

Editing Wikipedia, Discovering Inquiry: Collaboration in a Modern and Contemporary African Art History Course

By: [Maggie Murphy](#), [Elizabeth Perrill](#), Alexandra Gaal, Christina Kelly, and Maya Simmons

“Editing Wikipedia, Discovering Inquiry: Collaboration in a Modern and Contemporary African Art History Course,” co-authored with Maggie Murphy, Christina Kelly, Alexandra Gaal, and Maya Simmons. *Art Documentation*. <https://doi.org/10.1086/714390>

Submitted for publication to *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* on 03/01/2021

Made available courtesy of The University of Chicago Press: <https://doi.org/10.1086/714390>



This work is licensed under [a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International License](#).

Abstract:

The authors discuss a scaffolded, semester-long Wikipedia-editing project developed by a librarian and art history professor for a modern and contemporary African art history seminar. Their goals for the project were to introduce critical information literacy concepts into discussions about art information on the Wikipedia platform with their students, as well as to encourage them to see themselves as information creators. While course participants were tasked with adding research-based content that complied with Wikipedia’s point of view, they also generated many ideas for scholarly inquiry into their chosen artist’s life and work—a process with which undergraduate students, as emerging art historians, often struggle when they are assigned a traditional paper.

Keywords: Wikipedia | inquiry | research | art history

Article:

Introduction

Authors’ note: While this article is written from the perspective of an art librarian and a professor of art history, the authors have also included three former students as co-authors to this paper, as the students’ reflections on participating in the course were invaluable to the distillation of the ideas discussed here.

The idea of engaging with Wikipedia for active learning around critical information literacy concepts is not new. Many have written about the various ways in which librarians, faculty, and students have interrogated both the structure and content of the platform to discuss questions of authority, bias, and representation, in a variety of disciplinary settings.¹ In the field of art information, specifically, the work of Art+Feminism has created opportunities for thousands of people, both inside and beyond the academy, to learn how to edit Wikipedia in

order to increase the quantity and quality of articles about cis and trans women, non-binary, and BIPOC artists.²

At the same time, in undergraduate art history surveys and seminars, faculty and librarians are designing alternative research, writing, and creative projects for students—from writing artist’s statements and scripted dialogues to creating story maps, collages, exhibitions, and video documentaries—instead of assigning traditional papers.³ Reasons for this trend include wanting to give students more options for how they can demonstrate and apply what they have learned, making the processes and products required for the assessment more relevant to students’ personal and academic lives, and increasing student engagement with both class material and each other.⁴ One approach to an alternative assignment that shares many of the goals of a research paper is a scaffolded, semester-long project in which each seminar student researches and edits the Wikipedia entry for a single artist. Building upon a multi-year teaching collaboration, the authors of this paper (an art librarian and an art historian) designed such a project for a modern and contemporary African art history seminar with twenty-two students.

In addition to attending regular class sessions exploring course content, students in this seminar took part in a series of hands-on workshops focused on developing research strategies and editing Wikipedia. One of the workshops introduced a framework about the different rhetorical uses of sources in researched writing.⁵ This allowed the authors to discuss the explicit differences between how sources could be used rhetorically in Wikipedia articles and traditional art history papers, helping students further reflect on the influence of genre, audience, and purpose on their research and source integration strategies. The overall goals for the project were to introduce critical information literacy concepts, such as authority, bias, and representation, to discussions of art information on the Wikipedia platform, as well as encourage students participating in the course to see themselves as contributors to ongoing discussions about modern and contemporary African art.

The authors expected that students’ confidence in their role as information creators would increase as a result of this project. However, they were surprised at how many ideas class participants generated independently for scholarly inquiry into the work of their chosen artist during their conferences and in their final reflection papers. This seemed especially significant because, unlike a research paper assignment that requires students to posit their own questions, ideas, and assertions about an artist’s work in their writing, this assignment actually precluded it. Educators know that undergraduate students often struggle with brainstorming ideas for research questions when faced with a traditional paper. Yet, somehow the very process of editing articles that complied with Wikipedia’s content policies around neutrality and verifiability prompted these students to think about what they wanted to articulate in writing, but could not, given the confines of the platform and the norms of the reference genre. In other words, the limitation of contributing to texts that were intended to be merely descriptive and informative produced an unintended effect: students also generated research questions and arguments, based on their own observations and reflections about primary and secondary source material, that would best be addressed through interpretive and analytical art writing. This is the kind of genuine, iterative exploration of a chosen topic in which educators generally hope students will engage, which a traditional research paper assignment conversely may stymie for emerging art historians.

Wikipedia, Critical Orientations, and Art Information

Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia written and maintained by volunteer contributors and editors, is celebrating its twentieth birthday in 2021.⁶ Since its inception two decades ago, the use of Wikipedia by college students in the context of their coursework has been a subject of debate among disciplinary faculty and librarians across the curriculum. Because Wikipedia can be edited by anyone, concerns about the quality and reliability of its information has led many faculty members in and beyond art history to forbid its use in scholarly writing assignments, if not disparage its use outright in any context.⁷ For example, one art historian notes that she had a line in her syllabus to this effect for several years, stating “Do not rely on Wikipedia to conduct your research.” According to Amy Hamlin, her stance at the time was reflective of a view widely held by fellow art historians that, as a collaboratively authored, born-digital resource, Wikipedia represents a threat to the authority and intellectual rigor of traditional peer-reviewed scholarship within the discipline: “What kind of scholar and professor would I be were I not to warn my students against the dangers of unregulated knowledge?”⁸

Of course, along with students, faculty members and librarians *also* use Wikipedia regularly. Indeed, a reflection on her own frequent use of Wikipedia in the creation of PowerPoint slides for teaching is one of the reasons why Hamlin eventually removed the admonition against Wikipedia from her syllabus: “I regularly used Wikipedia for shorthand knowledge of persons, places, things, and events, and concepts to elucidate some aspect of the art or artist under discussion.”⁹ Its widespread use over the past twenty years certainly indicates a measure of public trust in its credibility as an encyclopedia—and with fair reason. An oft-cited 2005 study by Jim Giles¹⁰ found that Wikipedia’s accuracy for articles in the domain of science was nearly as high as *Encyclopedia Britannica*, yet errors are corrected much more quickly. Other researchers have calculated that 42 percent of inaccurate contributions to Wikipedia are rectified by the first subsequent viewer, while 70 percent are corrected within ten views.¹¹

While Wikipedia will always have its dissenters, fewer librarians and faculty members seem to be taking a hard line against the use of Wikipedia in student research now than a decade ago. While the practice of consulting Wikipedia certainly should not replace engagement with interpretive scholarly writing in art history, librarians who work with students as emerging researchers now largely embrace Wikipedia as an excellent source for background information, topic development, keyword brainstorming (for locating resources in databases that require precise searching), and finding ideas for additional sources when introducing students to strategies for approaching research assignments.¹² Stefanie Hilles even goes as far as arguing that librarians *must* address Wikipedia as an integral part of the information ecosystem within information literacy instruction.¹³

In addition, Wikipedia has been used by both disciplinary faculty and teaching librarians as a tool for introducing critical information literacy concepts about expertise, authority, power, and privilege in information creation and knowledge production, both within and outside of the field of art. For example, several practitioners have noted that scrutinizing Wikipedia’s public “Talk” and revision history pages for articles allows students to see firsthand the dynamics behind the social production of knowledge and the role of debate in various discourse communities.¹⁴ Anne-Marie Deiterling and Sara Jameson note in particular, “Students used to the neutral style of authorities such as encyclopedias and textbooks are often unaware of the serious differences of opinion that exist under the surface of that neutrality. The transparency of Wikipedia’s discussion pages makes those competing opinions visible.”¹⁵ Karen Weingarten and Corey Frost take this idea further, connecting these sites of discussion and scrutiny that underlie

Wikipedia to the iterative research, writing, and revision processes of scholarly inquiry. Indeed, engaging students in activities that encourage them to examine the collaborative authorship and editorial processes behind Wikipedia articles can support the development of critical practices and dispositions that align with many key ideas within the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education*.¹⁶

Likewise, Amanda Foster-Kaufman describes developing a series of Wikipedia-based assignments for a credit-bearing information literacy course that focus on exploring “underrepresentation and systemic bias” and encouraging “students to consider how power, privilege, and oppression operate within systems that produce, organize, and provide access to information.”¹⁷ More and more examples are emerging of librarians and faculty designing activities in class or stand-alone edit-a-thon¹⁸ workshops, as well as longer-form assignments, that allow students to interrogate systemic disparities in representation and authorship on Wikipedia, examine the interplays between labor, expertise, bias, and power in its collaborative model, and be empowered to contribute new content to one of the world’s most referenced open-access sources of knowledge.¹⁹ This arena of critical evaluation and reflective expansion of the platform’s coverage of underrepresented individuals is also where Wikipedia plays its largest role in the literature connecting art information and information literacy: through the work of Art+Feminism.²⁰

Background and Project Overview

As a team of an art librarian and an art historian, Maggie Murphy and Elizabeth Perrill have worked together for several years on designing and assessing activities and assignments that integrate critical information literacy practices and abilities in a range of art history courses, including an introductory survey, a sophomore research methods course, a senior capstone, and a graduate seminar.²¹ ARH 372: Modern and Contemporary African Art was a new course offered for fall 2019 semester within UNC Greensboro’s School of Art, resulting from the division of a one-semester survey of African art into two seminars: ARH 372 and its companion, ARH 370: Ancient Civilizations to Colonial Contact. The authors structured the course around a semester-long Wikipedia-editing project, in lieu of a traditional art history research paper assignment.

The impetus for this approach to the course structure was two-pronged. First, in preparation for developing ARH 372, Perrill applied for and received stipends from two internal funding opportunities at UNCG. One was a course-based undergraduate research experience (CURE) award from a Mellon-funded humanities teaching and learning initiative to use innovative pedagogical approaches in the design of undergraduate research-intensive courses. The other was an open-educational resource (OER) “mini-grant” from the University Libraries to utilize fair-use provisions, open-access publications, and public-domain content to curate course materials for students at no extra cost to them. While the authors sometimes collaborate on finding viable paths for online access to high-quality digital versions of images and texts as part of the Libraries’ OER mini-grant program, Perrill gets all the intellectual credit for developing her courses and instructional content, as well as seeking out these professional development opportunities around pedagogy and technology.

Second, both authors had become interested in the work of Art+Feminism independently: Perrill primarily for its work in expanding the coverage and quality of information about underrepresented artists on Wikipedia and Murphy because of its potential for empowering students to be contributors to ongoing conversations in their emerging areas of expertise. Murphy had participated in a few Art+Feminism edit-a-thons between 2017 and 2019 and co-organized

an unaffiliated edit-a-thon with similar goals as part of the 2018 National Day on Writing in UNC Greensboro's Jackson Library. Thus, in adapting Art+Feminism's premise and centering the course around editing the Wikipedia articles of modern and contemporary African artists, the authors were able to further explore their interests and design a project that incorporated their learning goals for students around critical evaluation and knowledge creation, while also developing a research-intensive course with no required textbook costs.

Before the semester began, the authors met with the director of the campus's digital rhetoric center (called the Digital ACT Studio, or DACTS) to discuss logistics for the project. Perrill presented to Murphy and the DACTS director her sketch for how to break her proposed semester-long assignment into six scaffolded steps. In order to help students develop the concrete skills necessary to edit Wikipedia, as well as build upon their existing knowledge about scholarly research, this team planned a series of six workshops to be co-taught by Murphy and the DACTS director on Wikipedia basics and advanced research strategies. The workshops would be held in lieu of regular class sessions, in a library computer lab, throughout the semester, employing a flipped classroom approach in which students conducted research, building on class content outside of the workshops, to then apply during the sessions.

In addition, the team worked together to refine the stages of the multi-step assignment (Figure 1), develop and revise rubrics for assessment of student's Wikipedia contributions (Appendix A), and compile additional tutorial resources to be embedded in the online shell for the course within the university's content management system. Finally, the authors decided to add one last requirement: each student would need to attend two one-on-one meetings, one with Murphy and one with Perrill. The purpose of these meetings was for students to provide updates on their progress with finding sources, synthesizing information, and editing the pages of their chosen artists, as well as ask questions in the authors' respective areas of expertise—the subject content of the course or the research aspect.

<i>Multi-Step Assignment Overview</i>	
Assignment Step	Short Description
Step 1	Identify a list of 5 artists/art movements that are represented in scholarly sources from class readings or parallel sources. Students will sign-up for one of the Focal Topic Days for their research to create peer groups that can help provide support for research.
Step 2	Search through Wikipedia to evaluate if a strong page and rigorously cited information is available on the artists/art movements selected. Create a ranked list of 3 top priority research topics from your original list of 5, with justification based on class rubric and Wikipedia workshops.
Step 3	Conduct initial research using scholarly databases and sources on 3 ranked artists/movements. Identification of artists/movements with the greatest disparity between the scholarly research available and the public-facing platform/Wikipedia. Following this assignment, individual artists/movements will be allocated to students based on expressed rankings and group interests within each Focal Topic.
Step 4	Focused individualized in-depth research on the artist/movement the student has selected. Create an annotated bibliography of at least 5 scholarly sources and 3-5 popular sources on selected artist/movement.
Step 5	Apply the knowledge gained in this disciplinary context to the public-facing platform and disseminate accurate, rigorously cited information to the public. Based on the Wiki Goals and Outcomes Rubric, which we will have discussed, edits will be categorized as Minor/Average/Substantive. You will be graded in each of the rubric categories and this rubric will also be used during peer-evaluations.
Step 6	Write a 4-6 page paper that reflects on the Wikipedia-editing experience, synthesizes the scholarly information available on the artist/art movement, and posits student's argument/hypothesis on the artist's work/production (its place in history or its direction in future).

Figure 1. The brief overview of the multi-step Wikipedia-editing assignment provided to students at the beginning of the semester. For each stage of the assignment, they were also given a more detailed assignment sheet and, for Parts 4–6, a submission checklist and/or evaluation rubric.

Connecting Rhetorical Use of Sources to Genre

The first workshop for the course, focusing on an overview of the Wikipedia platform, was held in the third week of the semester. That session was followed by an initial research workshop a week later, wherein students began to explore the range of resources available for researching modern and contemporary African art. During week six of the semester, students attended Workshop 3, in which they started to examine the role and function Wikipedia's "Talk" and "History" pages within the platform and were introduced to Wikipedia's core content policies: neutral point of view (NPOV), verifiability, and no original research (NOR). Together, these policies require that all Wikipedia articles be written from a neutral point of view, "representing significant views fairly, proportionately, and without bias" and that all assertions in articles must be "attributable to a reliable, published source." Furthermore, the verifiability policy specifically holds that anyone reading or editing an article should be able to check that a piece of information comes from a reliable source, which is why original research, criticism, or analysis is not permitted. Wikipedia forbids incorporating or citing unpublished theories, data, statements, concepts, arguments, or ideas in any form.²²

Because the authors wanted students to think through the implications of these content policies for art writing, the authors then engaged them in activity that asked them to compare a Wikipedia article and a scholarly journal article about a sample artist. The activity was framed by

a discussion of the following questions: What is the purpose of a Wikipedia entry? What is the purpose of a work of scholarship? How does the purpose impact the *content* of each? After students shared their thoughts for a few minutes, the authors presented them with the slide shown in Figure 2. The slide’s simplified outlines of both genres of writing—the reference entry and the journal article—helped set the stage for the detailed comparison students were asked to make between both formats in the subsequent activity and tied into the framework for thinking through rhetorical use of sources in art writing during the next workshop the following week.

Wikipedia entry:	Scholarly journal article:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Brief summary/overview● Biographical details<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Early life○ Education● Description of work/career<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Medium/technique○ Style/themes○ Critical reception○ Exhibitions○ Awards● Links to related resources● References	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Question or thesis● Background & context for argument● Interpretation or analysis, with evidence<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Formal/stylistic○ Iconographic/thematic○ Comparative○ Contextual/historical● Conclusion and discussion of significance/impact● Notes & references

Figure 2. A slide from Workshop 3 comparing the structure of a Wikipedia article and a scholarly journal article in art history. The notes from this slide read, “The bullets under ‘interpretation or analysis’ are examples of types of art historical writings, not elements that are included in every paper. Journal articles in the humanities will not necessarily have clear headings for each of these sections; they will blend together.”

Workshop 4 featured a continued exploration of the connection between students’ research, Wikipedia’s content policies, and the various use of information sources in scholarship before students engaged in more advanced research techniques to find difficult-to-locate information about their artists. These included combing the scholarly literature for all variations of an artist’s name found in the Union List of Artist Names, using the Google Books portal to search for key terms within books either not held by the library, or held only in print, or using the Internet Archive’s Wayback Machine to search for mentions of their artists in local African newspapers. See Appendix B for the “Research Log” handout accompanying this part of the workshop. However, before transitioning into the active research part of the session, students were presented with Joseph Bizup’s BEAM framework²³ for considering how different types of information can be used rhetorically in support of a scholarly argument.

As outlined by Bizup, the goal of introducing students to this framework, along with its corollary specifically for the humanities proposed a few years later by Bean, is to help them think through engaging with sources, the products of their research, in their writing by characterizing them in terms of how writers use sources in their texts.²⁴ In Workshop 4, the

authors wanted to contrast the rhetorical use of sources in scholarly art writing with the way the same sources might be integrated into a Wikipedia article—to emphasize again the differences between the interpretive, analytical writing of scholarship and the descriptive, neutral text permitted by Wikipedia’s content policies. Figure 3 pulls together the content from workshop slides into a table for easy comparison across Background, Exhibit, Argument, Method, and Theory (the T in Bean’s “BEAT”). Finally, to encourage students to synthesize ideas from this new framework with the discussion of purpose and audience in Workshop 3, the authors presented to students a slightly different version of the slide from Figure 2, shown in Figure 4. In the discussion that followed this slide, students began to reflect on the aspects of their chosen artist’s work that they would not be able to include or address through their Wikipedia article edits, such as their own interpretations and analysis of form, content, or technique.

Rhetorical use	In the context of scholarly writing	In the context of editing Wikipedia	Examples of potential sources for this use
Background	Provide readers with general information about a topic, in order to give them enough context to understand your argument.	Add biographical details or neutrally describe details of an artist’s career	An introductory chapter or topic overview in a monograph, expository information from a scholarly work, a biography of an artist
Exhibit	Introduce an example of a phenomena, an illustration of technique, evidence of an event taken place, or a primary site of interpretation or analysis for your argument	Neutrally describe an artist’s work or compile lists of artworks, exhibitions, or awards	An artifact, object, or work of art, photograph of an installation view, a document from an artist’s papers, an object label, an entry in an auction catalog, a recorded interview with a curator
Argument	Engage with another scholar’s argument in your own work, in order to analyze, discuss, or refute its reasoning or conclusions	Neutrally describe critical reception or analysis of an artist’s work by summarizing what scholars or critics have said about it	A review of a show or exhibition, an editorial or long-form essay in a magazine, a critical paper or chapter in a scholarly journal or anthology, a scholarly monograph
Method	Apply a research or analytical methodology from another source to your own research and writing	This has no application or equivalent for editing Wikipedia!	A critical paper or chapter in a scholarly journal or anthology, a scholarly monograph
Theory	Applying a specific theoretical framework originating with a particular scholar or school of thought in art, philosophy, visual culture, or a similar field to your own topic (i.e., feminist theory to analyze curatorial choice in a specific exhibition)	This has no application or equivalent for editing Wikipedia!	A critical or theoretical paper or chapter in a scholarly journal or anthology, a scholarly or theoretical monograph, a manifesto

Figure 3. A table presenting information from the librarian’s explanation of BEAM/BEAT in Workshop 4.

Wikipedia entry:	Art history research paper:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write brief summary/overview for lead section ● Provide biographical details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early life ○ Education ● Describe work/career <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Medium/technique ○ Style/themes ○ Critical reception ○ Exhibitions ○ Awards ● List references, provide links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce question or thesis ● Provide background & context for argument ● Engage in interpretation or analysis, provide evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Formal/stylistic ○ Iconographic/thematic ○ Comparative ○ Contextual/historical ● Draw conclusions and argue for significance/impact ● Include notes, provide references

Figure 4. The slide from [Figure 2](#), adapted to introduce rhetorical uses of sources using active language, as part of a discussion on the iterative research and writing process in Workshop 4.

Generating New Ideas for Inquiry through Contrast

In a now-classic text within composition studies, David Bartholomae suggests that research paper assignments for undergraduate students rarely produce the outcomes faculty have in mind: demonstration of content understanding and the ability to make original observations, synthesize ideas, and support an argument, within the norms of the discipline. Instead, he argues, traditional research paper assignments for emerging undergraduate students require that they mimic the specialized language and codes of academic discourse before they have sufficient content knowledge, awareness of conventions within specific disciplines, or reflective understanding of the role and purpose of scholarship in the first place.²⁵ This is at the core of why so many undergraduate students, as beginning participants in disciplinary conversations, struggle with even getting started with research papers, regardless of topic—a phenomenon observed by countless instructors, librarians, and researchers.²⁶ According to Bartholomae, it is not that most students do not, or would not, have ideas or observations that they want to explore when they are asked to brainstorm about potential research directions. Rather, “when the student above says, ‘I don’t know,’ he is not saying, then, that he has nothing to say. He is saying that he is not in a position to carry on this discussion.”²⁷ In other words, the expectations themselves are stymying to the development of ideas.

In art history, where research in so many cases begins with looking, observing, and reflecting on objects and works, it may seem that ideas for how to approach a researched writing assignment may flow more easily from engaging with these visual or haptic inputs—and in ARH 372, students *did* engage in brief formal analysis presentations, using works drawn from course readings and content. Yet there is plenty of evidence that, for many students, finding these kinds of ingresses to scholarly inquiry does not come naturally, demonstrated by the very existence of so many guides to writing the art history research paper.²⁸ In *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*, Sylvan Barnet explains, “Your own interests will guide you to the topic—the part of the broad subject—that you wish to explore, and you won’t know what you wish to explore until you start exploring.”²⁹ However, the idea that research is a process of open-ended exploration, often driven by curiosity, is a core element of one of the six frames of the *Framework for Information*

*Literacy in Higher Education: Research as Inquiry.*³⁰ The frames are based on the idea of threshold concepts, which “can be thought of as portals through which the learner must pass in order to develop new perspectives and wider understanding,” meaning that emerging scholars need explicit opportunities to learn, practice, and apply the ways of thinking, feeling, and doing with information contained within each frame. Thus, choosing a topic requires engaging in inquiry, but that is not something every student inherently knows how to do.

When the authors met with their students during one-on-one meetings and in their final reflective essays and presentations, students described their varying experiences with the research and Wikipedia-editing processes. They shared what they had read, seen, and observed, what questions they had but had been unable to answer, and which aspects of the artist’s work and life deeply interested them and about which they were driven to think and learn more. As a result, in preparing to write a text that was what another art history writing guide cautioned against for research papers— “merely descriptive”³¹—the students had begun to engage in genuine inquiry. In addition, they were frustrated that they would be unable to share their inferences and evidence, their interpretations and conclusions, on their artist’s Wikipedia page. In essence, they *wanted* to engage in the kind of writing a formal term paper requires. The authors’ students made substantive contributions to Wikipedia that improved both the quantity and quality of available information about modern and contemporary African art on one of the most used open-access sources of knowledge on the planet.³² The articles they edited include those about Kudzanai Chiurai, Chéri Samba, Omar Victor Diop, David Goldblatt, Youssef Nabil, Jane Alexander, George Lilanga, Samuel Fosso, Barthélémy Toguo, Bodys Isek Kingelez, Gladys Mgudlandlu, Peju Alatise, Ghada Amer, Johannes Phokela, Willie Bester, Mary Sibande, Gerard Sekoto, Athi Patra Ruga, Skunder Boghossian, Aïda Muluneh, Kendell Geers, and Toyin Ojih Odutola. Together, the twenty-two students in ARH 372 added an average of 1,279 words per article and made an average of eleven edits over the course of the fall semester, from September to November.

The following semester, the authors, along with the director of DACTS and three ARH 372 students, had the opportunity to give a presentation on the Wikipedia-editing project at the Conference on African-American & African Diasporic Cultures & Experience held at UNC Greensboro in February 2020. During the panel, each student gave a brief talk on the artist whose Wikipedia page she edited the previous fall and then shared her reflections on the process. As they each took their turns to present, and then later engaged in a question and answer session with the audience, many of their responses to the overall experience validated the authors’ original objectives for the project. The students shared that they were surprised at how little information was available about such influential artists at the outset of the project, and they recognized the disparities between information about modern and contemporary African artists and their European and North American peers. In addition, while they previously had not given a lot of thought to how the information in Wikipedia articles got there, they now felt gratified that they had played a role in constructing new knowledge on the platform that may serve as other researchers’ first introduction to those artists. Finally, they felt more confident in their research skills and planned to continue to add to Wikipedia as contributors as their expertise in the discipline grows.

Reflections and Conclusion

The authors’ observations are admittedly anecdotal, as they did not establish experimental conditions to study the outcomes of this course assignment on student perceptions about formal

writing in art history. However, based on the experiences and the reflections of ARH 372 students, the authors now believe that designing a curriculum sequence that places a seminar involving a semester-long Wikipedia-based project *before* a senior research capstone would provide students with the opportunity to engage in the kind of inquiry that is necessary to find a topic or direction and generate meaningful research questions, absent the pressure of having to produce a research paper. As Hamlin notes, participating in an edit-a-thon or multi-step editing assignment can be transformative for students as emerging art historians: “Once the student recognizes that she is implicated in the artwork’s intelligence and the discursive realm of scholarship, she understands that—like her—artists, art historians, and works of art are part of a complex social matrix, a common field in which she, too, is obliged to think and act.”³³

In addition, assignments that require students to contribute to Wikipedia, especially as a precursor to more traditional researched writing, potentially could help students demonstrate what Spivey et al. define as the essential competencies for college learning in art history. These competencies include abilities and practices for engaging in art historical research, such as assembling primary and secondary sources, distinguishing common methodologies used in art historical scholarship, critically examining the evidence used to support an author’s thesis, and identifying strengths and weaknesses of an art historical argument. However, just as important to these research-based competencies are the digital-based competencies, including being able to “locate, employ, evaluate, and produce digital resources appropriate for study and communication of academic research, and recognize ways they can use emerging technologies to contribute to scholarly knowledge, engage the public in art historical discourse, and demonstrate the discipline’s social and cultural value in a contemporary world.”³⁴ Indeed, contributing to Wikipedia is just the first step for students, as citizens and scholars, to create and share knowledge and contribute to public discussions about art and society.

Appendix A

<i>Wiki Goals and Outcomes Rubric</i>				
<i>Question to Consider</i>	<i>Your Ratings on Wiki Edits</i>			<i>Comments</i>
Basic Information / Broad Coverage 1. Did the student improve basic information/coverage? Does the student innumerate and document these changes?	Minor	Average	Substantive	
Verifiable 2. Did the student improve the verifiable citations for the Wiki article? Does the student innumerate and document these changes?	Minor	Average	Substantive	
Well-Written 3. Is the page well-written and neutral? Did the student edit existing text? If so, in what ways? Did the student add text; is it well-written and free of errors?	Minor	Average	Substantive	
Layout 4. Did the student improve the layout, divisions, and overall flow of the Wiki entry? Does the student document and innumerate these changes?	Minor	Average	Substantive	
Deeper Research / Interconnectivity / Augmentation 5. Has the student improved the depth of research on the topic? Have they significantly improved interconnectivity? Have they augmented the Wiki entry significantly?	Minor	Average	Substantive	

Appendix B. ARH 372 Workshop Log

Topic
<i>Who is your artist? Give me a little bit of background! Link to their existing Wikipedia page, if there is one:</i>
Keywords (list at least 5!)
<i>Brainstorm keywords related to the artist (name, location), their work (themes, techniques, medium, exhibits), or other related topics/ideas:</i>
Potential source for integrating into Wikipedia
<i>Describe, cite, or link to the potential source of information for your research you identified today so that I can check it out. Be sure to, at minimum, include author, title/publication, and date:</i>
What verifiable information from the source could be added to Wikipedia?
<i>Pull out some facts or information from the source about your artist:</i>
Next steps for your research (list 3):
<i>Describe the next steps (tasks, strategies, etc.) you will take in your research.</i>
1. 2. 3.

Notes

Maggie Murphy is an assistant professor and visual art and humanities librarian at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro; mmurphy@uncg.edu. Elizabeth Perrill is an associate professor of art history at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro; eperril@uncg.edu. Alexandra Gaal is an artist-in-residence with the Hirsch Wellness Network in Greensboro, North Carolina. Christina Kelly is an artist and designer working in Greensboro, North Carolina. Maya Simmons is a MA candidate in art history at the Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia.

1. Michele Van Hoeck and Debra Hoffmann, "From Audience to Authorship to Authority: Using Wikipedia to Strengthen Research and Critical Thinking Skills," in *Imagine, Innovate, Inspire: The Proceedings of the ACRL 2013 Conference (ACRL 2013, Indianapolis, IN: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2013)*, 217–29; Amanda Foster-Kaufman, "Wikipedia-Based Assignments and Critical Information Literacy: A Case Study," in *Critical Approaches to Credit-Bearing Information Literacy Courses*, ed. Angela Pashia and Jessica Critten (Chicago: Association of College and Research

- Libraries, 2019), 271–94; Angela Pratesi, Wendy Miller, and Elizabeth Sutton, “Democratizing Knowledge: Using Wikipedia for Inclusive Teaching and Research in Four Undergraduate Classes,” *Radical Teacher* 114 (July 18, 2019): 22–33, <https://doi.org/10.5195/rt.2019.517>.
2. Siân Evans, “Art 1 Feminism: An Interview with Siân Evans,” *Art Libraries Journal* 44, no. 2 (April 2019): 72–77, <https://doi.org/10.1017/alj.2019.7>; Siân Evans, Jacqueline Mabey, and Michael Mandiberg, “Editing for Equality: The Outcomes of the Art + Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-Thons,” *Art Documentation* 34, no. 2 (September 1, 2015): 194–203, <https://doi.org/10.1086/683380>.
 3. Caroline Bruzelius and Hannah L Jacobs, “The Living Syllabus: Rethinking the Introductory Course to Art History with Interactive Visualization,” *Art History Pedagogy & Practice* 2, no. 1 (2017): 20, <https://academicworks.cuny.edu/ahpp/vol2/iss1/5/>; Cara Smulevitz, “One Objective, Four Ways to Meet It: Replacing High-Stakes Exams with Multi-Option Creative Assessments,” *Art History Teaching Resources* (blog), April 22, 2018, <http://arthistoryteachingresources.org/2018/04/one-objective-four-ways-to-meet-it-replacing-high-stakes-exams-with-multi-option-creative-assessments/>; Virginia Spivey, Andy Schulz, and James Hopfensperger, “Measuring College Learning in Art History,” *Measuring College Learning Project*, Social Science Research Council, February 2018, <http://higherred.ssrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018.02-MCL-in-Art-History-Report-for-CAA.pdf>; Brett M. Van Hoesen, Laura Rocke, and Ann Medaille, “Mapping Art History: Enhancing the Teaching of German Art History with Student-Created Maps,” *Art Documentation* 38, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 35–52, <https://doi.org/10.1086/703509>; Leah McCurdy, “Creative Assessments for Creative Art History Teaching,” *Art History Teaching Resources* (blog), August 23, 2019, <http://arthistoryteachingresources.org/2019/08/creative-assessments-for-creative-art-history-teaching/>.
 4. Marie Gasper-Hulvat, “Active Learning in Art History: A Review of Formal Literature,” *Art History Pedagogy & Practice* 2, no. 1 (July 12, 2017), <https://academicworks.cuny.edu/ahpp/vol2/iss1/2/>; Smulevitz, “One Objective, Four Ways to Meet It”; McCurdy, “Creative Assessments for Creative Art History Teaching”; Elizabeth Pugliano et al., “Teaching Art History and Writing I: SECAC 2018 Conference Panel Review,” *Art History Teaching Resources* (blog), February 16, 2019, <http://arthistoryteachingresources.org/2019/02/teaching-art-history-and-writing-i-secac-2018-conference-panel-review/>; Anne Hunnell Chen, “Choose-Your-Own-Adventure Formal Analysis: Updating a Classroom Staple for the Age of Remote Learning,” *Art History Teaching Resources* (blog), August 10, 2020, <http://arthistoryteachingresources.org/2020/08/choose-your-own-adventure-formal-analysisupdating-a-classroom-staple-for-the-age-of-remote-learning/>.
 5. Joseph Bizup, “BEAM: A Rhetorical Vocabulary for Teaching Research-Based Writing,” *Rhetoric Review* 27, no. 1 (2008): 72–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07350190701738858>.
 6. “Wikipedia: About,” in Wikipedia, September 8, 2020, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:About&oldidp977383955>.
 7. Cate Calhoun, “Using Wikipedia in Information Literacy Instruction: Tips for Developing Research Skills,” *College & Research Libraries News* 75, no. 1 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.75.1.9056>; Ching-Jung Chen, “Art History: A Guide to Basic

- Research Resources,” Collection Building 28, no. 3 (January 1, 2009): 122–25, <https://doi.org/10.1108 /01604950910971152>.
8. Amy K. Hamlin, “Approaching Intellectual Emancipation: Critical Reading in Art, Art History, and Wikipedia,” in *Critical Reading Across the Curriculum*, ed. Robert DiYanni and Anton Borst (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2017), 104–22, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119154907.ch6>.
 9. Hamlin, “Approaching Intellectual Emancipation.”
 10. Jim Giles, “Internet Encyclopedias Go Head to Head,” *Nature* 438 (2005): 900–1
 11. Aaron Halfaker et al., “A Jury of Your Peers: Quality, Experience and Ownership in Wikipedia,” in *Proceedings of the 5th International Symposium on Wikis and Open Collaboration - WikiSym '09* (5th International Symposium, Orlando, FL: ACM Press, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.1145/1641309.1641332>.
 12. . Andrej Pop, *How to Do Things with Pictures: A Guide to Writing About Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Department of History of Art and Architecture, 2008), https://hwpi.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/writing_about_art_final_web.pdf; Jeff Gatten and Mike Bryant, “Rock the CASBAH: CalArts’ Student Behaviors and Habits,” *Art Documentation* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 63–69, <https://doi.org/10.1086/adx.29.2.27949555>; Sue Maberry, “Wikipedia: ABOUT,” Otis College LibGuides, <https://otis.libguides.com/Wikipedia/About>.
 13. Stefanie Hilles, “To Use or Not to Use? The Credibility of Wikipedia,” *Public Services Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (2014): 245–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080%2F15228959.2014.931204>.
 14. Anne-Marie Deitering and Sara Jameson, “Step by Step through the Scholarly Conversation: A Collaborative Library/Writing Faculty Project to Embed Information Literacy and Promote Critical Thinking in First Year Composition at Oregon State University,” *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 15, no. 1–2 (July 8, 2008): 57–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080 /10691310802176830>; Heidi LM Jacobs, “Posing the Wikipedia ‘Problem’: Information Literacy and the Praxis of Problem-Posing in Library Instruction,” in *Critical Library Instruction: Theories and Methods*, ed. Maria T. Accardi, Emily Drabinski, and Alana Kumbier (Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2010), 179–97; Karen Weingarten and Corey Frost, “Authoring Wikis: Rethinking Authorship through Digital Collaboration,” *The Radical Teacher*, no. 90 (2011): 47–57, <https://doi.org/10.5406/radicalteacher.90.0047>.
 15. Deitering and Jameson, “Step by Step through the Scholarly Conversation.”
 16. Association of College and Research Libraries, *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, February 9, 2015, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.
 17. Amanda Foster-Kaufman, “Wikipedia-Based Assignments and Critical Information Literacy: A Case Study,” in *Critical Approaches to Credit-Bearing Information Literacy Courses*, ed. Angela Pashia and Jessica Critten (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2019), 271–94.
 18. “Wikipedia: How to Run an Edit-a-Thon,” in Wikipedia, May 17, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:How_to_run_an_edit-a-thon&oldid=957130451.
 19. Jacobs, “Posing the Wikipedia ‘Problem’: Information Literacy and the Praxis of Problem-Posing in Library Instruction”; Hoeck and Hoffmann, “From Audience to Authorship to Authority: Using Wikipedia to Strengthen Research and Critical Thinking Skills”; Lydia Dawe and Ainslie Robinson, “Wikipedia Editing and Information Literacy:

- A Case Study,” *Information and Learning Science* 118, no. 1/2 (January 1, 2017): 5–16, <https://doi.org/10.1108/ILS-09-2016-0067>; Brian McKenzie et al., “From Poetry to Palmerstown: Using Wikipedia to Teach Critical Skills and Information Literacy in a First-Year Seminar,” *College Teaching* 66, no. 3 (July 3, 2018): 140–47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2018.1463504>; Pratesi, Miller, and Sutton, “Democratizing Knowledge.”
20. Since its outset as a nonprofit organization that organizes and promotes Wiki edit-a-thons, Art+Feminism has been associated with art librarianship and critical discussions of bias and underrepresentation of cis and trans women, non-binary, and BIPOC artists in open-access art information. Additionally, academic, art and design school, and art museum librarians, and along with art historians and studio artists, have been actively involved in the organization, marketing, and actual Wikipedia-editing at countless edit-a-thons supported by Art+Feminism at museums, archives, gallery spaces, and college and university libraries across the globe. While the development of critical practices for Wikipedia editing is a learning goal that has been incorporated into research-based projects in courses across the disciplines, in art history classes in particular, Art+Feminism’s mission, events, and training materials are likely to be the driving influence. See Hamlin, “Approaching Intellectual Emancipation: Critical Reading in Art, Art History, and Wikipedia”; Amy K. Hamlin, “Telling Stories Differently: Writing Women Artists into Wikipedia,” in *Extraordinary Partnerships: How the Arts and Humanities Are Transforming America*, ed. Christine Henseler (Amherst, MA: Lever Press, 2020), 119–36, <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.11649046>
 21. Maggie Murphy, “Authority Changes: Using the Framework to Teach Evaluation in an Art History Class” (The Innovative Library Classroom Conference, Radford University, May 9, 2018), <https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/listing.aspx?idp22983>; Maggie Murphy, “Framework-Based Instruction in Art History: From the First-Year Survey to the Senior Seminar” (Poster, ARLIS/NA Mid-Atlantic & Southeast Joint Chapter Meeting, Virginia Commonwealth University, November 16, 2018), <https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/listing.aspx?styp=ti&id=24629>.
 22. “Wikipedia: Core Content Policies,” in Wikipedia, May 22, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Core_content_policies&oldid=958224730.
 23. Bizup, “BEAM: A Rhetorical Vocabulary for Teaching Research-Based Writing,” 72–86.
 24. John C. Bean, *Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011); Kate Rubick, “Flashlight: Using Bizup’s BEAM to Illuminate the Rhetoric of Research,” *Reference Services Review* 43, no. 1 (February 9, 2015): 98–111.
 25. David Bartholomae, “Inventing the University,” *Journal of Basic Writing* 5, no. 1 (1986): 4–23, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4039-8439-5_4.
 26. Alison J. Head, “Learning the Ropes: How Freshman Conduct Course Research Once They Enter College,” *SSRN Electronic Journal* (December 5, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2364080>.
 27. Bartholomae, “Inventing the University.”
 28. Swarthmore Writing Associates Program, “Art History Writing Guide,” Swarthmore College, July 8, 2014, <https://www.swarthmore.edu/writing/art-history-writing-guide>; Maeve Gately, “Writing an Art History Paper” Hamilton College Nesbitt-Johnson Writing

- Center, 2014, <https://newsite.hamilton.edu/documents/Writing%20an%20Art%20History%20Paper.pdf>; “Standards and Expectations for an Art History Paper,” Skidmore Art History, <https://www.skidmore.edu/arthistory/academic/writing/standards.php>; “Tips & Tools: Art History,” The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/art-history/>; Gabrielle Moyer, “A Brief Guide to Writing in Art History,” Department of Art & Art History Writing Resources, Stanford University, https://art.stanford.edu/sites/art/files/a_brief_guide_0.pdf.
29. Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*, 5th ed. (New York: Longman, 1997), 197.
 30. Association of College and Research Libraries, *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*.
 31. Swarthmore Writing Associates Program, “Art History Writing Guide.”
 32. Alexa, “Top 500 Sites on the Web,” December 4, 2020, <https://www.alexa.com/topsites>.
 33. Hamlin, “Approaching Intellectual Emancipation.”
 34. Spivey, Schulz, and Hopfensperger, “Measuring College Learning in Art History.”