

## Want to start a WOW! Editing Group in your community? Here's 10 key steps....

- 1. Identify your target community and seek out multiple avenues through which to recruit it's members.**  
*For example, WOW! reached out to various student organizations, residential communities and academic programs to enlist mentors from UC Berkeley and contacted administrators on various levels (principals, counselors, teachers) to enlist high-school mentees. We used email to contact parent groups, posted in community Facebook pages, and placed flyers in cafes and libraries.*
- 2. Host an information session before the start of the program to communicate to prospective participants the goals and expectations of the program.** Ask each participant to introduce themselves. Keep it upbeat and fun.
- 3. Meet once each month in a large group.** Having large gatherings will galvanize the excitement of new editors while simultaneously fostering a safe space for connecting.
- 4. Keep each social exciting and unique by having themes, guest speakers, or something that draws them in besides editing.**  
*For example, if you're hosting your event on a campus, draw from the exciting faculty and student body to give short, 20 minute presentations about their research.*
- 5. Provide food and water at each social.** Hungry people won't function at their highest level - and editing requires brain power.
- 6. Devote the entire first meeting (and reserve time at following meetings) to teach Wikipedia editing and research skills.** Check-in at the beginning of each meeting to note editing and cultural hurdles participants experience. This takes about 15 minutes.
- 7. Create dyad or trio editing groups to meet between socials by connecting participants with similar interests or compatible schedules.** Ideally, each group will have a mentor, who has research/writing experience, and a mentee, who is less experienced.
- 8. Maintain frequent, regular contact with your group.** This can be achieved by using social media tools for sharing photos and sending weekly emails with updates on the group's progress and reminders. Send surveys online periodically to see how your group feels about their experiences in large and small groups.
- 9. Separate public and private.** Create a public Facebook group for recruiting purposes. Also create a private group through which participants can communicate with each other, ask questions, and post updates on their progress. Participants will not share their challenges publicly, but they will feel a kinship with their group members, so a private online group is important.
- 10. Document your group meetings.** Keep an attendance sheet at the door in case new members show up. (Have a column for writing their email addresses.) Take photos during the social, and post them on your Facebook page. This is a way of cementing the bond in your group by visualizing shared experiences.

## Insights from the field...

- If you're working with minors, invite parents to the information session. Introduce yourself and tell them a bit about your background.
- Whenever possible, choose public spaces (at universities or libraries, for example) to have your meetings.
- Work with a leader who has experience with your demographic. Minors in particular require a leader who can responsibly work with their age group. *For example, the WOW! Editing Group leader was a university professor and a mother. She had a LiveScan background check with the Berkeley Unified School District as well as extensive experience working with K-12 and university level students.*
- When working with high school students, accommodate holiday breaks, prom, SAT testing and other major dates that might conflict with editing socials. Create a calendar for each school's breaks and exams, and work around those dates. If you don't, expect some students will miss your socials.
- Keep the times and locations of socials and events as consistent as possible. We met at the same location from 11-2 each month. In a later survey, participants said they would prefer to meet from 10-1. If scheduling allows, be flexible and shift your meeting times by an hour or so.
- Choose a means of communication most used by your participants (Facebook, email, etc.). We had trouble finding a platform that everyone used, so we sent our messages across multiple platforms.
- Design a strategy for trouble-shooting editing during socials that is appropriate and effective for your particular group. *In WOW!, we had participants 'flag' their computers with questions on post-it notes as they edited, which our Wikipedian addressed one-by-one to the group.*
- Be attentive and responsive to the particular needs and challenges of your participants. *For example, our high-school aged participants had a relatively easy time learning the mechanics of editing Wikipedia, but needed more support in developing brainstorming and research skills.*
- Encourage participants' to share articles they are working on with the rest of the group by setting aside time for check-ins at social events.
- The success of your group depends on more than knowing the mechanics of editing a Wikipedia article. Understanding the culture of Wikipedia is just as important. *For example, our participants sometimes saw their edits removed within hours of making them. While this is frustrating to new editors, it also creates an opportunity for learning. Some edits that were removed were often not cited at all or not cited by a reputable source. This opens up space for practicing good citations. It also opens up space for learning how to challenge the deletion of your work by another user.*