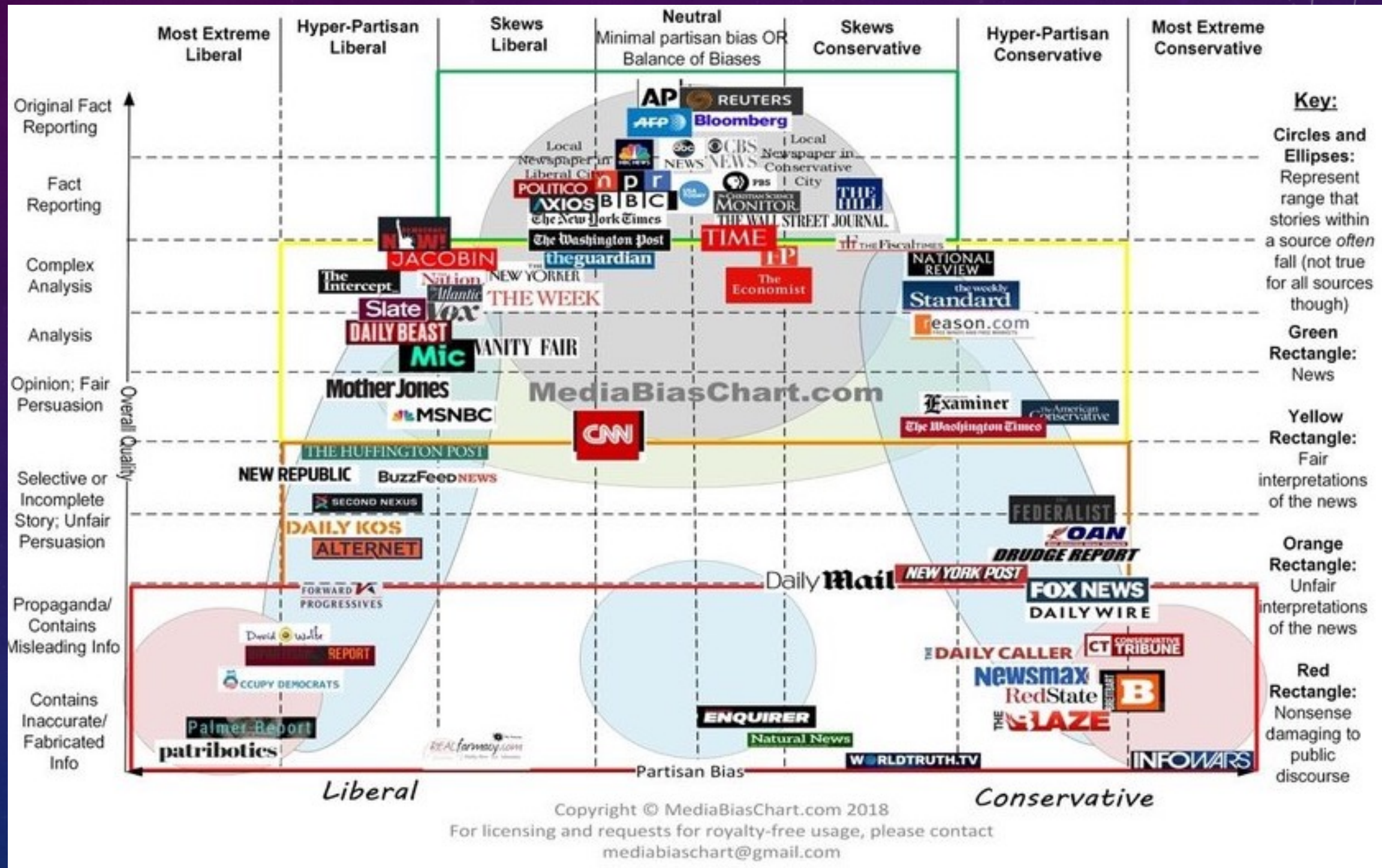
THE AI ASSIGNMENT: CLASS ACTIVITY & REFLECTION

Investigate a topic of interest

- In groups or individually, doesn't matter
- Find at least 5 sources of information about the topic
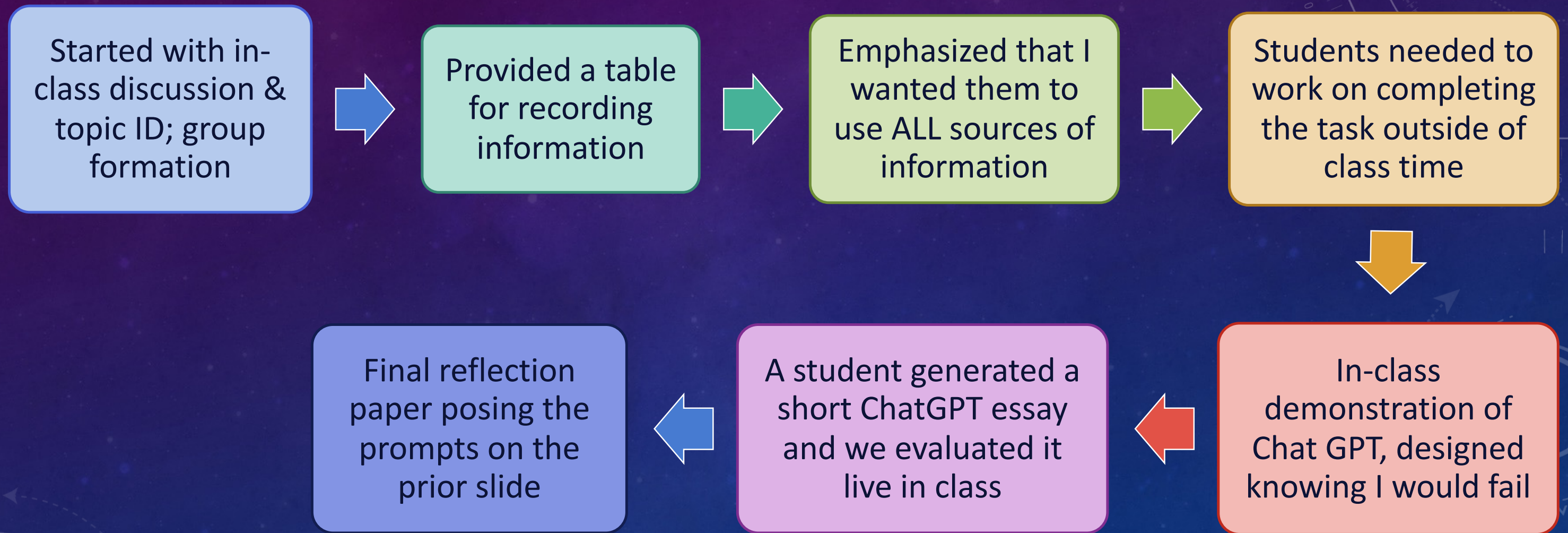- ALL sources of information are fair game.

Evaluate your sources of information based on the following:

- Would you be willing to stand in front of the class and teach your classmates based on this source of information?
- Same question, but professional colleagues
- WHY or WHY NOT?

Reflection on learning

- Who decides what knowledge is & who gets to produce it?
- Is an article generated by AI "knowledge" based on your definitions above?
- What are the social justice implications of whatever your response is about what knowledge is and who produces it?

WHAT I DID

Started with in-class discussion & topic ID; group formation

Provided a table for recording information

Emphasized that I wanted them to use ALL sources of information

Students needed to work on completing the task outside of class time

In-class demonstration of Chat GPT, designed knowing I would fail

A student generated a short ChatGPT essay and we evaluated it live in class

Final reflection paper posing the prompts on the prior slide

STUDENT RESPONSES FROM THE REFLECTION PAPERS

"I found that finding sources like social media was more difficult, perhaps because it isn't designed to search for a research topic and spit out individual sources, but rather people's accounts."

"Obtaining knowledge feels like a corrupt system because people are cheating with AI. It's like knowledge has an imposter. In my opinion it's unethical to use AI or chat gpt but it's a real question who will know? How will we know? That is the unhealthy mindset of our generation."

"The scariest part of Chat GPT is that if I was reading this essay with no prior knowledge it was AI-generated, I might have trusted it. I have fallen into the habit of just trusting the references that are listed on articles. This exercise has taught me that even those can be fake."

"I think that Chat GPT can maybe be a good place to for an outline of a topic but not a valuable source because I cannot clearly see where this information the AI came up with was from."

"I think using ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas about a topic is helpful. Taking information from ChatGPT to start your research is a beneficial way of starting out."

SOURCES

Engel, R. J. & Schutt, R. K. (2017). *The practice of research in social work* (4th Ed.). Sage Publications

Fricker, M. (2007). *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing.* Oxford University Press.

Marlow, C. (2011). *Research methods for generalist social work* (5th Ed.). Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning

Rubin, A. & Babbie, E.R. (2016). *Essential research methods for social work* (4th Ed.). Cengage Learning