A Perspective on Wikipedia: Approaches for Educational Use

Laurie M. Bridges, Instruction and Outreach Librarian, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon

Meghan Dowell, Teaching and Learning Librarian, Carroll University, Waukesha, Wisconsin

Accepted Manuscript

A Perspective on Wikipedia: Approaches for Educational Use

In our previous column, we reviewed Wikipedia's role as a global encyclopedia and demonstrated how it can be paired with the ACRL Framework (Dowell & Bridges, 2019). This column will expand on its use, highlighting several approaches for employing Wikipedia as an educational tool through programs, assignments, and methods by providing real-world examples from libraries and other educational institutions.

EDITATHONS

An editathon is a scheduled time when people come together to edit Wikipedia, online or in person. Editathons can help ameliorate systemic bias in Wikipedia by focusing on a specific topic, such as women's biographies or the African diaspora ("Wikipedia:Systemic bias," 2019). There are many libraries that have hosted editathons; a quick search using the keyword, "library", returned 100s of past events on the Wikimedia Foundation Outreach Dashboard ("Programs & Events Dashboard," n.d.). Academic libraries such as MIT in the US, National Autonomous University in Mexico, Oxford University in England, and Universidade de São Paulo in Brazil have extensive experience hosting editathons; other libraries are just beginning, such as Oregon State University Libraries, which recently hosted its first editathon ("OSU History Month Dashboard," n.d.).

Editathons motivate students to apply their own authority on a topic by contributing to articles. An editathon demonstrates that authority is constructed and contextual with the knowledge practice to "understand the increasingly social nature of the information ecosystem where authorities actively connect with one another and sources develop over time" (ACRL, 2015). Editathons encourage people with similar interests to come together and discuss the topic and the research while contributing to Wikipedia.

Don't let inexperience hold you back from hosting your first editathon; there are many

resources available to help you in the process. The Wikipedia page "How to run an editathon" is a useful introduction describing the before, during, and after process, along with promotional suggestions ("Wikipedia:How to run an editathon," 2019). If you'd rather have a little more hand-holding and work directly with experienced hosts, we suggest reaching out and partnering with a non-profit organization, such as Afrocrowd (afrocrowd.org), Art+Feminism (artandfeminism.org), or 500 Women Scientists (500womenscientists.org).

IN THE CLASSROOM

University and college faculty are incorporating Wikipedia assignments into their syllabi. Assigning students to create and/or edit articles focuses on improving students' writing and research skills. Assignments are supported by Wiki Education (in the US and Canada) through the Wiki Education Dashboard ("Wiki Education Dashboard," n.d.). It's easy to find out if instructors at your college or university are using Wikipedia assignments in their classroom by visiting the "Explore" page in the Dashboard and entering your institution's name into the search box. If you live outside the US or Canada, we suggest reaching out to your regional user group (https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_user_groups) to ask how your class might be supported.

Librarians can support instructors by helping to identify possible article topics, hosting open labs for working on Wikipedia articles, and teaching one-shot sessions about research and citation within Wikipedia. Librarians can also teach undergraduate for-credit classes about Wikipedia, as one of the authors of this article did in the Spring of 2019 (Bridges, 2019).

If your library has a liaison program, teaching with Wikipedia is an ideal time to collaborate with faculty on their research assignments. Not only would the library build stronger departmental relationships, but it also serves as a chance to create disciplinary learning outcomes and demonstrate interdisciplinary instructional design.

ONE SHOTS

"One-shot" classroom sessions are a common, if not the most common, instruction method for academic librarians. These classes, usually lasting between 50-120 minutes, can be used for short Wikipedia "editing sprints" (Oliver, 2015). During sprints, students work toward several learning objectives: defining an information need with a manageable focus; evaluating information sources and identifying their values and differences; searching for relevant resources; finding information for a specific purpose; and using the appropriate documentation style to cite sources (Oliver, 2015, p 85). A librarian's lesson plan for a two-hour edit-sprint is detailed in Oliver's article "One-shot Wikipedia: An edit-sprint toward information literacy."

In addition to an edit-sprint, Wikipedia can be referenced and used to augment one-shot instruction sessions. For example, have students compare a Wikipedia article to a more traditional encyclopedia article owned by the library (Masunaga, 2015), assign a Wikipedia article for students to analyze and then find more information using the library's databases (Acosta, 2017); or view a Wikipedia article's "history" and "talk" pages to describe scholarly conversations and disagreement.

INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT WORKSHOPS

Workshops can introduce faculty, students, and the general public to writing for Wikipedia (Fenoll, Cummings, Tramullas, & Hinojo, 2016). They can be led by a librarian or a local Wikimedian. Recent examples include workshops held at Maimónides University in Argentina; titled WikiFridays, this short series of workshops was held over a four-week period to promote media literacy and written expression skills for students studying Communication Studies, Digital Art, and Systems Architectures (Alamo, 2019). In the Basque Country, Spain, Wikimedians, librarians, and faculty joined together to host workshops for university students to enhance Basque articles chosen by instructors (Iñaki LL, 2017). Carroll University Library hosted its first

convocation workshop about racial bias in Wikipedia during Black History Month (Dowell, 2019).

Useful exercises and agendas can be found on "Wikipedia:Workshops" (2018).

Workshops allow librarians to introduce the pedagogy of Wikipedia by providing hands- on experience to demystify and destigmatize the encyclopedia with faculty. Additionally, the library has an opportunity to outline learning outcomes that intersect with strategic goals and the ACRL Framework and partner with the campus for teaching and learning.

WIKIPEDIA CLUB

Wikipedia clubs are a way for Wikipedians to share their common interest and build community ("Wikipedian Student Organizations," n.d.). When students engage in extracurricular activities, such as clubs, it has been shown to increase a student's sense of belonging, and ultimately retention (Rempel, McElroy, & Bridges).

Librarians can support Wikipedia clubs in several ways: partnering with student affairs to create a Wikipedia club, providing space for the group to meet, acting as a faculty advisor to the club, and/or providing recurring instruction to the group. The University of Valladolid in Spain has hosted a Wikipedia Club for several years at the Reina Sofia library (Ojeda, 2017). Several other active Wikipedia clubs, not directly supported by the library, include the Wikipedia Club at National Taiwan University (Liang-chi ShangKuan, FireFeather, Koala0090 & KOKUYO, 2017); the Digital Arabic Content Club at Hashemite University in Jordan, which brings together students and faculty to add content in Arabic with a focus on translation (Banat & Elsharbaty, 2018); and the Wiki Club at University of Sri Jayewardenepura in Sri Lanka, which recently kicked off its Wiki Club in May of 2018 with a ceremony that included the Vice Chancellor, department heads, and numerous professors (Galib Hasan, 2018).

WIKIPEDIAN IN RESIDENCE

Wikipedians in Residence (WiR) serve as liaisons between the encyclopedia and the institution in which they are working ("Wikipedian in Residence," n.d.). While in residence, they work to promote a positive relationship between the two organizations, facilitate improvement of content, and coordinate events. The first WiR was at the British Museum in 2010; the residency lasted for five weeks. Since then, nearly 200 WiRs have served in galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM) in the past ten years. WiR's can last for a short or long period of time (several weeks to several years), be temporary or permanent, paid or unpaid.

The University of Toronto Libraries recently announced its first WiR as an effort to bring more attention to primary sources in its libraries and archives by adding content and citations, and provide training sessions to others interested in becoming involved with editing or contributing resources to Wikipedia. In 2017 the National Library of Wales transitioned its WiR, Jason Evans, into a permanent position, "…tasked with developing collaborations, programming, and services that advance the representation of Wales and the Welsh language on Wikimedia projects" (Stinson, 2017).

INTERNS

Interns differ from Wikipedians in Residence in that they are not involved in creating collaborations between a library's staff and the larger Wikipedia community; in addition, they are usually inexperienced Wikipedia contributors ("Wikipedia:The Wikipedia Library/Professional Interns," 2019). An internship provides students with an introduction to Wikipedia, improved research skills, and an overview of librarianship best practices. In the online "self-guided curriculum for student and professional editors" published by The Wikipedia Library, there are learning goals, institutional motivations, intern activities, and educational outcomes.

In 2019, Oregon State University used grant funding to employ its first Wikipedia intern, officially titled, "Wikipedia Student Scholar." The 4-month internship had three outcomes: "(1)

Improve Wikipedia's coverage and accuracy with the intention of creating a more informed citizenry; (2) Increase information and knowledge equity by filling information gaps in Wikipedia; and (3) Develop (student) research, writing, and information literacy skills," (Bridges & Caleen, 2019). The student chose to translate articles about women artists from Spanish Wikipedia into English Wikipedia.

#1lib1ref

Although previous examples have focused on educating students and faculty, we also want to highlight a notable effort to educate librarians about Wikipedia. In 2016, to celebrate its 15th anniversary, Wikipedia asked librarians to contribute during the #1lib1ref campaign. The goal of the campaign was to encourage librarians to contribute to Wikipedia by adding missing citations. This campaign was promoted through Twitter, Facebook, and Wikipedia editorial comments with the hashtag #1lib1ref (#1bib1ref in Spanish). When starting a new initiative in a library, it is helpful to have allies and partners in teaching. The #1lib1ref campaign creates an open environment where librarians can learn from each other before developing lesson plans or entering the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Our previous column discussed the cultural importance of Wikipedia and the ways in which the ACRL Framework and Wikipedia are natural partners. The above methods of incorporating Wikipedia into your teaching and learning can serve as a starting point for more interdisciplinary collaboration between librarians and instructors, encouraging creativity in instructional design. As with any new initiative or change in teaching, there will be bumps and learning curves. It is helpful to lean on something familiar, like the ACRL Framework, when developing lesson plans and outlines. Use the resources listed throughout this article and reach out to other librarians working in this area. We look forward to seeing the new ways librarians and students are interacting with and

contributing to Wikipedia.

Useful Resources

Wikimedia + Libraries, Public Facebook Group, (facebook.com/groups/WikiLibrary)
Wikimedia Education Newsletter, (outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education/News/Newsroom)
Wikimedia and Libraries Listserv, (https://lists.wikimedia.org/mailman/listinfo/libraries)

Alamo, S. B. (2019). Learning and sharing knowledge with Wikipedia, Wikicommons and

    Wikidata projects. Retrieved July 31, 2019, from Wikimedia + Education Conference,

    2019 website: https://tinyurl.com/y4mkfbn6

Acosta, E. (2017). The Gender Gap in Wikipedia. Retrieved July 31, 2019, from

    https://www.projectcora.org/assignment/gender-gap-wikipedia

Association of College and Research Libraries. (2015, February 9). Framework for Information

    Literacy for Higher Education. Association of College and Research Libraries. Retrieved

    from http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework

Banat, M., & Elsharbaty, S. (2018, August). 54 students help enrich the digital Arabic content.

    Education News Wikimedia Outreach. Retrieved from

    https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education/News/August_2018/54_students_help_enr

    ich_the_digital_Arabic_content

Bridges, L. (2019). Syllabus. Retrieved July 31, 2019, from Google Docs website:

    https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jxi9TFrym0_x1dTi_-

    sw1qSlU85y6wZY/view?usp=sharing

Bridges, L., & Caleen, S. (2019). Wikipedia Student Scholar. *This Month in Education*, 8(8).

    Retrieved from

    https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education/News/April_2019/Wikipedia_Student_Schol

    ar

Dowell, M. (2019). Wikipedia. *PioGuides*. Carroll University Library. Retrieved July 31, 2019,

    from https://pioguides.carrollu.edu/wikipedia/edit.

Dowell, M. L., & Bridges, L. M. (2019). A Perspective on Wikipedia: Your Students Are Here,

    Why Aren't You? *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *45*(2), 81–83.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2019.01.003

Fenoll, Ca., Cummings, J., Tramullas, J., & Hinojo, À. (2016). *Opportunities for Public

    Libraries and Wikipedia* (p. 9).

Galib Hasan, M. (2018, May). Inauguration Ceremony of Sri Jayewardenepura University Wiki

    Club. *Wikimedia Outeach Education News*. Retrieved from

    https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education/News/May_2018/Inauguration_Ceremony

    _of_Sri_Jayewardenepura_University_Wiki_Club

Iñaki LL. (2017, February). An auspicious beginning at university. *Wikimedia Outreach

    Education News*. Retrieved from

    https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education/Newsletter/February_2017/An_auspicious

    _beginning_at_university

Liang-chi ShangKuan, FireFeather, Koala0090, & KOKUYO. (2017). Time is youth. *This Month

in Education, *6*(2). Retrieved from
https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education/Newsletter/March_2017/Overview_on_Wikipedia_Education_Program_2016_in_Taiwan

Masunaga, J. (2015). Wikipedia vs. Encyclopedia. Retrieved July 31, 2019, from
https://www.projectcora.org/assignment/wikipedia-vs-encyclopedia

OSU History Month Dashboard. (n.d.). Retrieved July 31, 2019, from
Wikimedia Outreach website:
https://outreachdashboard.wmflabs.org/courses/AfroCROWD,_Oregon_State_University,_Wikimedia_Nigeria/Oregon_State_Univ_Black_History_Month_Wikipedia_Editathon_with_AfroCROWD_(February_8,_2019)

Ojeda, R. (2017). Spain Report: Wikipedia Club. *This Month in Glam*, *7*(12). Retrieved from
https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/GLAM/Newsletter/December_2017/Contents/Spain_report

Oliver, J. T. (2015). One-shot Wikipedia: An edit-sprint toward information literacy. *Reference Services Review*. https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-10-2014-0043

Programs & Events Dashboard. (n.d.). Retrieved July 31, 2019, from Wiki Education website:
https://outreachdashboard.wmflabs.org/explore

Rempel, H. G., McElroy, K., & Bridges, L. M. (2017). *Understanding How Students Develop: A Practical Guide for Librarians*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Stinson, A. (2017, September 26). Becoming a National Wikimedian: Jason Evans and the National Library of Wales. Retrieved July 23, 2019, from Wikimedia Blog website:
https://blog.wikimedia.org/2017/09/26/national-wikimedian-jason-evans/

Wiki Education Dashboard. (n.d.). Retrieved July 31, 2019, from Wiki Edu website:
https://dashboard.wikiedu.org/

Wikipedia:How to run an editathon. (2019). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from
https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:How_to_run_an_editathon&oldid=904242627

Wikipedia:Systemic bias. (2019). In Wikipedia. Retrieved from
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Systemic_bias

Wikipedia:The Wikipedia Library/Professional Interns. (2019). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from
https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:The_Wikipedia_Library/Professional_Interns&oldid=908554968

Wikipedia:Workshop. (2018). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from
https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Workshop&oldid=820895928

Wikipedian in Residence. (n.d.). Retrieved July 23, 2019, from Wikimedia Outreach website:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedian_in_residence

Wikipedian Student Organizations. (n.d.). Retrieved July 31, 2019, from Wikimedia Outreach website: https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikipedian_Student_Organizations