

A Tour of WikiLearn

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01 What is WikiLearn?

And why do I need it in my life?

Why do we need WikiLearn?

- To become the essential infrastructure of the ecosystem of free knowledge, as our Strategy calls for, we need to **invest in skills and leadership development**.
- There is a clear need for **up-to-date, high-quality** training resources across the movement.
- Much of the existing training materials are **under-utilized**, even by people who would gladly have used them had they **known** they existed.
- Other training materials are **incomplete** or **unmaintained** (and out of date).
- And many things just don't have any training materials available **at all**.



Why do we need WikiLearn?

- **Access** is a significant barrier to skill development in the Wikimedia movement.
 - Learning and development experiences happen at movement convenings (travel, language, time off, funding)
- In-person training is great, but also exclusionary and limited.
- Online learning addresses many of these downsides (and has its own).

What would be ideal?

- Ideally, the Wikimedia movement would have a platform where:
 - Structured, up-to-date learning resources are available for anyone to study.
 - Materials are available in multiple languages. (Text translated, videos subtitled)
 - Volunteers can contribute and not just consume learning materials.
 - Grading and automated assessment are available for self-study.
 - Grading, mentorship, and qualitative assessments are available for human-taught interactive courses.
 - Materials can be easily forked and modified.
 - All on free software.

How?

- Knowing the problem space is *enormous*, we decided to **experiment** with a Learning Management System (LMS), and ran **two interactive pilot courses** on the free-software **Moodle** platform.
- We picked two strategic topics: **identifying and addressing harassment** and **partnership building**. We developed custom curricula, in English, and taught for **8 weeks** in two-hour live session of instruction and discussion, supplemented by written assignments, graded by the instructor.



Some design considerations

- The courses were to **teach** principles and the learners were to **apply** them in real-life tasks, with written feedback.
- **Grades** were personal and private
- Live lessons were **recorded**; videos and slides were made available inside the platform
- The assignments were designed to **add up to a toolkit** or scaffolding for a project each learner could build on, in their local community and context.
- Easy integration with existing Wikimedia identity using OAuth
- Course materials (slides+video) are **available on Commons**



Pilot conclusions

- The pilot was successful: learner feedback was very positive, and the skills taught were described as helpful and useful in the learners' Wikimedia work.
- We were not entirely happy with the platform, so switched from Moodle to Open edX, another free-software LMS platform.
- It was important for us to enable **course content translation**, to allow sharing excellent teaching materials across languages.
 - Specifically, to benefit from materials not authored in English!
- So we developed a course content translation feature, relying on the familiar translation system on Meta, allowing course authors to enable translation of their courses.



Why not Wikiversity?

- Wikiversity is a poor fit for our purpose. It is, *at best*, a collaborative environment for **developing** curricula. It is a very poor **learning** environment. It misses basic features modern Learning Management Systems do have:
 - The concept of **enrollment**. The concept of a **cohort**.
 - Mechanism for submitting, reviewing, and grading **assignments**, *privately*.
 - Learner **inboxes**, **threaded discussion** forums.
 - Smooth **integration** with (free-software) BigBlueButton **video calls**.
 - Plugins (e.g. quizzes)

Why not build these into Wikiversity?

- Totally beyond our team's power to decide.
- There already exist excellent free-software platforms that do these things; competing with them from an inferior starting position is probably not a good use of resources.
- Wikiversity is not a thriving project; it does not look like the collaborative wiki approach is contributing much – the majority of content on WV is solo work.



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Let's take a tour!

learn.wiki
studio.learn.wiki

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Looking ahead

Things we still need to figure out

Governance

- When we open the platform to community curation, what governance measures should we put in place to **handle abuse and spam**?
- Do we need some **distinction** between complete, maintained, and up-to-date courses and the various in-progress or low-quality courses that would appear on the platform once open? If so, what might that look like, and **who** would be creating and maintaining it?
- We will be having a public conversation about this in the coming months.



Desired topics?

- What topics would you be interested to take a course on?
- What topics would you be interested in **teaching and developing curriculum for?**



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Next steps

How can we engage with WikiLearn?

These are early days!

1. Take an available course
2. Translate a course into your language
3. [Write to us](#) if you want to develop curriculum yourself
4. Tell your colleagues about WikiLearn!

**Thank you for your
attention!**