WIKIMEDIA UK

Wikimedia in Education

Wikimedia UK in partnership with the University of Edinburgh

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Introduction

This booklet has been produced by Wikimedia UK and the University of Edinburgh, bringing together a collection of case studies from across the UK in order to provide insight into the use of the Wikimedia projects in education.

It is our belief that the Wikimedia projects are a valuable tool for education, and that engagement with those projects is an activity which enriches the student experience as much as it does the open web itself. Educators worldwide are using Wikimedia in the curriculum – teaching students key skills in information literacy, collaboration, writing as public outreach, information synthesis, source evaluation and data science. Engaging with projects like Wikipedia – particularly through becoming a contributor – enables learners to understand, navigate and critically evaluate information as well as develop an appreciation for the role and importance of open education. Once published, material produced by students becomes immediately accessible by a global audience, giving students the satisfaction of knowing that their work can be seen by many more people than just their tutor.

As individuals working in the open web in the twenty-first century it is incumbent upon us to embrace innovative learning, embedding into our practice those tools which equip our students to work collaboratively, be skilled digitally, and think critically.

Of our 21 examples, 18 pertain to higher education, one from further education and two from secondary. This resource has been designed for anyone involved in education, and will be of particular interest to teachers, lecturers and learning technologists involved in open pedagogy and course design, or who have an interest in library skills, innovative learning, working on the open web, co-creation, collaborative working, or digital skills.

Feedback from both students and course leaders, at the University of Edinburgh and beyond, has consistently highlighted:

- Student-led creation of academic quality content, available to be shared and used by wide audiences.
- Students and course leaders having the opportunity to examine their subject area reflectively through a global, publicly engaged perspective.
- Students having the opportunity to learn and practise beginner-level coding skills and increase their digital competencies.

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Margaret of Scotland (1469) by Hugo van der Goes. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.

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The University of Edinburgh

The University of Edinburgh was the first university in the UK to employ a university-wide Wikimedian in Residence.

The Wikimedian works with course teams and students across the university to facilitate engagement with the Wikimedia projects as part of the University's strategy to develop information and digital literacy skills.

The Raeburn Room, Old College, Edinburgh – CC-BY-SA by Mihaela Bodlovic via Wikimedia Commons.

At the University, courses at undergraduate and masters level are incorporating Wikimedia editing activities in many different parts of the curriculum. Many of the editing events have had a focus on addressing the underrepresentation, and improving the visibility, of women online, delivering on the University's commitment to equality, diversity, and the sharing of open knowledge.

Wikipedia's sister project, Wikidata, offers students the chance to engage with issues of data completeness, data processing, data analysis and data ethics. Importantly, students are also working practically with real world datasets and make use of a large range of tools and data visualisation techniques to tell engaging stories and help further discovery and areas for future research through linked open data and the semantic web. The skills gained through engagement with Wikidata are transferable to many disciplines from the sciences to digital humanities to cultural heritage.

Edinburgh Gothic editathon, CC-BY-SA by Mihaela Bodlovic via Wikimedia Commons.

"We will enrich Wikipedia content with our research collections and expand the range of knowledge covered. We will contribute not only our research to Wikipedia, but do research with and about Wikipedia. We will use the data sets being shared and study how the work of knowledge sharing and gathering is conducted."

Dr. Melissa Highton,
Assistant Principal Online Learning,
University of Edinburgh

In the first eight years we delivered:

- 364 Wikimedia training sessions
- 155 Wikipedia editathons/editing events
- 2,188 students, 667 staff and 739 members of the public trained up
- over 2,000 Wikipedia articles have been created and over 14,000 improved

For academic colleagues, having a Wikimedia expert present has facilitated a growing understanding among staff and students of how information is created, contested and disseminated online. The role has provided new insight into how Wikipedia articles are constructed and Wikipedia's editorial processes, with evidence of a growing awareness among academics of the opportunities for teaching and learning that Wikipedia can provide.

"By learning how to contribute articles to Wikipedia, students and staff become better able to evaluate how knowledge is constructed, curated and contested online. Alongside this, editing Wikipedia gives room for valuable development for students' research and communication skills, enabling them to make genuine contributions to knowledge."

Ewan McAndrew,
Wikimedian in Residence,
University of Edinburgh

Black History Month editathon, CC-BY-SA by Stinglehammer, via Wikimedia Commons.

Samhuinn Festival Wikipedia editathon, CC-BY-SA by Mihaela Bodlovic via Wikimedia Commons.

Wikimedia UK

Wikimedia UK is the national charity for the global Wikimedia open knowledge movement.

We are committed to the ideal of a world in which every single human being can freely share in the sum of all knowledge, and believe that here in the UK, we can play a unique and important role in realising that global vision.

Wikimedia UK's strategy is informed by and supports the strategic direction of the global Wikimedia movement. Our work therefore focuses on knowledge and communities that have been left out by structures of power and privilege. We break down the barriers that prevent people and organisations from accessing and contributing to open knowledge, and support the development of people-centred and technical solutions to help eradicate inequality and bias on the Wikimedia projects.

"Our work with the University of Edinburgh has been a flagship partnership for us, and has significantly deepened our understanding of how the Wikimedia projects can support the development of digital literacies alongside a wide range of other skills, whilst also helping to ensure that every single human being can freely share in the sum of all knowledge."

Lucy Crompton-Reid,
Chief Executive, Wikimedia UK

Wikimedia UK Strategy 2022-25 We are working towards the following long term outcomes:

1. Wikimedia reflects our diverse society and works to overcome systemic bias.
2. Our work has increased free, ethical access to knowledge and information.
3. Our work has supported the development of high levels of information literacy.
4. Wikimedia users are able to understand the climate crisis and their role within it.
5. Wikimedia UK is recognised as a leading organisation for open knowledge.

In working towards these long term outcomes, in the period 2022 - 2025 we will continue to work on our key strategic themes of Knowledge Equity and Information Literacy. We will also explore and develop activities around our emerging theme of Climate and Environment.

Our delivery model is based on the cross-cutting strategic priorities of partnerships, community and technology, which are an essential element of all our activities.

We work in partnership with the education sector to improve the digital literacy skills of both staff and students, with a particular focus on information and data literacy. Through our projects and programmes, students can develop their writing, research, evaluation and critical thinking skills whilst contributing to open knowledge that reaches millions of people.

Wikimedia and Skills Development

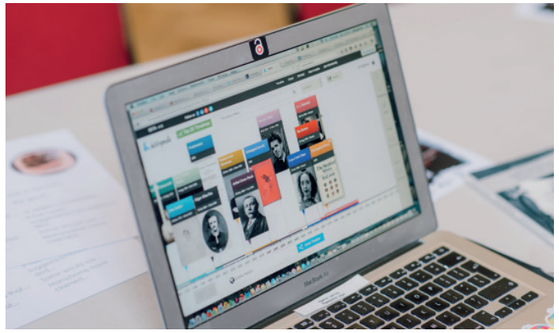
Wikimedia projects of particular interest to teachers include: Wikipedia, Wikidata, Wikimedia Commons, and Wikibooks.

Wikimedia UK has produced a report mapping engagement with the projects to existing digital skills frameworks in the UK, which can be read on Wikimedia UK's website: **https://wikimedia.org.uk/wiki/Education**

The skills which can be enhanced through engagement with the Wikimedia projects include:

Wikipedia the online encyclopedia

- Computer and internet literacy, from opening an account to searching and critically evaluating information online.
- Creating, preparing (digitising, editing, converting), uploading, categorising, translating information and digital content.
- Collaboration, communication and consensus building in an online environment.
- Understanding reliable, verifiable sources, licences, consents, and copyright.
- Encyclopedic writing in the public domain, using citation softwares and referencing.



Edinburgh Gothic - Gothic authors Histropedia timeline, CC-BY-SA by Mihaela Bodlovic via Wikimedia Commons.

Wikidata an open database and central storage for structured data

- Understanding data concepts, data types, data functions and data characteristics.
- Importing, exporting, linking, reusing, and combining datasets.
- Understanding of Creative Commons database rights.
- Engaging with the development of data models, exploring and visualising your data.
- Collaborative data management.

Wikimedia Commons a host of media files and their metadata

- Understanding of free digital file types and formats.
- Understanding organisation of information and discoverability.
- Understanding the educational value of different types of content.
- Content reuse skills, including editing and improving images.

Wikibooks a collaborative, instructional non-fiction book authoring website

- Writing in Wikitext or in a combination of Wikitext, HTML, and CSS.
- Content creation, collaborative editing, translation.
- Editing (e.g. spelling, grammar and formatting).
- Understanding licensing (GFDL and Creative Commons).

Case Study 1

Course Leaders

Dr. Hephzibah Israel,
Dr. Charlotte Bosseaux and
Dr. Şebnem Susam-Saraeva,
Senior Lecturers in Translation Studies

Additional support

Ewan McAndrew
University of Edinburgh's Wikimedian in Residence

Class size

35-55 students

Course duration

1 academic term, delivered in both the Autumn and Spring terms. Ongoing since 2016/2017.

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Translation skills
- Knowledge equity
- Critical thinking
- Information literacy
- Digital literacy

Translation Studies MSc

University of Edinburgh

A Wikipedia translation assignment was integrated into the Independent Study component of the MSc in Translation Studies, with students translating 2,000-2,500 words from a quality Wikipedia article and publishing to a different language Wikipedia in a wide variety of languages (Arabic, Chinese, Danish, English, French, German, Japanese, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish, and Turkish).

Assignment

Students peer assess the translation of one 2,000-2,500 word article into another language Wikipedia.

Translation Studies MSc students and course leaders, CC-BY-SA by Mengqi Yuan.

Impact

- 20-50 new articles created in different language Wikipedias each semester.
- Case study published about the assignment in New case studies of openness in and beyond the language classroom. Permalink: **https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2019.37.9782490057511**
- Video interviews with students: **https://media.ed.ac.uk/tag/tagid/content%20translation**

Supporting resources

- The Content Translation tool: **https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Content_translation**
- The Gapfinder tool for identifying missing articles in different lanaguage Wikipedias: **https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/GapFinder**

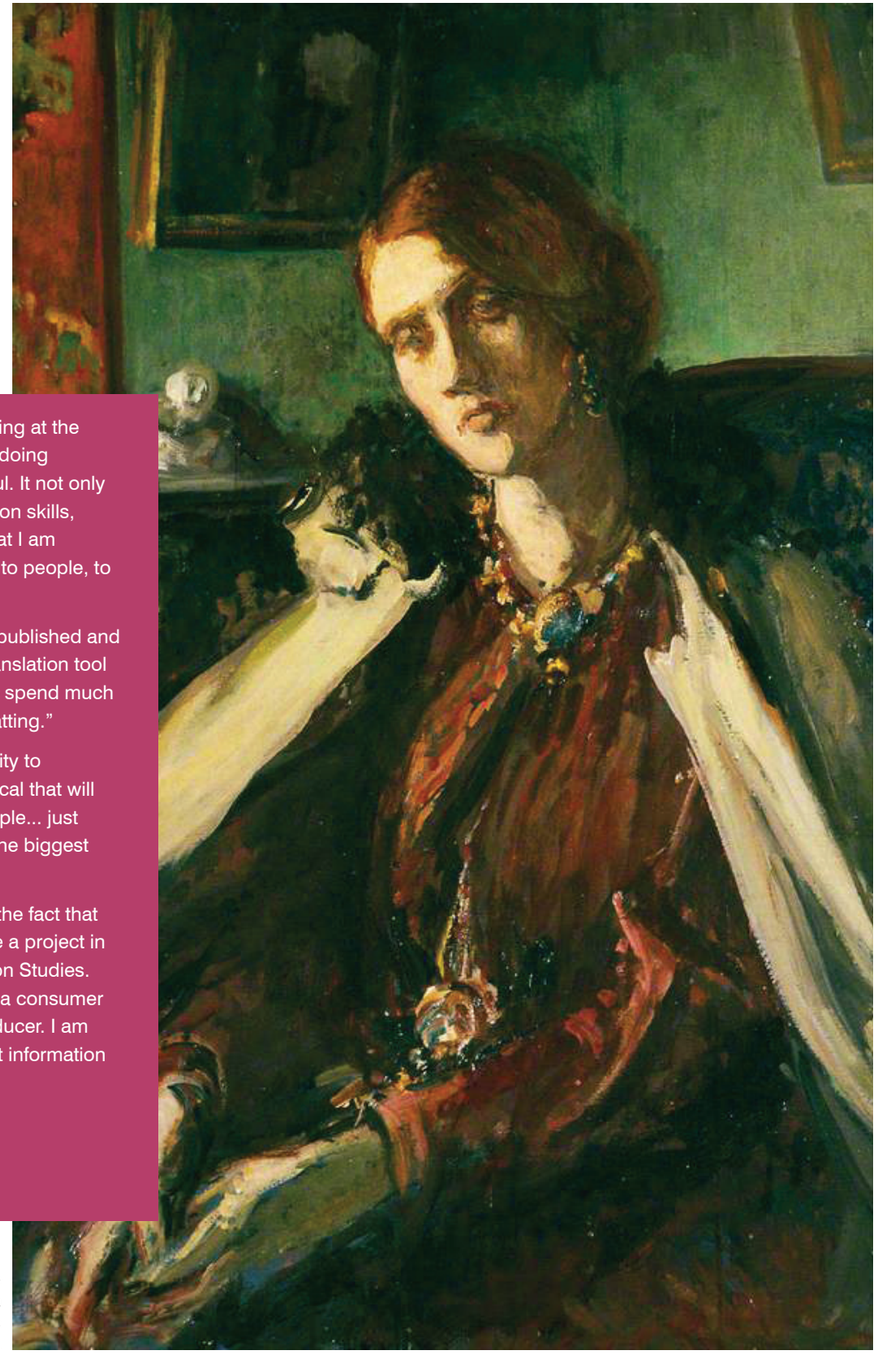
"It is very fun but challenging at the same time. I feel like I am doing something very meaningful. It not only helps me with my translation skills, but also makes me feel that I am contributing to Wikipedia; to people, to society."

"It is nice to see my work published and online, and the content translation tool meant that I didn't have to spend much time worrying about formatting."

"To be given the opportunity to translate something practical that will end up being read by people... just that motivation itself was the biggest positive."

"I was very excited about the fact that Wikipedia was going to be a project in our workshop in Translation Studies. For the first time, I am not a consumer of information, I am a producer. I am contributing to the present information out there."

Student feedback, Translation Studies MSc



Julia Stephen by Jacques-Emile Blanche. Public domain via Wikimedia Commons – one of the articles translated from English to German.

Case Study 2

Course Leaders

Dr David Murray-Rust, Lecturer in Design Informatics

Assistant Professor Benjamin Bach, Lecturer in Design Informatics and Visualisation.

Additional support

Ewan McAndrew
University of Edinburgh's Wikimedian in Residence

Class size

40-50 Masters students

Course duration

1 academic term in Autumn/ Winter. Ongoing since 2017/2018

Learning outcomes

- Data analysis
- Communication skills
- Working professionally
- Data literacy
- Applying learning to real world contexts
- Source evaluation

Design Informatics MA Scottish Witchcraft Data Project

University of Edinburgh

Design Informatics students on the Data Science for Design course were given the opportunity during the annual Data Fair project to work with the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft database. They imported data on Scotland's accused witches and witch trials from this resource to Wikipedia's sister project, Wikidata, as 5-star linked open data to give a real-world practical example of analysing, manipulating, contextualising and visualising data in engaging ways.

Assignment

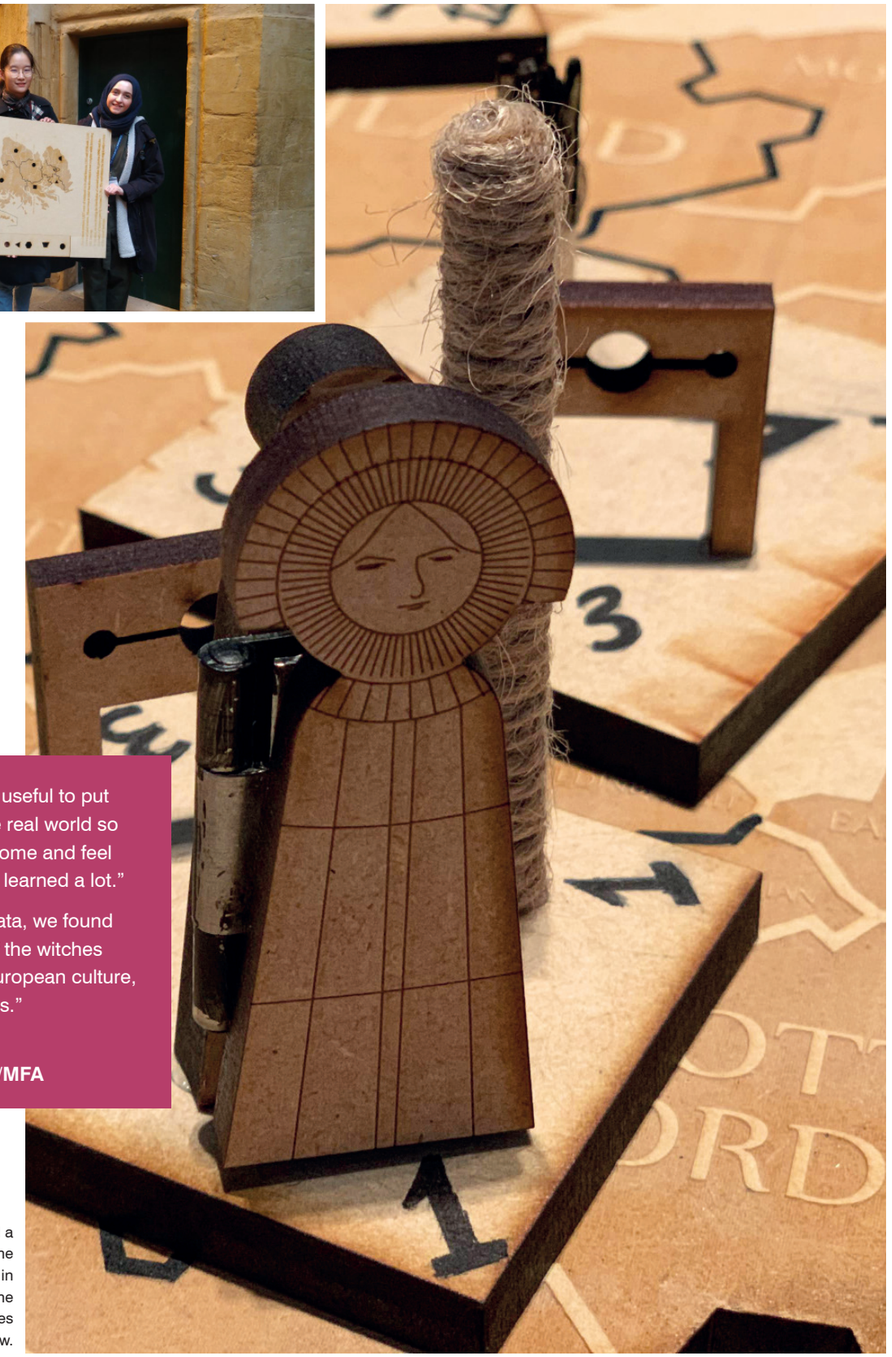
100% coursework; two individual reports (1,000 words each, 30% each), a group report (2,000 words, 30%) and an ongoing professional collaboration component (10%) which was assessed through contributions to code and data repositories, and online group discussion.

Impact

- 3,219 unique items of linked open data for each accused witch in Scotland (spanning 1563 to 1736) created in Wikidata and items of data for each of the 2,356. individuals involved in trying these accused witches.
- Items of linked open data for the 3,210 witch trials.
- An A1-sized wooden map of accused witches in Scotland was laser cut by students using interactive pieces to illustrate the gender distribution of accused witches and the methods of torture employed in different regions of Scotland during the period.

Supporting resources

- Open source data reconciliation software, OpenRefine. **openrefine.org**
- Wikidata experts around the United Kingdom: including Dr. Martin Poulter, Simon Cobb and Histropedia's Navino Evans.
- The Project Directors of the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft database, Professor Julian Goodare and Dr. Louise Yeoman.



"In my opinion, it's quite useful to put learning practice into the real world so that we can see the outcome and feel proud of ourselves… we learned a lot."

"After we analysed the data, we found we learned the stories of the witches and we learned about European culture, especially the witch hunts."

Student feedback, Design Informatics MA/MFA

Design Informatics students created a laser-cut wooden map visualising the gender of all the accused witches in Scotland and showed it at the Suffer the Witch symposium at the Patrick Geddes centre, CC-BY-SA by Ewan McAndrew.

Case Study 3

World Christianity MSc

University of Edinburgh

Students each selected a topic to critically analyse, and synthesised peer-reviewed literature to create new articles on Wikipedia in the field of World Christianity Studies. The assignment provided an opportunity for the students' research to have a published output and increased the breadth and diversity of content online.

Course Leader

Dr. Alexander Chow, Senior Lecturer in Theology and World Christianity

Additional support

Ewan McAndrew
University of Edinburgh's Wikimedian in Residence

Class size

7 students (2016)
8 students (2017)

Course duration

2 academic terms (2016/2017 and 2017/2018). No longer ongoing but a Wikipedia component is planned by Dr. Chow for a different course.

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Information literacy
- Digital literacy
- Critical thinking
- Research skills
- Collaborative working

Assignment

The production of a 1,000 word Wikipedia article, which accounted for 10% of this module's grade, and a class presentation of their article.

Impact

- Seven new articles created in 2016 and eight in 2017.
- One of the students has continued to write Wikipedia articles in English and Chinese and was recently quoted in Wired magazine: **www.wired.co.uk/article/hong-kong-protests-wikipedia**
- Blog article by student Lucy Schouten at **www.cswc.div.ed.ac.uk/world-christianity-wikipedia/**
- Dr. Alex Chow has also generously given his advice and experience to other course leaders considering Wikipedia assignments; namely, Dr. Glaire Anderson, Lecturer in Islamic Art at the University of Edinburgh.

Dr. Alexander Chow, Senior Lecturer in Theology and World Christianity, CC-BY-SA by Stinglehammer.

"The idea of using Wikipedia as an assignment became very intriguing because it would produce an end product which would have a life beyond the class. Secondly the type of scrutiny and editorial work that is done throughout the world on that particular article really challenges students to think academically. I saw these benefits not only in terms of the research being taught, but also in the possibility for the students to have something that lasts beyond the class."

Dr. Alexander Chow,
Senior Lecturer in Theology and World Christianity

"When you hand in an essay, the only people that generally read it are you and your lecturer. No one [else] really benefits from it. With a Wikipedia assignment, other people contribute to it, you put it out there for everyone to read. It becomes more of a community project that everyone can read and access. I really enjoyed [using] it."

"It demystified creation of online resources especially in this context, Wikipedia. I believe we had all the help and resources necessary for a successful article. Thank you for this wonderful exposure, enabling in us the 'I can' spirit."

Student feedback,
World Christianity MSc

Women in Religion editathon, CC-BY-SA by Dr. Alexander Chow via Wikimedia Commons.

Case Study 4

Theology and Religious Studies MA, Modern Judaism: Aspects of Life and Culture

University of Glasgow

Course Leader
Dr. Mia Spiro, Lecturer in Jewish Studies (Theology & Religious Studies)

Class size
12-18 students

Course duration
2 academic terms (full year)

Learning Outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Collaborative working
- Digital literacy
- Research skills
- Applying learning to real world contexts

Building and expanding Wikipedia information on Jewish Scottish heritage. In small groups, students used archive material held at the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre to expand and develop two Wikipedia pages on key sites and figures related to Scottish Jewish heritage: the Garnethill synagogue in Glasgow and Scottish Jewish artist, Hannah Frank.

Assignment

Assessment included two separate elements (20% of final grade: Group assessment (10%). This was an overall assessment of the quality of the Wikipedia entry itself and the group's presentation of the project to the class.

Peer assessment and self reflection (10%). This included a section to reflect on how students worked as a group and a 4-page self-reflection outlining what students learned and how they participated.

Dr. Mia Spiro, CC-BY-SA via Mia Spiro.

Impact

- The Wikipedia pages the students worked on were expanded from stubs to full articles using research, photos, and links.
- The final evaluations showed that enabling students to become part of the knowledge-sharing community of Wikipedia was a highly successful and meaningful form of assessment.
- These pages continue to benefit the community, and are used, amended, and accessed by people looking for information on Jewish Scotland.

Supporting resources

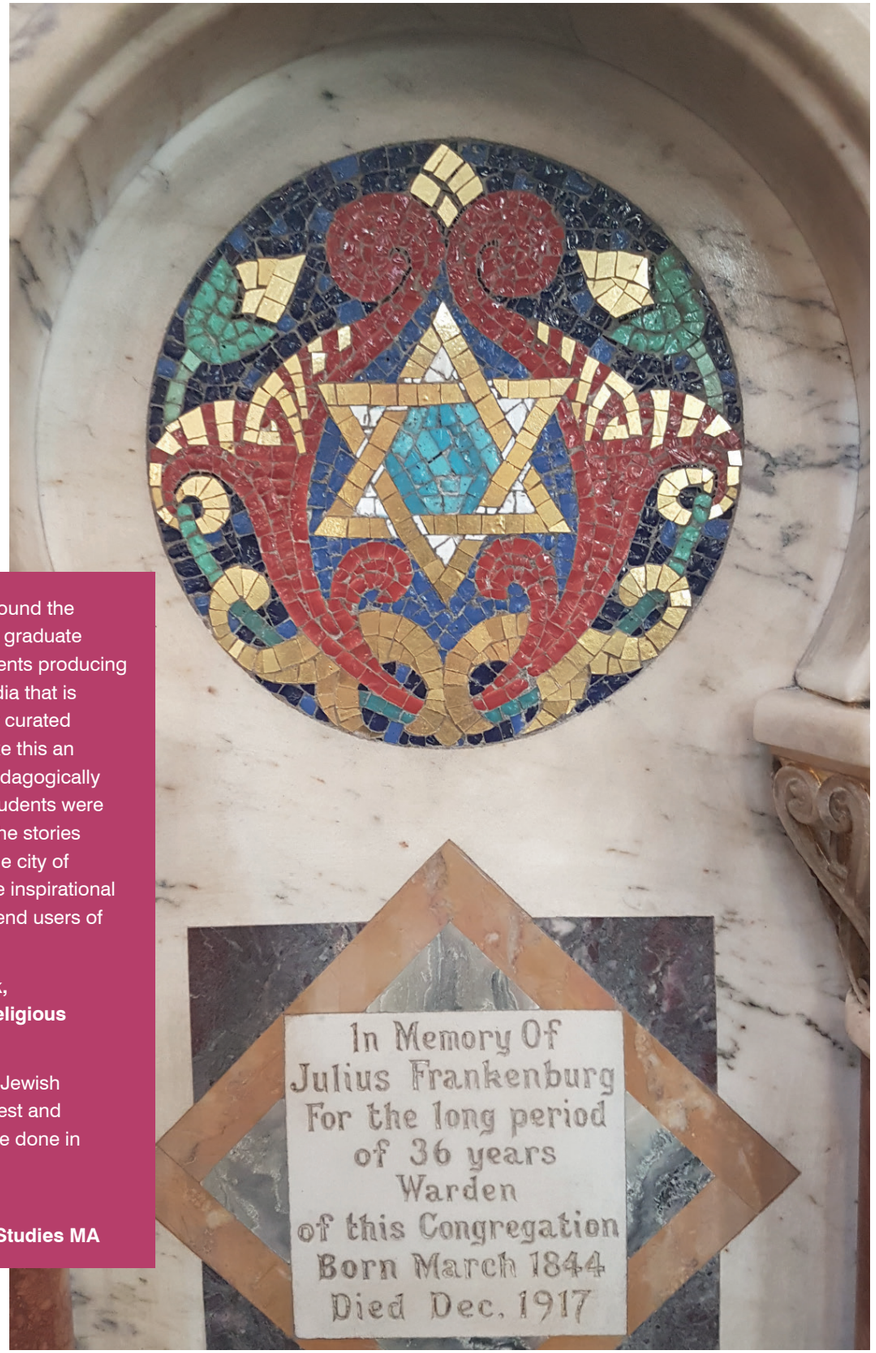
- Archival material from the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre.
- Training and help resources provided on Wikipedia.
- Peer assessment feedback sheets and group presentation rubric.

"With all the discussion around the importance of transferable graduate attributes, the idea of students producing an assessment on Wikipedia that is culturally relevant, digitally curated and publicly available make this an eminently practical and pedagogically rich exercise. Moreover, students were able to explore and relay the stories of historical figures from the city of Glasgow whose stories are inspirational for both students and the end users of the Wikipedia entries."

Professor Scott Spurlock, Head of Theology and Religious Studies

"The Wikipedia project on Jewish Scotland was one of the best and most relevant exercises I've done in university."

Student feedback, Theology and Religious Studies MA



Garnethill Synagogue by Stinglehammer. CC-BY-SA via Wikimedia Commons.

Case Study 5

Stars, Robots and Talismans: Science, Magic and Medieval Islamic Visual Culture (Honours, History of Art)

University of Edinburgh

Building and expanding Wikipedia information on medieval Islamic contributions to history of science, technology and the occult. In small groups, students used knowledge gained in the course, as well as images of scientific instruments and manuscripts from the landmark Wikimedia UK-Khalili Collections partnership, to expand and develop a pre-selected list of Wikipedia articles keyed to the course topics.

Course Leader

Dr. Glaire Anderson, Senior Lecturer in Islamic Art and founding leader, Digital Lab for Islamic Visual Culture & Collections.

Additional support

Ewan McAndrew
University of Edinburgh's Wikimedian in Residence.

Two other course leaders generously shared their advice and experience: Dr. Alex Chow (University of Edinburgh) and Dr. Sasha Livintseva (QMUL).

Course duration

1 academic term in Autumn 2020

Class size

15 students

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Information literacy
- Co-operative working
- Digital literacy
- Research skills
- Copyright literacy
- Applying learning to real world contexts
- Knowledge equity

Assignment

Formative assessment – a collaborative project and presentation feeding forward to the summative assessments (an essay and exam). Students worked in small groups, tasked to write a new Wikipedia article, or to assess an existing Wikipedia article from a pre-determined list, and then research, write, and improve it. In a 5-minute class presentation the group explained how they improved the article, and what they collectively learned from the process.

Supporting resources

The image component of the assignment gave the students experience of Wikimedia Commons and the Khalili Collection images of Islamic art shared openly there and introduced them to issues of image copyright, which is key for art historians.

Impact

Collectively, the students contributed over 8,000 words and 85 references to 9 articles which have been viewed 1.27 million times to date. They also contributed images to articles that previously had privileged text and intellectual content exclusively.

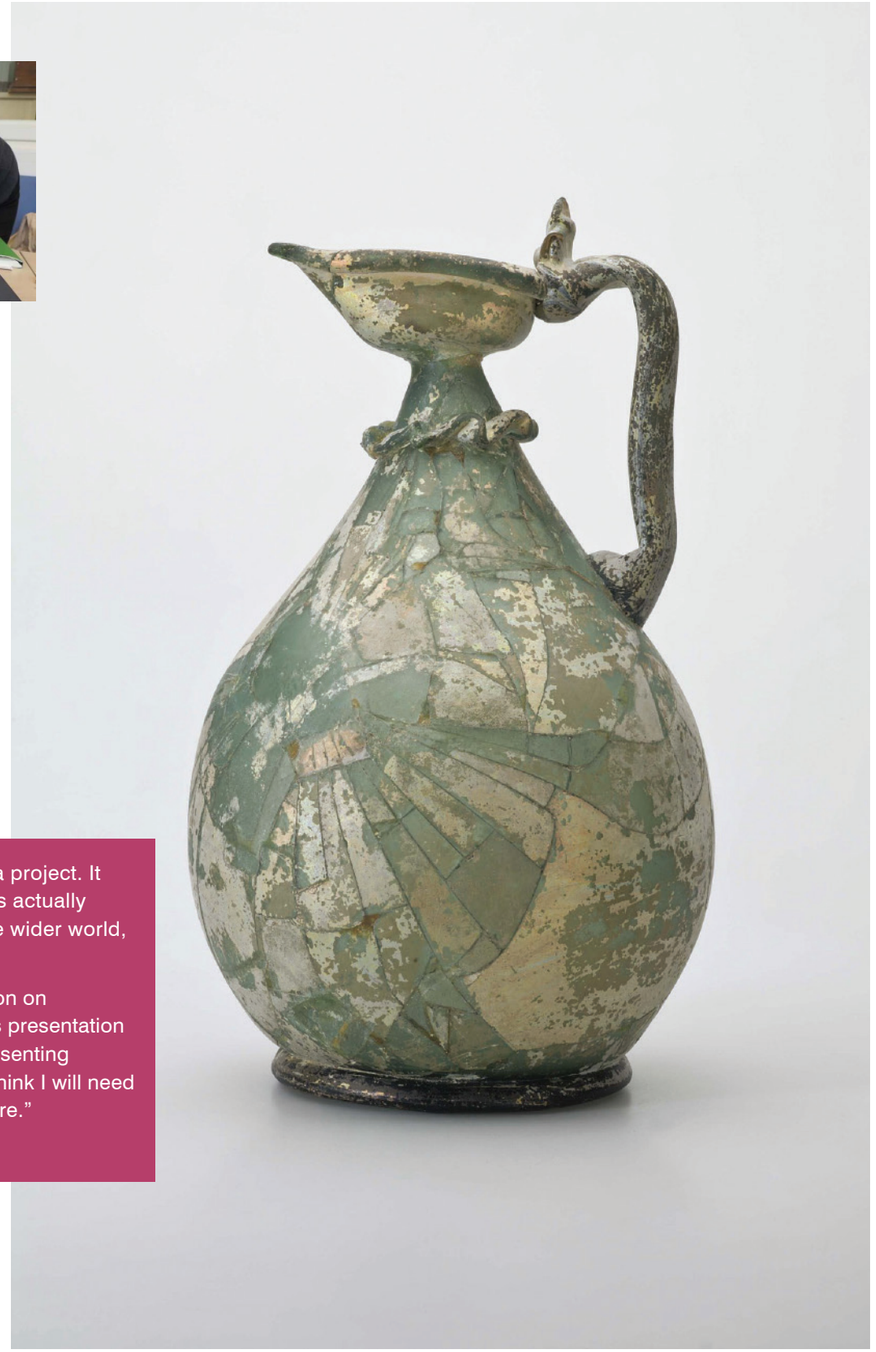
Mid-course feedback specifically mentioned the Wikipedia project as something that was going well in the course. They appreciated how the editing process had gotten them thinking about knowledge dissemination. Students contributed strong research and writing skills to a more interdisciplinary Wikipedia. They brought perspectives from art and architectural history and Fine Arts to the work of editing History of Science articles, creating fruitful intersections between science and art.

Dr. Glaire Anderson and the 11th century Cordoban astrolabe preserved in the National Museum of Scotland (photo: Tacye Phillipson, owner: Glaire Anderson, reproduced with permission)

"Really love the Wikipedia project. It feels like my knowledge is actually making a difference in the wider world, if in a small way."

"How to publish information on Wikipedia and the in-class presentation made feel confident in presenting virtually, which is a skill I think I will need more and more in the future."

Student feedback



Large Ewer, Iran or Egypt 9th–11th century AD, held by the Khalili Collection of Islamic Art. Khalili Collections / CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO via Wikimedia Commons.

Case Study 6

Course Leader
Dr. Charles West,
Reader in Medieval History

Dr. Sihong Lin, Lecturer in Early Medieval History

Additional support
Remote support from the Wikimedia UK team

Class size
9 - 22 student

Course duration
1 academic term (2017 to 2023)

Learning outcomes

- Collaborative working
- Writing for public outreach
- Information literacy
- Critical thinking
- Digital literacy
- Media literacy

History MA, Wikipedia and Medieval History

University of Sheffield

Students updated a Wikipedia article on a topic related to the medieval course content, then wrote a reflective essay on the process.

Assignment

The course was assessed through a 100% summative reflective essay of 1,500 words. Students were asked to think about how their editing experience had changed what they thought about Wikipedia, and its role in sharing historical knowledge worldwide. This has been expanded to 2,500 words for the next version of the course.

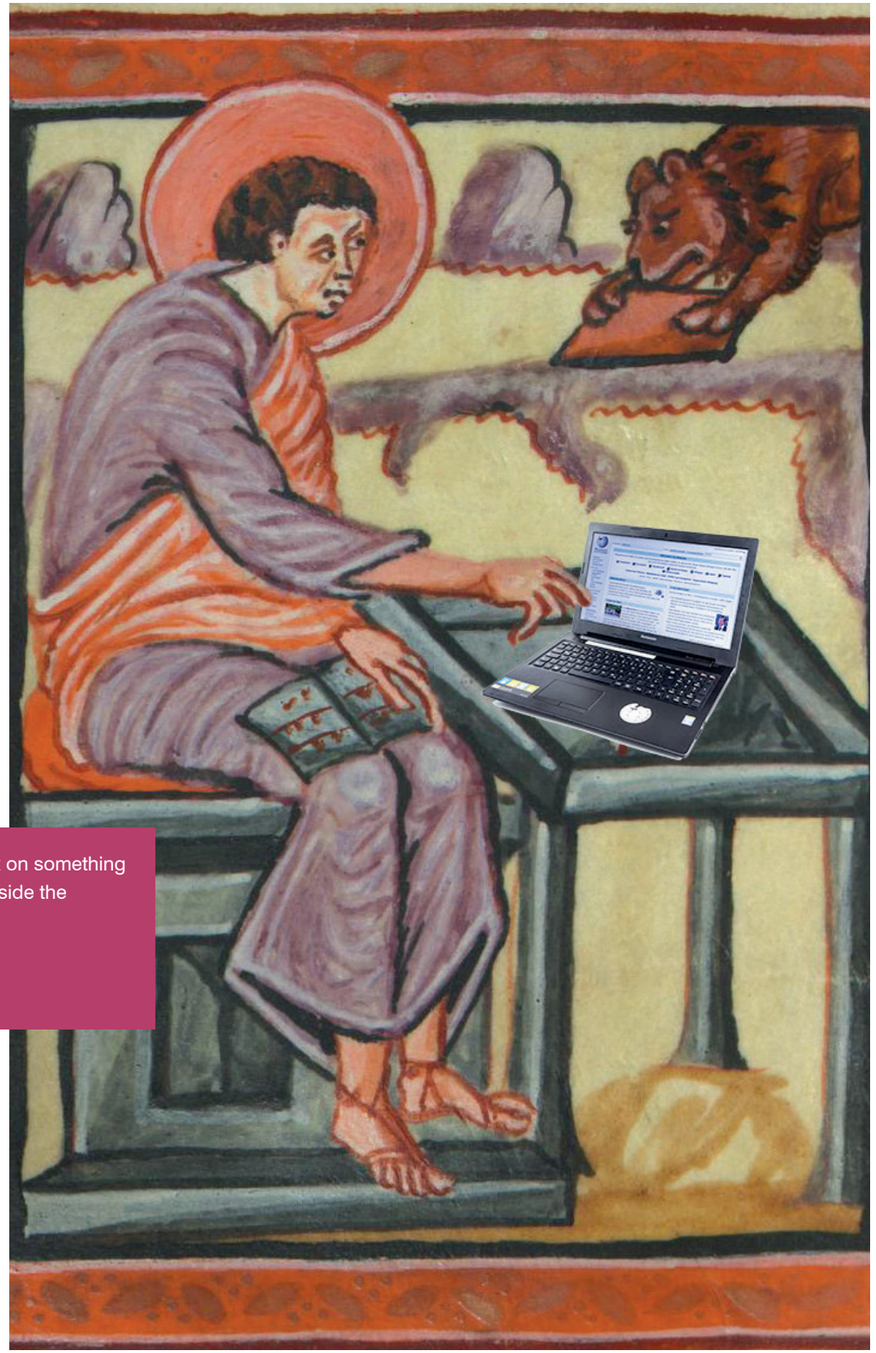
Dr. Charles West, CC-BY-SA via Charles West.

Impact

- Between 2017 and 2023, 45 students took this course, created 8 new articles, and edited 99 more. The edited pages have now been viewed more than 23 million times.
- Charles is now teaching a similar course for MSc students at the University of Edinburgh, Charles Martel in a Digital Age, while Sihong Lin, who taught this module in 2021-23, has integrated Wikipedia editing into a new undergraduate course at the University of Glasgow, The Mediterranean in the Age of Justinian.

> "Our students here at Sheffield do fantastic work, [so] I wanted to teach a course which allowed them to apply their expertise to improve a global resource – as well as to reflect on the implications of Wikipedia's ever growing influence for history and historians."
>
> **Dr. Charles West, Course Leader**

> "It was really good to work on something that made a difference outside the university."
>
> **Student feedback, History MA**



St Mark at his writing-desk (adapted from The Walters Museum, MS W.4, fol. 90v). CCO.

Case Study 7

Course Leaders

Professor Diana Paton, BA, PhD. William Robertson Professor of History; Caribbean history.

Lucy Parfitt, President of the University of Edinburgh History Society.

Additional support

Ewan McAndrew
University of Edinburgh's Wikimedian in Residence

Course duration

1.5 academic terms (2020/2021)

Class size

10 volunteer editors (Professor Diana Paton and 9 student volunteers).

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Critical thinking
- Collaborative working
- Online citizenship
- Research skills
- Digital literacy
- Applying learning to real world contexts
- Knowledge equity

Scotland, Slavery and Black History project

University of Edinburgh

An extracurricular project which drew together academic staff, the student History society, and volunteer undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Assignment

This was an unassessed extra-curricular project which took place online during the December 2020 to January 2021 Covid-19 lockdown in the United Kingdom.

Students were invited to reflect on their experiences in video interviews which were shared with local secondary schools who were embarking on similar projects examining Scotland's legacy in relation to slavery. Participants also came back to discuss the project in a staff & student panel discussion at the University of Edinburgh Learning and Teaching Conference in June 2021.

Impact

The controversial politician Henry Dundas was a focal point following media coverage of the back and forth discussions on his activity in relation to slavery and some significant changes were made to the Wikipedia article which now presents historical facts and a more nuanced understanding about his legacy in this regard.

In addition, new articles were created which provided a more positive view of Scotland's black history inc. Jesse Ewing Glasgow Jr. (1837-1860), an African-American intellectual from Philadelphia, who studied at the University of Edinburgh from 1858 to 1860.

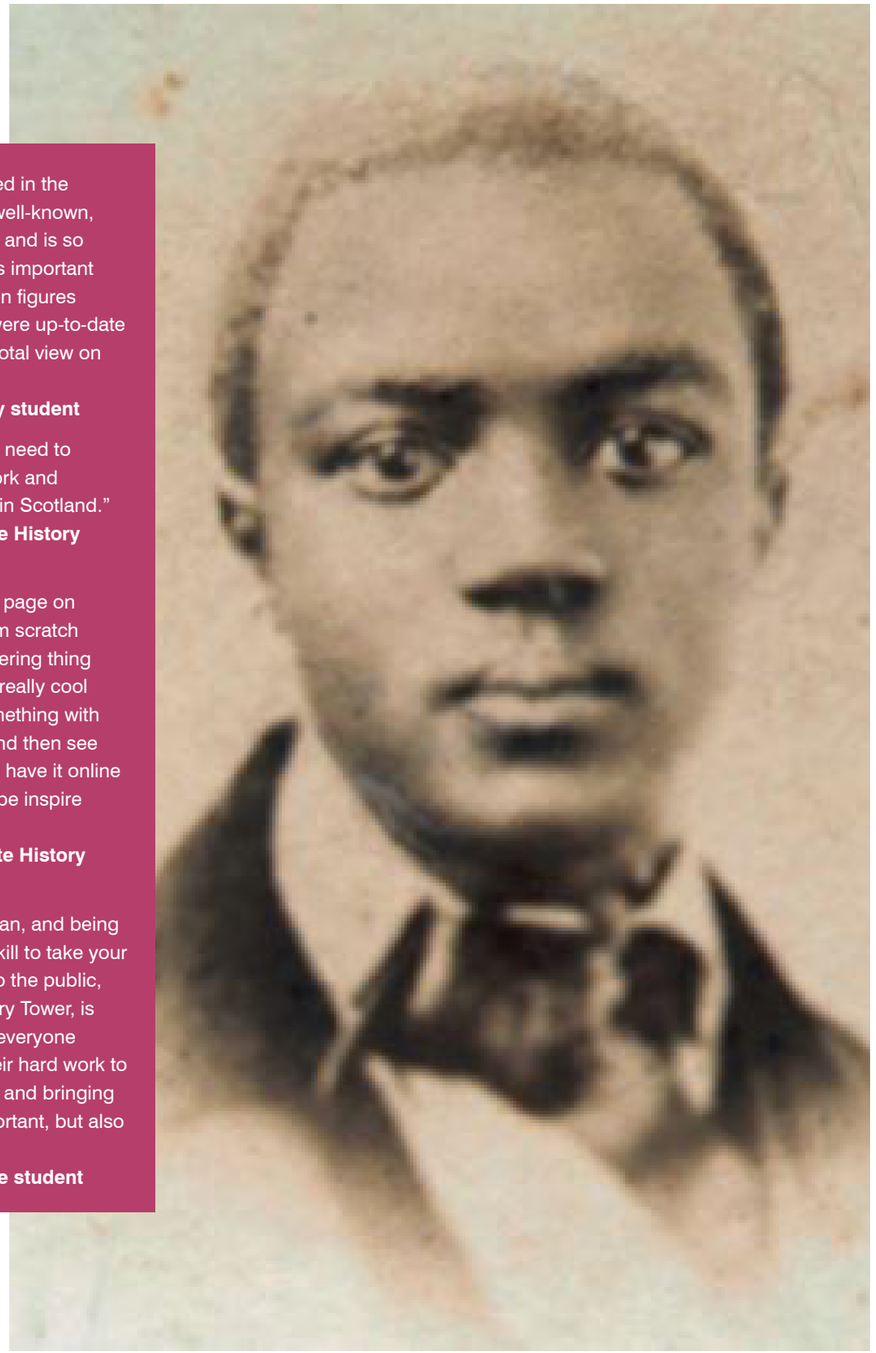
Sian Davies, a student volunteer on the project, has since been motivated to apply for a Student Experience Grant at the University of Edinburgh to continue to research and improve information on Wikipedia in the hope that it "contributes to public understanding of the varied and widespread connections between Caribbean slavery and the making of modern Britain... [and] how some of built environment of Scotland is also connected to the Caribbean and the profits made.

"I was particularly interested in the Wikipedia aspect. It is so well-known, has such a large audience and is so accessible. I thought it was important that its pages, especially on figures involved in black history, were up-to-date and factual and offered a total view on their subjects."
Katie Reinemann, History student

"It just showed me that we need to encourage more of this work and research on Black History in Scotland."
Grace King, Postgraduate History student

"We made the [Wikipedia] page on Jean-Baptiste Philippe from scratch which was a really empowering thing about the project… It was really cool to go off and research something with Scarlett, draft it together and then see the fruits of our labour and have it online on the internet… and maybe inspire future research"
Sian Davies, Postgraduate History student

"In terms of being a historian, and being in academia, having this skill to take your research and bring it out to the public, bring it out beyond the Ivory Tower, is really important and what everyone wants. Everyone wants their hard work to be appreciated, of course, and bringing it out into the world is important, but also feels really good."
Grace King, Postgraduate student



Jesse Ewing Glasgow Jr., Public Domain image from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania via Wikimedia Commons

Case Study 8

Contemporary African History

University of Dundee

Improving and expanding Wikipedia articles on themes concerning the African continent.

Course Leaders

Dr. Matt Graham, Senior Lecturer in African History.

Course duration

The course is one semester long, and runs every other year (2021/22, 2023/24) at Level 3 of undergraduate.

Class size

24-30 undergraduate students

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Critical thinking
- Collaborative working
- Online citizenship
- Research skills
- Information literacy
- Digital literacy
- Applying learning to real world contexts
- Knowledge equity
- Diversifying and improving the visibility of African articles

Assignment

The assignment was designed to enable student contributions to improve a Wikipedia article connected to any element of the African continent associated with the themes of the module. The students are provided training on how to edit Wikipedia across the course, and then in small groups, they identified articles that need expansion or improvement in terms of content and scope. The aim was to add at least 1500 words and 15 new citations to each page.

The class were given autonomy to select articles that reflected their interests, and as a result, a wide range of topics and geographies were chosen for edits including: The Siege of Jadotville, LGBT history in Uganda, Hereroland, the Women's Africa Cup of Nations, the Flag of Biafra, and Pan-Africanism.

The project is split into two sections: collaborative team work during the semester to identify and, in small groups, edit a Wikipedia page.

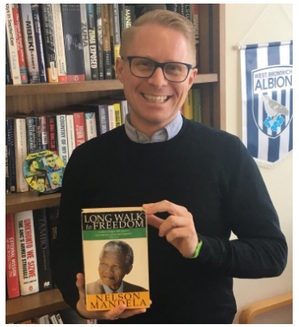
Each student writes a reflective essay (20% of the module grade) that evaluates their experiences of editing Wikipedia. They are asked to consider the differences between their knowledge of their topic, acquired in an academic environment, and its representation on Wikipedia, the representations of history on this platform, the overarching editing process, and questions of representation and inclusion on the site.

Impact

The class initially had trepidations concerning the scope of the project, including their ability to edit a website that the majority of them used on a frequent basis, and the potential readership of their work. After several bespoke training sessions on why we should make edits, how to do them, and the rules of Wikipedia, the students became far more confident in the applicability of their knowledge and skills.

The module content regularly discussed the marginalisation of African history, which then enabled them to critical assess how Wikipedia covered such themes and the consequences this might have.

The 2024 cohort contributed to 30 Wikipedia pages, added 30,000 words, and introduced 238 new references. In total, the pages were read 1.17 million times in under a month. The project really showcased their work to the world, and the wider impact they could have.

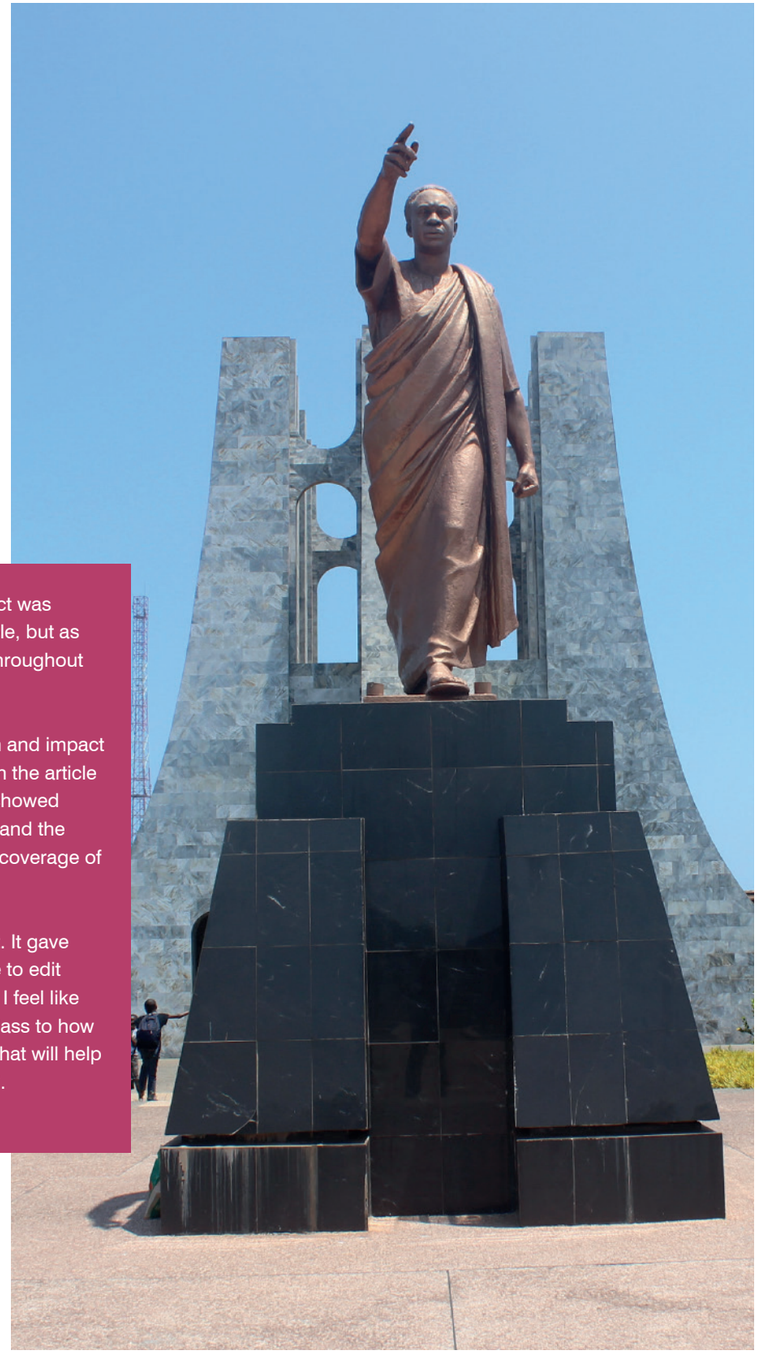


Dr. Matt Graham. Image provided by Dr. Graham, CC-BY-SA.

"The uniqueness of the Wikipedia project was something that I found not only enjoyable, but as great a way to implement the learning throughout the module in a very different way".

"What surprised me most was the reach and impact of the changes I'd made. Within a month the article had been read more than 70k times. It showed to me how significant Wikipedia can be and the importance of improving the depth and coverage of marginalised themes".

"I gained so much from this assignment. It gave me lots of new skills and the confidence to edit Wikipedia, which I'd never done before. I feel like I've made a real impact outside of the class to how information is presented on Wikipedia, that will help others learn more about African history".
End of semester student feedback



The Kwame Nkrumah memorial park and Mausoleum is located in Accra, the capital of Ghana. The memorial complex was dedicated in 1992, and is situated on the site of the former British colonial polo grounds in Accra. It is the spot where Nkrumah made the declaration of Ghana's independence. Fquasie, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Case Study 9

Course Leader

Nadege Forde-Vidal
Historian & Community Project Developer

Course duration

2 x 1.5 hour workshops.

Since 2021, these workshops are part of a 7 week project that runs in term time in April – May, in June – July, or in Sept – Oct. Dates are determined by the participating schools. Ongoing across London.

Class size

10 – 25 students

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Source evaluation
- Knowledge equity
- Research skills
- Digital literacy

Sankofa London Schools Local History Study

London Secondary Schools

Acquiring knowledge relating to cultural diversity in 18th century London through individual case studies, and improving access to that knowledge through relevant Wikipedia pages.

Assignment

Over the course of two in-person workshops, the last led by Wikimedia UK, groups of year 9 students (with year 12 & 13 assistance) collate and edit details of the life stories of People of Colour living and working in their local area in the 1700s.

These individuals have all been found using freely accessible online databases that can, through wikipedia citations, garner a much wider audience. To follow up, year 12 students undertake lunchtime sessions with the groups to refine and add to edits, communicate with wikipedians, and analyse impact.

Supporting resources

www.sankofalondonschools.co.uk

https://inhounslow.com/black-history-month/black-history-month-2023/

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isleworth

Impact

Wikipedia pages relevant to the case studies in terms of location, individuals, historical period and socio-cultural topics are made more culturally inclusive through the additions made by the students. Having gained an understanding of the importance and practical elements, they become Knowledge Activists - committed to ensuring that their local history is presented to the public in an inclusive, culturally sensitive manner.

Wikipedia pages provide a tangible platform through which students can share with pride, can form a personal connection to, and can continue to engage with these inclusive histories.

The process enables uncommon, across-year-group co-operation and collaboration, facilitating group work in future.

Chiswick School year 9s at the Museum of London. Photo by Nadege Forde-Vidal. CC-BY-SA.

> "The students are proud to create something real which will be available to the public, and will outlast the project itself."
> **Hannah Nonnenmacher, Assistant Head, Chiswick School**
>
> "Writing the paragraph and putting it into wikipedia felt like our work amounted to something and it was generally just fun to finalise everything."
>
> "I would do this project again, it was fun."
> **Year 9 pupils, Chiswick School**

Including two individuals, identified in a London newspaper advert published on the 17th December 1724.

'Run away from his Master Philip Reynolds of James River Virginia, and suppos'd to have come over into England, a … Man, nam'd Scipio, (but now calls himself John Whitt) He is a short Fellow, Coal Black, and round faced; aged about 24 Years; he hath a Hole through his left Ear, and a Sort of a Star between his Shoulders on his Back; he work'd there as a Glazier and a Tinker, and plays on the Violin. Whoever shall secure…, and bring him to Mr. John Midford, Merchant, in Mincing Lane, shall have Ten Pounds Reward. N.B. Another… [man] is suppos'd to be with him, who was Coachman to Col. Diggs of York River.[83]

Screengrab example of text added to Wikipedia page from the page for the History of slavery in Virginia (controls and resistance section). Pic shared by Nadege Forde-Vidal via Grant Alderman, Chiswick School 2024 (CC-BY-SA).

Case Study 10

Course Leader
Aaron Morris,
WiciMôn Project Coordinator

Class size
5-10 students

Course duration
Several workshops taking place across each academic term. Started March 2017 and is still ongoing.

Learning outcomes

- Improvement in Welsh language skills
- Writing for public outreach
- Collaborative working
- Basic coding skills (Wikipedia markup)

Wikipedia in the school curriculum

Anglesey, Wales

In partnership with Wikimedia UK, the organisation WiciMôn have been running workshops in Anglesey, Wales, across several secondary schools to promote the Welsh language and Wikipedia literacy.

Assignment

Students are assessed on their delivery of their own Wiki Workshops in their local community, with the remit to engage others beyond their classroom to edit Wikipedia in Welsh.

Aaron Morris, CC-BY-SA via WiciMôn.

Impact

- The WiciMôn project aims to raise the profile of the Welsh language nationally and internationally.
- Creating new articles on the historical, scientific and linguistic elements of Anglesey in Wales.
- The project educates people on open access and the benefits of sharing the sum of all human knowledge.
- Supports the Welsh Government's campaign to reach 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.
- One of the successes of the sessions was the thousands of pronunciation audio clips recorded by 6th form students for articles about places in Wales.
- WiciMôn's work developed best practices for engagement with primary and secondary schools and discussions are underway in Wales to see if this approach can be rolled out to schools nationwide as part of the new Welsh Curriculum.

Supporting resources

- Robin Owain, Wikimedia UK Wales Manager.
- Jason Evans, National Wikimedian at the National Library of Wales.
- Wikipedia training materials.
- Members of the Wikimedia community.

Wikipedia Clubs

Students are now organising their own Wikipedia clubs during lunchtime. Wiki Ambassadors are appointed from the 6th forms, encouraging junior pupils to be involved in the project. The club gives students a further opportunity to edit and create articles, take pictures, upload images and create audio clips. This is a great opportunity for the students to transfer their skills and gain confidence.

"I enjoy writing articles about my interests and uploading them on the Wikipedia website. I've been learning coding skills, and I've written a few articles related to the work I'm studying in my science lessons and I'm looking forward to writing more!"

Mared Griffith, Year 12 pupil Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Amlwch

"WiciMôn has enabled me to create computer science-based articles to help bring the Welsh language into the 21st century."

Rhys Jones, Year 12 pupil Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni

Aaron Morris, CC-BY-SA via WiciMôn.

Case Study 11

Course Leader
Leon Hill, Curriculum Team Manager

Debbie Miller, School of Art and Design.

Additional support
Dr. Sara Thomas, Progamme Manager, Wikimedia UK

Class size
64 students approx. (split into 16 groups of 4)

Course duration
1 academic term in Sept – Nov 2021

Learning outcomes

- Information literacy
- Research skills
- Collaborative working
- Critical thinking
- Source evaluation
- Digital literacy
- Copyright literacy

Knowledge Activists Project UAL Foundation Diploma in Art and Design

Edinburgh College

Publish a stub article of at least 300 words, about an underrepresented artist on Wikipedia. Collaborative small group project (16 groups of 4 students), all teaching and learning online. This project effectively established student links with a major local art gallery (Fruitmarket).

Assignment

Formative assessment – Collaborative small group project, all teaching and learning online. Each group assigned an underrepresented artist to research and publish a draft Wikipedia stub article about of, at least, 300 words using at least 3 separate reliable sources.

Each student in the group had to evidence their individual input (research, editing and evaluative annotation tracking their learning) in their Teams Virtual Sketchbook.

This was reviewed by other individuals within their own small group, other small groups and their lecturer during formative reviews and fed through to the summative assessment as an element of each students portfolio of Unit 1 evidence.

Impact

The students are beginning their art career, so investigating a range of emerging artists was highly relevant and expanded their ideas of what art can be. It has been difficult getting students to talk to each other online in the past but feedback from students was that they enjoyed getting to know each other within a group.

They also enjoyed understanding Wikipedia in more depth as it's a tool that they all use constantly. They especially liked finding out more about the ethical underpinning of Wikimedia and thinking about the ethical implications of knowledge dissemination: how knowledge is presented and why. Led to follow up work in 2022 (presentation around copyright, open licensing and Wikimedia Commons for visual artists).

Dr. Sara Thomas, Programme Manager for Wikimedia UK (pictured top left) leading Wikipedia training. Screengrab via Sara Thomas, CC-BY-SA.

"Wikipedia is a platform that I am exposed to regularly but never been aware of what happens behind all of it, so, it was really interesting being taught how to use this resource and have the opportunity to publish articles on underrepresented artists. I also liked being introduced to other Wikimedia resources that I wasn't fully aware of before."

"I found this project quite enlightening. It was not what I expected to be working on for an art project and it has helped build my knowledge of how art also has knowledge gaps alongside many other parts of society.

"The artists that we have researched here can also provide a source of inspiration to other people once they read their stories so getting them onto Wikipedia gives more people the opportunity to read and learn from them. "

"The past two weeks working on this project has been quite a calm and focused project for myself. I honestly feel using wikipedia is a clever way of producing academic writing and learning to use citations while having purpose."

Student feedback

Man buying sausages at the counter
Illustration taking compositional elements from Edvard Munch's "Fortvivlan", "Scream" "Despair" and "Anxiety paintings, to create a sense of unease.
Musicisbad, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Case Study 12

Art and Law

University of Exeter Law School

Students worked in groups to improve knowledge in a select group articles on art, colonial statues and monuments. They used knowledge gained in the module, as well as in other modules, to create and expand on Wikipedia articles related to their legal studies, while considering their own participation in the power dynamics of knowledge production, citation, representation, visibility, and access.

Course Leader

Dr. Andrea Wallace, Assistant Professor and Senior Lecturer in Law.

Course duration

1 academic term of the 2020-21 school year.

Class size

118 students

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Research skills
- Collaborative working
- Academic referencing
- Knowledge equity
- Copyright literacy

Assignment

Summative assessment – A detailed report at the end of term, reflecting on the experience of contributing to Wikipedia. The report discussed their editing approach, any barriers encountered, what was learned, and the overall impact of their engagement. Students supported this discussion by demonstrating an understanding of Wikipedia's five pillars and the relevant standards for editing, as well as with scholarly research on Wikipedia and evidence of their engagement (e.g., edit logs, screenshots, etc.,). They were encouraged to express their own views as informed by their experience, observations, research and any data collection.

Supporting resources

The assignment page is located at: **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:ExeArtLaw2021**
It includes an orientation guide entitled "Why Wikipedia".

Impact

Students appreciated gaining a greater understanding of the inner workings and mechanics of Wikipedia, and how its communities and volunteers operate. They gained confidence both in contributing to Wikipedia and in challenging and rectifying certain information that articles contained or relied on.

Students were given full autonomy around their engagement over the term. Many overlapped their research and editing with the module's topics. Others repurposed and expanded on research being undertaken for other modules to inform edits, which they felt improved their performance in that module. In total, students created 39 and edited 1.4K articles, added 284 words, 2.81K references and 85 commons uploads. Collectively, their articles have since received more than 103M views.

Nelson's Ship in a Bottle, on permanent display in Greenwich Photograph by Mike Peel (www.mikepeel.net) Nelson's Ship in a Bottle' is a sculpture of Nelson's flagship 'HMS Victory'. The sculpture considers the relationship between the birth of the British Empire, made possible in part by Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar, and multiculturalism in Britain today. CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Dr Andrea Wallace presenting at 2017 NDF conference in Wellington, New Zealand. National Digital Forum, CC BY 3.0

"I loved editing Wikipedia and the insights it gave me into researching topics, citing sources, and writing essays. The skills I learnt have been incredibly useful and on top of that it was a fun experience that I'd wholeheartedly choose to do again!"

"Loved the Wikipedia Project. It allowed me to explore an area I am passionate about and contribute to increasing web accessibility."

(This student created an article on blind and partially sighted artists, and she set up the page to be fully web accessible.)

Student feedback

Case Study 13

Course Leader
Mr. Richard Leonard-Davies, Senior Lecturer in Law, Hillary Rodham Clinton School of Law, Swansea

Class size
8 students

Course duration
1 academic term

Learning outcomes

- Applying learning to real world contexts
- Information synthesis
- Source evaluation
- Writing for public outreach

LLB Law, Competition Law: The Regulation of Dominance

Swansea University

Students critiqued an existing Wikipedia article on a competition law topic of their choice, and then amended or rewrote those articles.

Assignment

Students were assessed on the quality and accuracy of their contributions to Wikipedia, in addition to the accuracy of the points made as part of their original article critique pieces.

Impact

- The creation and improvement of Wikipedia articles.
- Contribution to a growing recognition of Wikipedia as a respected and legitimate information source.
- The creation of new Wikipedia editors.

Mr. Richard Leonard-Davies, Senior Lecturer in Law, CC-BY via Swansea University

"Using Wikipedia as a learning tool has facilitated a more flexible working environment and encouraged broader discussion."

"As a lecturer, I'm learning from the students! Wikipedia has created a 360° learning environment."

Mr. Richard Leonard-Davies

Aerial view of Swansea University, CC-BY via Swansea University

"The use of Wikipedia in this way has been a great learning tool as it is particularly important for budding lawyers to be able to translate complex legal principles into straightforward and understandable advice, at all times, supporting their statements with evidence. By amending or creating a section of a Wikipedia article, the students were able to demonstrate the level of their actual understanding of the relevant legal and economic concepts and communicate them to their peers in a contemporary manner."

Mr. Richard Leonard-Davies

Tips for successfully using Wikipedia in the classroom

1. Introduce students to using **Wikimedia's Programs & Events Dashboard** (**outreachdashboard.wmflabs.org**/) at the beginning of the module, a Wikimedia platform for managing editing events and assignments.
2. Monitor student engagement with the course via the Programs & Events Dashboard.
3. Encourage students to undertake the **Wikipedia Editing training modules**.
4. Take prior steps to ensure editing rejections are not due to Wikipedia's restrictions towards new editors.
5. Advise students on how to create new articles or amend articles by moving small amounts of text from the sandbox to the main space area.
6. Remind students that Wikipedia is a living community, and that there are options for feedback and discussion.
7. If using the Programs & Events Dashboard as an assessment tool, **ensure that students submit their work via a Word document first** using your institution's own plagiarism detection systems, otherwise the text on Wikipedia will be detected.

by Richard Leonard-Davies

Case Study 14

Course Leaders

Prof. Stephen Curry, professor of Structural Biology, and Dr. Steven Cook, Principal Teaching Fellow in the Department of Life Sciences.

Class size

30 students

Course duration

1 academic term, featuring a 3-hour workshop introducing Wikimedia, Creative Commons, and practising Wiki mark-up language

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Critical thinking
- Information literacy
- Digital literacy
- Illustration and graphic design skills
- Collaborative working

Life Sciences BSc degrees, Science Communication

Imperial College London

Final year Biochemistry and Biological Sciences BSc students at Imperial College London selected and improved Wikipedia articles within their Science Communication module by adding content to existing pages, including adding their own illustrations.

Assignment

Students were assessed on both their written inputs to Wikipedia, and their graphic additions uploaded to Wikimedia Commons.

Dr. Steve Cook, (User:Polypompholyx). CC-BY-SA via Steven Cook.

Impact

- 100 articles improved since 2012.
- Several illustrations and photographs were created and uploaded to Wikipedia pages to support the relevant compound's Wikipedia page.
- Contributed to the growing Wiki culture and community within the University.

Supporting resources

- Science communication and illustration workshops run by staff on the Science Communication module.
- Wikimedia Commons and the RCSB Protein Data Bank.
- User:Polypompholyx's Wikipedia page includes guidance for students.

"There are plenty of incomplete and missing articles on Wikipedia, and it would be great to get students involved in editing articles much earlier in their careers."

"The articles have to be on a scientific topic, and they typically choose life science topics, as that is their expertise (biology and biochemistry students). Some articles are created from scratch, others take existing articles and improve them. This is typically by rewriting the text to make it clearer, more complete and more up to date. Most articles end up with new sections, updated references, and additional media: either from Commons, or media they create and CC license themselves."

Dr. Steven Cook
Course Leader

Light micrograph of *Eimeria* parasites in a rabbit's liver. Made by Andi347, an ICL student. CC-BY via Wikimedia Commons.

Case Study 15

Course Leaders

Dr. Chris Harlow, Dr. Simon Riley and Dr. Richard Smith, Professor Norah Spears and Dr. Agnes Stefansdottir Reproductive Biology BSc, Programme Organisers

Additional support

Ewan McAndrew, University of Edinburgh's Wikimedian in Residence

Ruth Jenkins, Academic Support Librarian for the College of Medicine.

Class size

25-51 students

Course duration

Two 3hr workshops one week apart in the Autumn/Winter semester. The assignment ran each year from 2015/2016 to 2023/2024.

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Research skills
- Information literacy
- Digital literacy
- Critical thinking
- Collaborative working

Reproductive Biology BSc

University of Edinburgh

4th Year Reproductive Biology Honours BSc students researched and developed new Wikipedia articles on previously unpublished medical terms relating to their course content. This assignment has been repeated each year since 2015.

Assignment

The exercise was not formally assessed, but provided direct experience of group working, enhancing skills that could be transferred to other assessed group work activities in the curriculum. The project allowed students and staff to explore what is offered by virtual public engagement spaces. In addition, students had access to numerous databases (both openly available and subscription-only) with one of the aims of the session being to introduce the students to these science-specific resources.

Dr. Simon Riley, CC-BY-SA via Simon Riley.

- Created a new article on one of the most common and fatal forms of ovarian cancer, which has now been viewed in excess of 180,000 times since it was published in Sept 2016.

Impact

- The creation of approximately 8 new Wikipedia articles each year in the field of Reproductive Biomedicine through collaborative group research.
- Contributed to the growing Wiki culture and community within the university.

> "I use Wikipedia a lot, so it was good to be able to understand exactly what goes into editing it. The assignment also helped me understand where to find valuable references in places I would not have known to look."
>
> **Student feedback, Reproductive Biology BSc**

> "Working with colleagues from different disciplines, I found the process of introducing the whole class to a range of literature searching tools, setting them specific tasks to collect information, and then engaging a small group of students to help build the Wikipedia page a truly inspiring activity. To see the end product evolve on screen in front of me was very exciting!"
>
> **Dr. Chris Harlow, course organiser in 2016**
>
> "The session was informative and an enjoyable way to start the semester. It got me to consider different aspects of scientific communication and my involvement in it."
>
> "As a student it's a really good opportunity, it's a really motivating thing to be able to do; to relay the knowledge you've learnt in lectures and exams, which hasn't really been relevant outside of lectures and exams, but to see how it's relevant to the real world and to see how you can contribute."
>
> **Student feedback, Reproductive Biology BSc**
>
> "We all know our students are using Wikipedia & we're all using it ourselves so I think being familiar with it is really important and a really important part of information literacy."
>
> **Ruth Jenkins, Academic Support Librarian (pictured right)**

Ruth Jenkins, Academic Support Librarian at the University of Edinburgh Medical School, CC-BY-SA by Stinglehammer.

Case Study 16

Introduction to Global Health Challenges (Online, Postgraduate)

University of Edinburgh

Application of global health practice concepts to expand an existing Wikipedia page related to natural and human-made disasters. In small groups, distance learning students collaborate online over four weeks and use knowledge gained in the course to evaluate, expand and develop short stub Wikipedia articles on recent natural or man-made disasters keyed to the study of global health challenges e.g. 2020 Kerala floods.

Course Leaders

Professor Liz Grant, PhD
Dr. Evelyn Balsells, MPH PhD
Raina Klüppelberg
Juwairia Quazi
Michelle Hart
Anne MacKenzie

Additional support

Ewan McAndrew, University of Edinburgh's Wikimedian in Residence

Course duration

1 academic term in Autumn/ Winter each year. Ongoing since 2019/2020.

Class size

17-30 students

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Critical thinking
- Collaborative working
- Online citizenship
- Digital literacy
- Research skills
- Knowledge equity
- Applying learning to real world contexts

Assignment

A collaborative project and an individual reflective piece feeding forward to the summative assessments (blog, infographics and magazine style essay). Students worked in small groups online, tasked with selecting a short stub article from WikiProject Disaster Management's list of stub articles and then research, write and improve it by 1,500 words. In a reflective writing exercise, each group participant explained how they improved their chosen article and what they had learned from the process of editing a Wikipedia page, working collaboratively in an interdisciplinary group, and application of global and planetary health concepts.

Impact

Editing a Wikipedia page provides a basis for supporting good digital research habits and undertaking an academically useful group task with published outputs. It creates a unique facility for co-operative work

Collectively, the students contributed in excess of thirty thousand words and three hundred and seventy-five references to seven Wikipedia articles, which have received over 11,000 page views to date.

Students also submit individual reflections on digital skills and the importance of good communication channels within an interdisciplinary team based in different locations, key components in global health careers.

"With just a small change to the format […] we could achieve a double purpose: showcase student progression towards the learning objectives […] and contribute to the development of open knowledge"

Varia Christie, course organiser in 2020.

"I thought the assignment was a great idea. I'd never even thought about editing a page before the assignment, it was great to have the opportunity to have a go."

Jenni Argent, student

"I think this was my favourite assignment to date in my degree. While the contents of the article were relatively high-level, I thoroughly enjoyed working with my fellow classmates"

Saorla Whelan, student

"In the GHC course, Wikipedia is used to offer students a learning technology where they feel empowered to apply new skills and to communicate their scholarship to improve an understanding of overlooked topics. It is a triple win innovation: for people, for scholarship, and for the planet. "

Evelyn Balsells and Professor Liz Grant, course organisers 2022.

Families contribution to food distribution to other families during COVID-19 pandemic, Guatemala city. Owner: Eleazar Hernández, CC-BY-SA

Case Study 17

Course Leaders

Professor Devi Sridhar, Chair in Global Public Health and Founding Director of the Global Health Governance Programme

Dr. Felix Stein, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, the Usher Institute of Population Health Sciences and Informatics

Additional support

Ewan McAndrew, University of Edinburgh's Wikimedian in Residence

Class size

35-45 students

Course duration

Three 1hr workshops in 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 before Prof. Sridhar had to support the Scottish Government as scientific advisor during the Covid Pandemic.

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Research skills
- Information literacy
- Applying learning to real world contexts

Masters in Public Health (MPH), Investing in Global Health and Development

University of Edinburgh

Adding to Wikipedia's Global Health related content. The students researched, synthesised and developed either one existing Wikipedia article, or created a new one, for the field of Global Health.

Assignment

Obligatory requirement for passing the course.

Impact

- Over 30 students trained and supported to add 180-200 words to Global Health related articles on Wikipedia. Edits to pages such as Obesity are now viewed 3,000 times a day on average.
- Article about the assignment written by Felix Stein: **http://globalhealthgovernance.org/blog/2018/11/19/editing-wikipedia-as-part-of-teaching-public-health**
- New assignment on the PG Global Health Challenges online course programme resulted from this assignment.

Dr. Felix Stein, CC-BY-SA via Felix Stein.

Supporting resources

- WikiProject Globalisation.
- Wikimedia's Programs & Events Dashboard and training libraries.
- WikiProject Medicine's guidelines on reliable sources for biomedical topics.

"It was a wonderful exercise and good learning. Hope to do more of such exercises in future!"

Student feedback,
Masters in Public Health (MPH)

Globe Map by Duangphorn Wiriya. CC-BY via Unsplash.com

Case Study 18

Film and Media Studies BA

University of Stirling

Students created and co-edited a new Wikibook textbook exploring the topics covered in their adjacent modules on Digital Culture, which became an Open Education anthology in the subject area.

Course Leader

Dr. Greg Singh,
Associate Professor in Communications, Media and Culture

Class size

The cohort size for the module tended to be about 120 to 140 students. This was then split into three labs of 40-45 students for training and demonstrating.

Course duration

1 academic term. Ran from 2013/2014 until 2018/2019

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Critical thinking
- Collaborative working
- Digital literacy
- Research skills

Assignment

Students' contributions to the book were assessed on several levels, including the quality of the content in their chapters and on-wiki collaboration on talk pages and sandboxes prior to final submission.

The module was also delivered through seminar discussion in seminar groups of around 20, and supported through either a conventional lecture series, or, in the last couple of years the Wikibook ran, through flipped lecture content pre-recorded and uploaded to the VLE (we started with Blackboard and moved to Canvas later).

Dr. Greg Singh, University of Stirling. CC-BY-SA via Greg Singh.

Impact

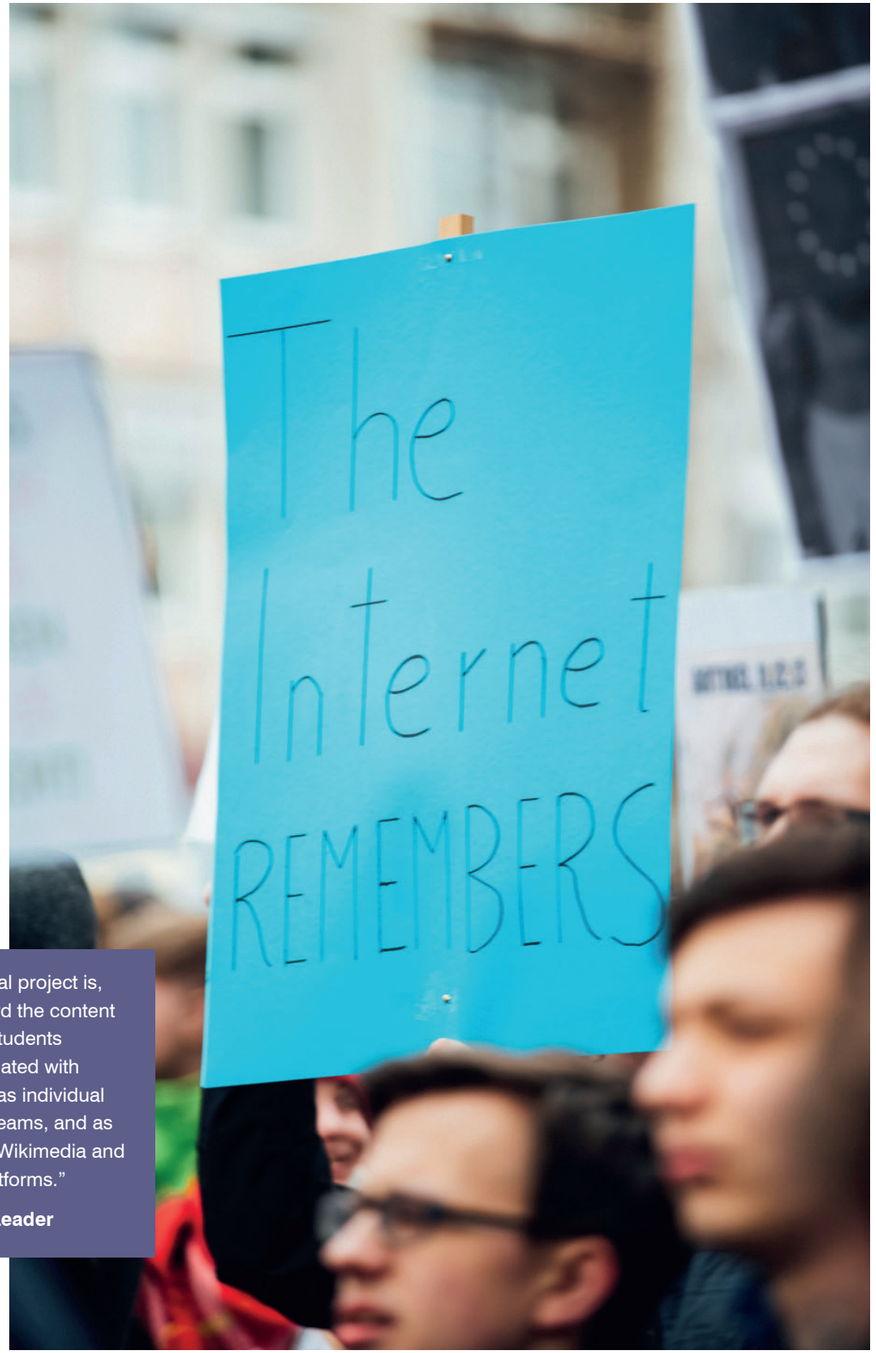
- The creation of several student-written Wikibooks Open Education textbooks on Digital Culture each year since 2014 with chapters including topics such as: Determinism, Convergence, Transmediality, The Internet of Things, Always-on Culture, Collective Intelligence, Information Society, Online Identity and more.
- Contributed to the growing Wiki culture and community within the University.

Supporting resources

- Wikibooks guidelines for class projects: **https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Wikibooks:Guidelines_for_class_projects**

"The aim of this educational project is, firstly, for students to record the content of their learning and that students will learn the values associated with working at different levels as individual researchers, as research teams, and as research communities on Wikimedia and other open knowledge platforms."

Dr. Greg Singh, Course Leader



The Internet remembers. Save Your Internet – Demonstration against upload filter – Article 13 by Marcus Spiske. CC-BY via Unsplash.com.

Case Study 19

Course Leaders

Dr. Jenny Chamarette (2012-2018), Senior Lecturer in Film Studies

Dr Sasha Litvintseva (2019-present), Lecturer in Film Theory and Practice

Class size

35-50 students

Course duration

Six weeks during the second year undergraduate module which is compulsory for all single-honours Film Studies students. Ran from 2017 until 2020.

Learning outcomes

- Research skills
- Information literacy
- Reflective practice
- Source evaluation
- Collaborative working

Film Studies BA, Research Methods

Queen Mary University of London

Identifying, evaluating and editing existing content in a Wikipedia article on a particular film. This assignment builds digital literacy and source evaluation skills where the students identify relevant research and scholarship to enhance the article before editing it to improve its scholarly quality.

Assignment

The assignment was 30% of the overall module mark and consisted of:

A group presentation giving a review and evaluation of a Wikipedia page on a specific film – no formal weighting, immediate informal feedback provided.

A group writing activity: editing the selected Wikipedia page to enhance its scholarly value – 30% of mark.

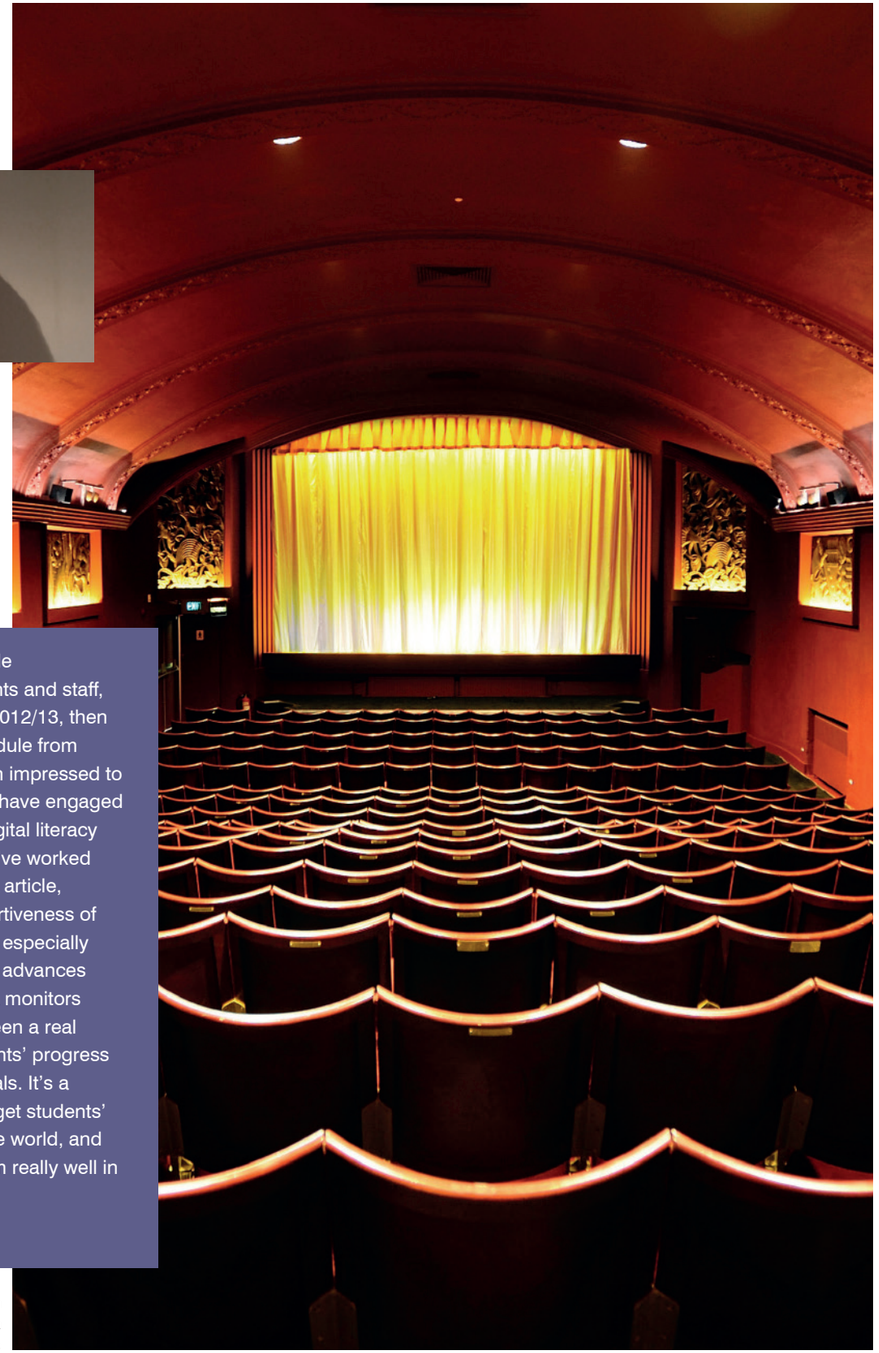
Impact

- Since 2015, over 35 film articles have been edited by ~200 students.
- These edits have been viewed over 6.1 million times.
- Dr. Chamarette's achievements have been recognised with Higher Education Academy Fellowship and an e-learning grant to develop student-led teaching materials.

Supporting resources

- Online support from Wikimedia UK's Programmes team.
- Support from members of the Wikimedia community.
- Support by the Queen Mary University Library team.
- Queen Mary University of Library resources.

Dr. Jenny Chamarette, CC-BY-SA via Jenny Chamarette.



"I've developed the module collaboratively with students and staff, first as a pilot scheme in 2012/13, then as a compulsory core module from 2014/15 onward. I've been impressed to see how quickly students have engaged with source evaluation, digital literacy and fact-checking as they've worked on their chosen Wikipedia article, and by the general supportiveness of the Wikipedia community, especially Wikimedia UK. Significant advances in the ways that Wikipedia monitors engagement data have been a real asset to how I track students' progress in groups and as individuals. It's a great opportunity to help get students' expertise out there into the world, and students generally perform really well in this task."

Dr. Jenny Chamarette

Phoenix Auditorium by Basil Jradeh CC-BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Case Study 20

Course Leader

Caroline Ball, Academic Librarian and Associate Lecturer

Class size

10 students

Course duration

1 semester, 12 x 4 hour classes. No longer ongoing.

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Decision making
- Research skills
- Collaborative working
- Academic referencing

Writing and Publishing BA

University of Derby

Creating and copy-editing articles, developing digital capabilities, enhancing understanding of Wikipedia. Over the course of a semester students edited and created new articles on topics of their choice, enhancing their understanding of Wikipedia and developing their digital literacy in the areas of research, academic referencing, copyright and plagiarism, open images and Creative Commons licensing, feedback, peer review and systemic bias.

Assignment

Two summative assignments forming 100% of module grade: Editing assignment requiring adding 1,500 words of content to an article of the student's choice plus a 500 word reflective report (40%).

Group assignment requiring a portfolio of mixed edits (new articles, translation, significant edits etc) plus a weekly reflective blog (60%).

Students were graded on: language, spelling and grammar (15%); engagement with Wikipedia editing community (35%); and engagement with Wikipedia standards and sources, and awareness of the requirements of the medium (50%).

Impact

- Students made 1,090 edits across 124 articles.
- 51,700 words, 361 references and 6 brand new articles were added to Wikipedia.
- The articles have been viewed a combined 18.9 million times.

Caroline Ball, Academic Librarian and Associate Lecturer, CC-BY-SA via Caroline Ball.

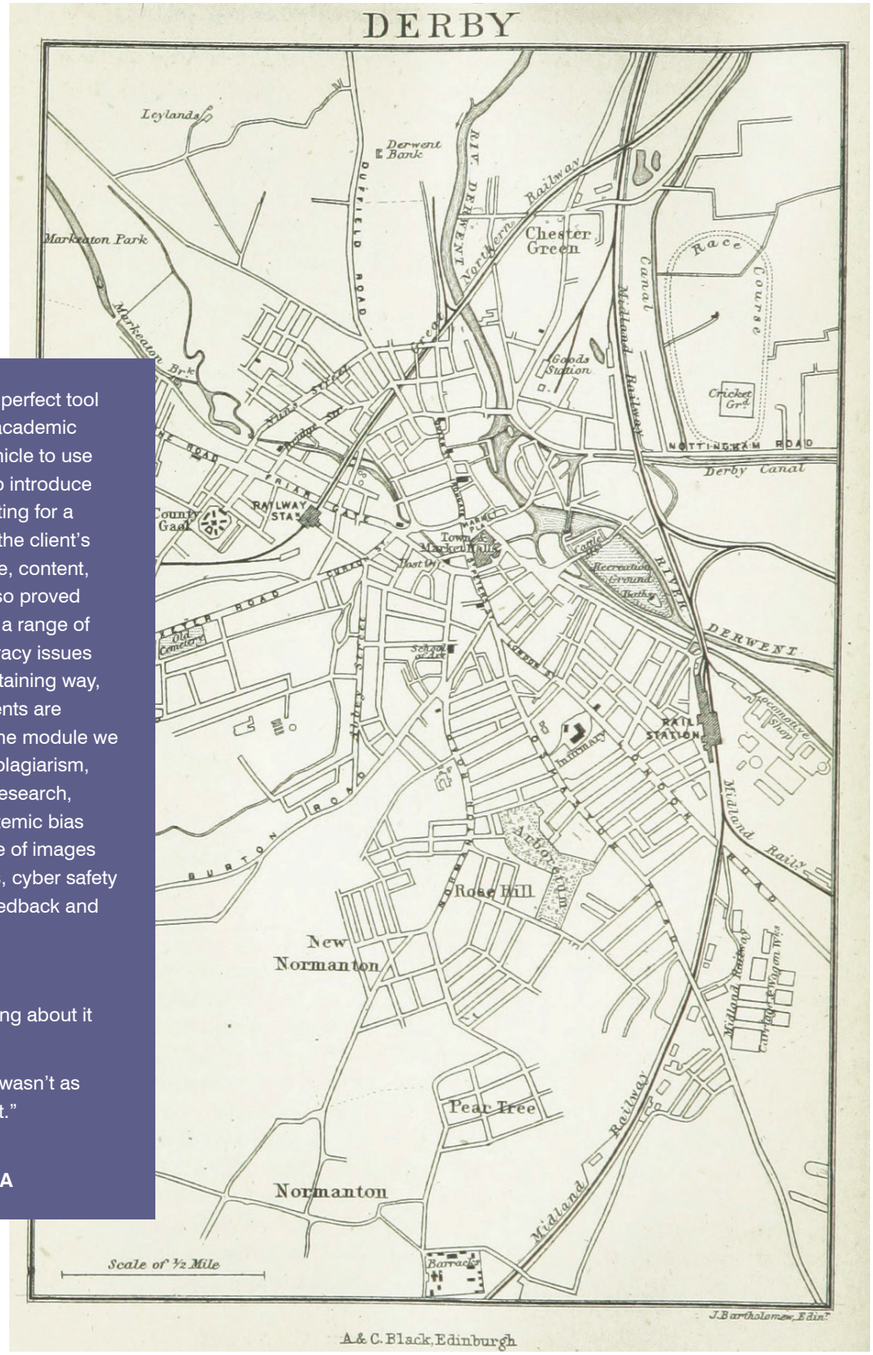
"Wikipedia proved to be a perfect tool to address a multitude of academic issues. It was a perfect vehicle to use with Publishing students to introduce them to the concept of writing for a client and complying with the client's requirements for style, tone, content, format, approach etc. It also proved a fantastic way to address a range of digital and information literacy issues in an accessible and entertaining way, using a resource the students are already familiar with – in one module we addressed copyright and plagiarism, how to reference, how to research, evaluation of sources, systemic bias in information sources, use of images online, Creative Commons, cyber safety and online harassment, feedback and peer review skills."

Caroline Ball

"There wasn't really anything about it that I didn't like."

"Felt like editing an article wasn't as daunting as I once thought."

Student feedback, Writing and Publishing BA



EW(1884)p.500-Derby-A+C Black(pub). Image taken from "Black's Road and Railway Guide to England and Wales" (14th edition). Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.

Case Study 21

Course Leader

Stefan Lutschinger, Programme Leader Digital Media BA.

Class size

22 students

Course duration

2 academic terms (level 5)

Learning outcomes

- Writing for public outreach
- Information literacy
- Critical thinking
- Media literacy
- Research skills
- Collaborative working

Digital Media BA, Digital Cultures

Middlesex University

Digital Cultures is an undergraduate module, which encourages students to participate in the editing of Wikipedia articles and to develop quantitative literacy skills with Wikidata. Students document their engagement with weekly readings and make a series of edits which also follow up on the contributions of their classmates.

Assignment

Students contribute 1,500 words to Wikipedia pages in the subject area of digital culture in the form of two edits (500 words each) per student and two follow up edits (250 words each) on the contributions of their classmates.

Stefan Lutschinger at Bletchley Park, CC-BY-SA via Stefan Lutschinger.

Impact

- Students' articles address Wikipedia's gender gap – by having a focus on article creation about the Women of Bletchley Park.
- Regular Wikipedia editathons (Ada Lovelace Day, Arts and Craft, WWII Women Codebreakers of Bletchley Park, UK National Elections).
- Wikipedian in Residence with the Museum of Domestic Design & Architecture (MoDA). **https://moda.mdx.ac.uk/**

Supporting resources

- Middlesex University's Library Services.
- Online support from Wikimedia UK's Programmes Team and members of the Wikimedia Community.

"I learnt an important lesson in redundancy within language. Coming from an English Literature, Language and Journalistic background, I have always had to put more description and persuasive techniques into my work, but Wikipedia pushed me to entirely abandon my processes and only write the factual text that needed to go on the article."

Student feedback, Digital Media BA

Field trip to Bletchley Park, CC-BY-SA via Stefan Lutschinger

Going further with student engagement – Wikimedia-focused paid internships and student work placements

Over the last few years, Wikimedia UK and its partners have been increasingly involved with or have helped with the hosting of paid internships or student work placements focused on delivering Wikimedia-related projects.

Learning outcomes

These projects have included:

- Working on input of a particular dataset into Wikidata, and producing creative visualisation
- Supporting Wikipedia editing events
- Working on documentation around Wikimedia tools and processes
- Identifying gaps in the visual record and uploading media to Wikimedia Commons

While there can be a lot of crossover between internships and student placements, in general we would expect an internship to last for a longer period of time than a placement, and for a placement to be a requirement of a course of study. The former would be a paid position, and the latter normally unpaid, or at least covered by existing student funding. Although organisations may occasionally encounter instances where students seek out their own unpaid positions, we would generally recommend that funding be sought in order to pay them, and at a minimum, reasonable expenses should be allowable, in line with good volunteering practice. We recognise that the Wikimedia Projects are dependent on the donation of volunteer labour, and that Wikimedia can play a vital role in educational settings, but we also acknowledge that the culture of unpaid internships, especially where these are linked to employability skills and post-graduation employment opportunities, contribute to a less equitable society.

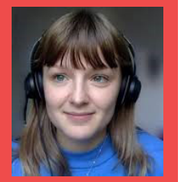
For an organisation who is already engaged with the Wikimedia Projects, a paid intern or student placement can be an opportunity to engage with a section of the Projects they are in the early stages of exploring, and can offer new depth to their engagement. Alternatively, it can be an opportunity to carry out work such as research or documentation which can benefit from a fresh eye. We have also seen examples where a student was able to take on a 'nice to have' project that the organisation wished to complete, but which might not have been prioritised under normal circumstances.

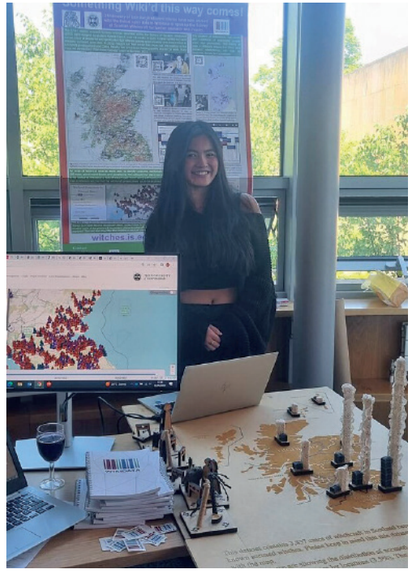
We've noted that a good project is improved by a host organisation that is flexible enough to allow a student to bring something of their own to the project, whether that be outlook, skills or experience. One host described the process as 'alchemy' – finding the right person for the right project, and letting them run with it.

Ruby Imrie, Wikidata Data Visualisation intern was Student Staff Member of the Year at the Information Services Staff Recognition Awards 2023. CC-BY-SA by Karen Howie.

"Within universities, many staff and students are in excellent positions to contribute, improve and edit articles on Wikipedia. They can access resources, they have specific subject expertise and, with some persuasion, a desire to improve Wikipedia. This could mean that they could be valuable editors and empowered knowledge activists."

Hannah Rothmann, Wikimedia Digital Skills intern in Summer 2020, won an Open Education Global award. CC-BY-SA by Ewan McAndrew.





Maggie Lin, Wikidata Data Visualisation intern, received award as Undergraduate Feminist Trailblazer of the Year at the Gender.Ed 5th anniversary awards showcase in May 2022. CC-BY-SA by Ewan McAndrew.

Benefits for student and host organisation

- Skills development
- Learning about open knowledge
- Confidence building
- Experience outside their subject area
- (Net)working with a team
- Tangible impact

Host organisation

- Growing the community
- Delivering on strategic objectives
- Fresh eyes
- New opportunities

Whatever the project, we would advise the host organisation to take careful note of local Wikimedia Project guidelines, particularly around such items as conflict of interest and paid editing.

Emma Carroll, the 'Witchfinder General' Wikidata Data Visualisation intern in Summer 2019. CC-BY-SA by Ewan McAndrew.

Case study: University of Edinburgh

The University of Edinburgh has engaged a number of student interns through their established internal paid internship programme, most notably the Witchfinder General, a placement that worked with the Survey of Scottish Witchcraft, a database of accused witches in Scotland that was put together by university researchers. Ewan McAndrew, the University's Wikimedian in Residence, had begun working with this dataset for student training in Wikidata, and had pointed out that the geolocation data would be a valuable addition to Wikidata, and would allow for interesting and valuable visualisation.

Intern Emma Carroll worked with a number of partners (including the National Archives of Scotland and National Library of Scotland) to geolocate a number of historic places, and uploaded this information to Wikidata.

The university further supported the project by the creation of a new website (https://witches.is.ed.ac.uk/), which provided engaging visualisation of this data. The website caught the imagination of many, and resulted in both national and international press coverage, as well as bringing attention to the original piece of research.

Since that internship, the university has hosted a number of other internships through their internal scheme, working on Women in Red editathons, EDI and Wikimedia, creating and documenting workflows for image and data upload to Commons and Wikidata (working on the Tower Block Archive and Historic Leith Archives), creating videos, and creating a new section of the website to host many of the Wiki resources relevant to students and teaching staff. The university's Wikimedian in Residence is also now participating in the Edinburgh Award Programme, offering a Wikipedia editing module. The Edinburgh Award comprises a scheme whereby student involvement in activities such as volunteering and community work can be officially recognised by the university.

This text is excerpted from Going further with student engagement: Wikimedia-focused paid internships and student work placements, by Dr Sara Thomas, Wikimedia UK (2022), CC-BY-SA 4.0. The original document is available on Wikimedia Commons: **https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Going_further_with_student_engagement.pdf**

"The university [has] strategic commitments to open knowledge…navigating the world of information, providing [students] with opportunities to learn digital skills that are important to graduate employability…so that we have an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive and achieve. [These internships] are about Walking the Walk…It's a win…and it's good value for money."

Ewan McAndrew,
SFHEA, Wikimedian in Residence

The Benefit of a Wikimedian in Residence

If you would like to discuss how a Wikimedian might work in your own organisation, contact education@wikimedia.org.uk

Wikimedia UK supports Wikimedians in Residence in a wide range of institutions including galleries, libraries, museums, and archives (GLAMs). Wikimedia UK also works with a wider range of partners in the education sector across the UK, including a number of universities – but the University of Edinburgh was the first to host a Wikimedian in Residence who worked across the entire organisation. They should not be the last.

Having a Wikimedian on staff, and placed in a part of the university which allows them to work across a number of departments and with a range of students, staff and members of the public, dramatically increases the impact on, and benefit to, the organisation from the post.

A Wikimedian can act as support for course leaders. They can be a crucial interface between the Wikimedia community and the university community, and a key tool in bringing those two groups together. They can be trainers, and they can be advocates – both internally and externally. They can be a driver for change and a focus for activity. They can support organisational aims such as a commitment to information literacy, digital skills and sharing collections.

At the University of Edinburgh, the role of the Wikimedian in Residence is to work with course teams and students across the university, to demonstrate how learning to contribute to Wikipedia can enhance staff and students' understanding of how knowledge is constructed, curated and contested online. Editing Wikipedia also provides valuable opportunities for students to develop their digital research and communication skills, and enables them to make a lasting contribution to the global pool of open knowledge.

In addition to providing educational opportunities, the University of Edinburgh residency supports a number of key institutional missions, including: open knowledge and open science; the Scottish Government initiative on creating a data literate workforce; and public and community engagement. The residency provides opportunities for the University of Edinburgh to expand its civic mission, through new forms of collaboration with city-wide and Scottish national bodies.

A significant remit of the University of Edinburgh's residency has been to support the institution's commitment to gender equality including the Athena SWAN (Scientific Women's Academic Network) charter. Many of the editathons facilitated by the Wikimedian in Residence focus on addressing the under representation of women on Wikipedia and encouraging more women to become editors. A 2011 survey (**https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Editor_Survey_Report_-_April_2011.pdf**) showed that around 90% of English language Wikipedia editors were male. Since then Wikimedia has made a concerted effort to improve the gender diversity of its community, however women editors are still a minority. In contrast, 69% of participants at University of Edinburgh editathons are women.

(The text in paragraphs 4-6 is issued under a CC-BY-SA licence to Jisc, Sero HE and University of Edinburgh).

"A Wikimedian in Residence is a changemaker and a facilitator to help organisations become more open and work better with Wikimedia. A residency can transform public engagement with the host organisation's collections, and deliver increased reach and impact of the knowledge and content held by the institution.

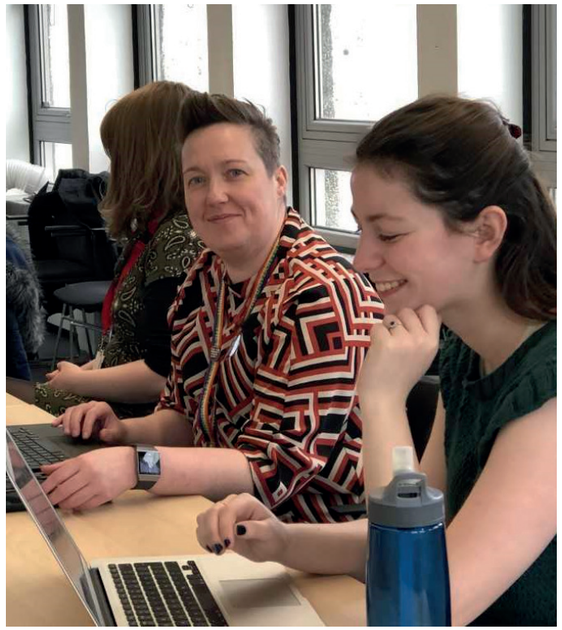
Daria Cybulska,
Head of Programmes and Evaluation, Wikimedia UK

Embedding Wikimedia assignments

Monitoring progress

The Programs & Events Dashboard is an easy to use platform for engaging your students, monitoring their activity, and helping to structure any Wikimedia assignment. The tool requires no prior knowledge, it automatically updates with course-related statistics and has useful additional features such as self-directed training libraries and the authorship highlighting tool.

The Dashboard can be found here: **https://outreachdashboard.wmflabs.org/**



International Women's Day 2019 - Women of Edinburgh Wikipedia editathon by Jackie Aim, University of Edinburgh. CC-BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

Integration

There are several avenues available for integrating Wikimedia editing into your course programme. This can include:

- Swapping out existing, similar modules for modules focusing on Wikimedia engagement with similar learning outcomes.
- Organising a one-off, or a series of workshops, teaching students Wikimedia editing in the context of their course.
- Assigning/providing an option of Wikimedia engagement as part of student coursework.

Assessment

When engaging with Wikimedia in the Classroom for the first time, course leaders are often unsure what assessment method to use, as their course cohorts will be contributing content to a live and editable space on Wikipedia.

There isn't just one way of assessing a student's engagement with Wikimedia in an academic setting, but we have found several tried and tested approaches (including the development of rubrics) which have worked well when assessing students' learning development on the course, including:

- Being assigned a particular word count to contribute to Wikipedia.
- Groups working together to each contribute equal word counts to a Wikipedia article, or series of related articles.
- Students being assigned reflective essays or blog posts as an opportunity to evaluate their experience engaging with the Wikimedia projects.
- Course leaders measuring the level and quality of student engagement contributed to the projects (either manually or through the Programs & Events Dashboard).

Next steps

Getting started with a Wikimedia in the Classroom assignment or embedding Wikimedia practices at your institution might seem intimidating at first, however this needn't be the case.

1. Get in touch with Wikimedia UK

Wikimedia UK will be able to direct you to further introductory resources. We may also be able to signpost you to Wikimedia volunteers, where available, or help connect you with existing Wikimedia activity taking place in your area. Contact **education@wikimedia.org.uk**

2. Consider hosting a Wikimedian in Residence

An in-house Wikimedian in Residence can dramatically increase the effectiveness of your engagement with the Wikimedia projects, and the benefit to the organisation. Please contact Wikimedia UK for advice, support and resources if you are considering the creation of a Wikimedian in Residence role in your institution.

> "Hosting a Wikimedian in Residence (WiR) in a university has real potential to target empowerment in learning technology. If you put your Wikimedian alongside your digital skill trainers and learning technologists, their impact can be significant."
>
> **Dr. Melissa Highton**,
> Assistant Principal Online Learning, University of Edinburgh

3. Make the most of the existing tools and materials

Resource development and method documentation is at the heart of the collaborative Wiki way of working. There exists a large array of resources out there, created to assist first time Wikipedia editors and Wikipedia in the Classroom course leaders.

The most reliable resources we can recommend are The Programs & Events Dashboard training libraries and The Wikimedia Foundation's Outreach For Educators resources. Visit **outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education/Resources/Overview**

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Text by Ewan McAndrew (Wikimedian in Residence at the University of Edinburgh), Dr Sara Thomas (Programme Manager, Wikimedia UK) and Wikimedia in the Classroom contributors.

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