



WIKIBRIDGES

Bridges between school, digital and
free culture



*An innovative distance learning
training about the Wikimedia's
projects*

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1- Introduction

What makes a distance learning experience a successful one? How can the same content be relevant for different educator profiles and contexts? These are some of the questions that guided Wikimedia Argentina through the process of reviewing, small detail by small detail, the learning proposal we launched for educators all over Latin America back in 2014.

A first distinctive mark is “identification”. From the very beginning the proposal is built on the basis of something everyone can relate to: school culture. The next step is to find ways to articulate school culture and digital culture (one of the recent challenges that national education policies have presented to schools throughout the country, bringing the material and cultural consumption patterns of younger people into the spotlight). Last, this exercise of articulation necessarily brings into question the ethical aspects of digital culture: What are the rules of the game in the digital scene? It is here that free culture can provide answers. We are then able to build bridges between school, digital and free culture. Bridges which are strong yet flexible, relaxed yet compromised, solid but adaptable at the same time.

After an initial research of the online and presential learning proposals for educators existing in the region, we decided to offer a new and unprecedented type of course, making the most of the tools available in the Wiki world and using the resources available thanks to the generation of free content. We played with different digital proposals that could shape the experience of users, to make them conscious of what is new, what is known and what can be created in the future.

A group of Wikimedia specialists from different areas worked along the Latin American Network of Educational Portals (RELPE) for several months. We travelled to Peru to take part in the Virtual Educa conference, where we had the opportunity to discuss the different challenges of our agenda with experts in the region. We are convinced that a proposal which disregards users’ true needs, individual realities and backgrounds, becomes pointless and is bound to be unsuccessful. Real interaction with our final users and their local contexts is key.

The question is, how do we put together a proposal which is practical, and contributes to the construction of a *glocal* approach, while maintaining theoretical rigour and keeping up with the voices of experts and current research trends? The balance and the challenges in education are catalyzed in the creation of technological spaces and proposals where “do

and do now” is vital and there is still room for innovation. “Doing now” must be coupled with critical thought. The celerity of technology cannot impose such a pace on education that we are unable to stop and consider: what are we doing? why? Where do we want to go? Again free culture comes into play giving clues and pointing us in the right direction to understand the rights and good practices related to digital culture.

Wikimedia and Wikimedia projects are much more than digital environments: they are open spaces for debate, collaborative construction and positioning of knowledge. Spaces where people share rights and obligations and learn to exist in harmony with others. These are spaces governed by altruism, where the ultimate aim is for the largest amount of knowledge possible to be free and accessible for everyone. This is part of the concept of free culture and is tightly linked to the values and premises of school culture.

With these ideas and goals in mind, we redesigned our course -which celebrated its second edition in 2015- giving it a theoretical foundation which implied an active exercise of production, consideration of local contexts, diffusion and participation within digital culture.

Wikimedia and RELPE launch a free online course

Wikimedia Argentina and the Latin American Network of Education Portals (RELPE) are launching a new virtual space destined to the diffusion of the fundamentals of free culture and its close connection with education and new technologies. We are pleased to invite professionals in the field of Education Technology and members of the community in general, to join us in this new training proposal.

We are all familiar with Wikipedia but, how many of us are actively involved in editing? Is Wikipedia just a digital encyclopedia? With the needs and real context of schools as a starting point, we examine one of the greatest works available on the Internet, to learn how to contribute to it and get to know the rest of Wiki projects. The course has a theoretical component which links to an active exercise of production, reflection on our local contexts, intervention, and diffusion of digital culture.

Bridges between school, digital and free culture is a course specifically designed by Wikimedia Argentina for RELPE's Virtual Campus with the aim to trigger didactic proposals that can serve as meeting points between the classroom and different digital platforms that focus on user participation and on the importance of community work.

The course will be available from Thursday 2nd October for all users of the RELPE Campus platform.

Applications can be sent by email to secretaria@relpe.org



www.relpe.org

www.wikimedia.org.ar

www.campus.relpe.org

Source: <http://www.relpe.org/wikimedia-y-relpe-presentan-un-curso-gratuito/>

The text below corresponds to the testimony of Laura Marés, Director of RELPE, our main ally in the design of this proposal:

LAURA MARÉS' TESTIMONY



My name is Laura Marés, I am the Executive Secretary of the Latin American Network of Educational Portals, RELPE. This is a network which links the open and free public portals from the Spanish and Latin American Ministries of Education. We work to share projects, knowledge and public policies concerning education. I had worked with Wikipedia before, as a director of the Educ.ar portal in Argentina, in the development of a Wikipedia offline project for schools which had no access to Internet.

Working with Wikimedia Argentina has been a bonus, not just because of the advantages of having a local contact, but also because of the broad approach they have towards collaborative culture. To be more specific, we worked together in the creation of an e-learning course on the subject of Wikimedia in the classroom and the use of different collaborative tools.

I think this is a really worthy initiative to promote the smart use of Wikipedia in educational contexts and to encourage the production of content on local and regional matters by local users -the real protagonists.

The biggest challenge for me is to really instill these ideas (open resources, collaborative culture, users as producers of content) and to create a work structure that facilitates the conditions necessary for these ideas to set in and remain.

Her insights were key in the design and development of a learning proposal which could bring different and richer content for users.



2-What is WikiLab?



Schools (or universities), institutions over a hundred years old which sustain the education of younger generations, are currently anchored in a world that has experienced drastic changes: the way we interact, the different forms of production, the means through which information is released and spread. The generation of knowledge itself has changed and is accessible at the touch of a button through mobile devices.

Wikimedia Argentina and [RELPE](#) have worked together in the frame of this unique social and cultural juncture, to create a learning proposal for educators in the region through what we have called *WikiLabs*: an incubator of co-creation activities where users can experiment, design, share and collaborate in the production of initiatives that can become bridges between school, digital and free culture, from and for the region.



Source: <http://www.wikimedia.org.ar/2014/10/19/tendiendo-puentes-entre-las-culturas-escolares-digitales-y-libres/>

Besides, our learning proposal became a space for experimentation on how to design a sustainable distance learning strategy, where contents and ideas could be generated by the educators themselves.

These contents and ideas would eventually translate into didactic material and experiences that could be shared and used by others, with the reassurance of working with material co-created by educators.

This way, the course becomes an invitation for educators to be brave and dare to generate more and better educational projects involving technology. In other words, inspiring others to do, by doing, by doing with others. To show that it is possible to examine what is already known to us, shape it into what we need today and imagine what we want for the future in terms of education.

3-Why Bridges?

We believe -we are certain- that educators have a priceless knowledge of what happens at schools (and by mentioning schools we are also referring to the rest of educational institutions). “What happens” is called school culture and has to do with the timeframes and spaces at schools: how lessons are planned and what actually happens during those lessons, the relation between the different actors in the educational scene (directives, teachers, students, families, non-teaching staff), the conflicts that arise on a day-to-day basis, the social demands on the institution and on educators, among others.

In sum, educators have broad experience in school practices: they know the “what and how” of teaching educative content. But, what happens when they find themselves on new ground such as the uses and scenarios presented by digital culture? At this point we need to consider that most of our educators have been trained as such years before the digital explosion, so many of them see it urgent and necessary to adapt quickly to the uses and tools provided by the web. However, learning to use digital tools involves working with them, and for this reason we thought it was necessary to give participants a space for intervention and action which was both controlled and on-site -in the actual context of production - to facilitate the transfer of digital work tools from educators to their students.



Source: Tim Heaton [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)], undefined

In addition, digital culture promotes a set of rules which change or consolidate according to the practices of users. What happens when we do not have an active participation in this process? These particular rules define even the limits of access, manipulation and intervention of the information that circulates in digital channels. Our second challenge in this project was to show participants what the particularities of digital culture are, as a necessary condition to be present and stay so in the digital scene.

Free culture on the other hand, gives us the perspective of “what and how” we can influence the web in a critical and creative manner. In this regard, offering educators the possibility of intervening from the standpoint of free culture was the most innovative part of our proposal, since it rarely happens in the practice of education.

In sum, we rose to the challenge of building bridges to bring the school, digital and free cultures closer, generating educational proposals that had a real application in the classroom. In this sense, we never lost sight of the fact that, if we wanted educators to be able to transfer the new skills acquired into their work spaces, it was necessary for both, the tools and the methodology used, to be adaptable to the content of the academic curriculum of each discipline. This is why we say we kept our “pedagogical glasses” on throughout the design and development of the proposal.

The experience and teaching background of educators become the standpoint from which to build bridges and discover the interstices between school, digital and free culture. Their experience is the compass that guides us through exploring, researching

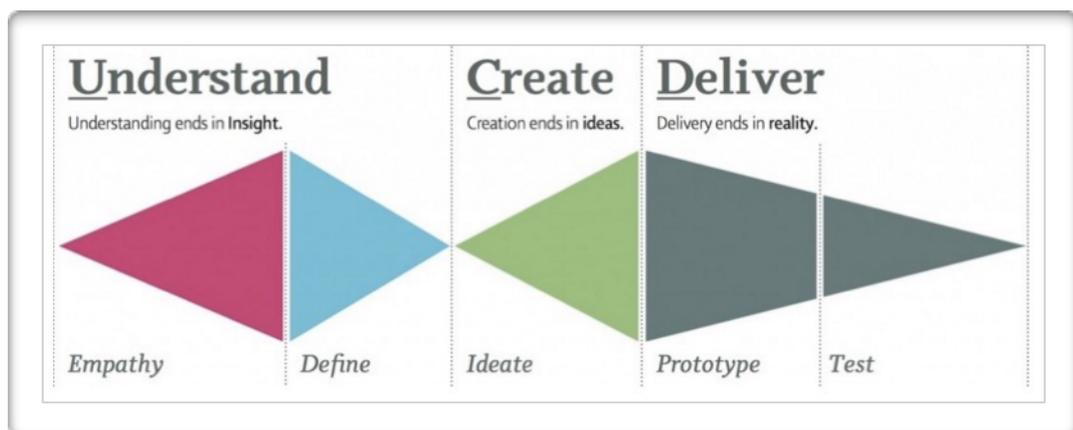
and designing educational proposals aimed at introducing and consolidating the use of technology in educational contexts.

4- Course design

The design of the course followed a strategy called [Design Thinking](#) normally used by product designers in the industrial sector and currently, also in the creation of technology. In other words, this is the methodology behind the conception and production of the same digital tools which are the basis of our proposal. This approach made us think of instances which are mutually defined and where feedback goes back and forth. It is a dynamic, non-linear and never ending process (it is often referred to as "prototyped"). What we look for is the most adequate way to solve a problem within an unfamiliar environment.

The different stages involved in this strategy are:

- Definition: synthesizing the objectives of the proposal and the detected needs that the proposal will address.
- Investigation: researching on the latest state of the art related to our subject of work.
- Ideation: coming up with different possible solutions for the situation or problem detected.
- Prototype: creating a basic draft of the proposal and trying to apply it.
- Assessment: evaluating the impact of the proposal and detecting elements for improvement.

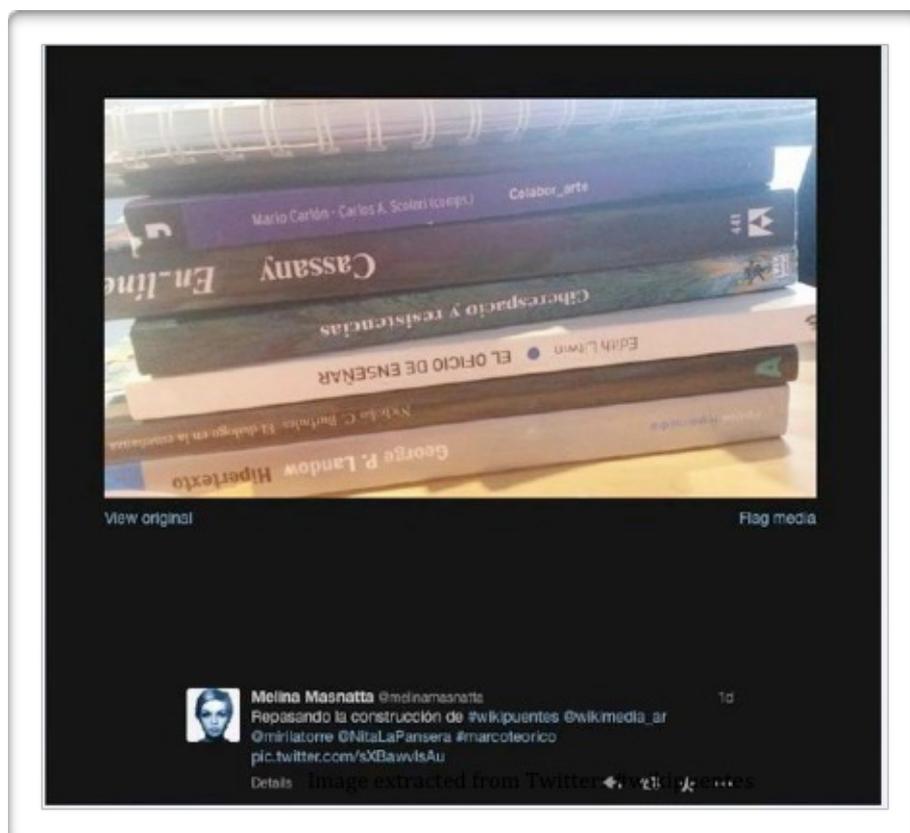


Source: <http://designthinking.co.nz/design-thinking-in-a-day/>

The course as we designed it was flexible enough to allow participants to work on the basis of their own needs and interests. It also encouraged participants to apply the same methodology in the design of their own educational proposals using Wikimedia projects.

The first step in the design of the learning proposal was to define our objective/ problem. We finally defined 2 (two) main issues:

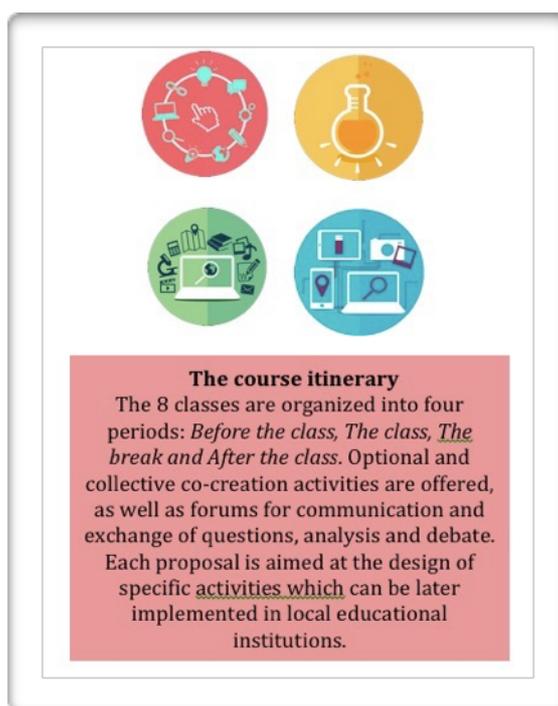
- a) sensitizing and promoting instances for appropriation of the concept of free culture within educational spaces (represented by the Wikimedia projects).
- b) taking what is already known by our recipients (this is, school and digital culture) as a starting point.



During the stage of investigation, we sought the advice of experts in the field of Educational Technology to learn what the current nodal points are in this field. At the same time, we analyzed similar proposals and precedents. At this stage, we found that many other training proposals had failed because of their excessive rigidity in applying a fixed training scheme, a finished product. In addition to this, the majority of distance learning proposals have a high participant drop-out rate. One of the reasons is the availability-or lack of -accreditation, a common requirement from educators which helps them validating and progressing in their career.

On many occasions we do not count with accreditation from the ministries of education, so our proposal necessarily had to be solid and have its own intrinsic value.

With these considerations in mind we came up with a proposal which left room for the production, imagination, reflections and needs that our participants brought in every week, reviewing and putting into value the whole process and its intermediate results. In other words, although we did design a general course agenda which started by questioning certain uses and practices in order to introduce participants to the Wiki culture and philosophy, to later participate actively in the design of experiences that encouraged cultural and educational appropriation, the content and extension of each class was determined by the issues that arose as the course progressed, aiming for the intensity of the use, content and production to be transferred progressively on to the Wikipedia platform and its sister projects, and to facilitate participant intervention and appropriation. The design of each class, specially the practical part, was adapted to the particular issues that came up along the course of the sessions.



Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f9/Propuesta_Curso_%22Puentes_entre_la_cultura_escolar%2C_digital_y_libre%22_2015.pdf

The content taught each week included proposals for activities where participants were presented with a challenge that involved questioning their own practices and needs. This motivated participants, not only to read the contexts of application, but to analyze the contents of the classes in the light of their own reality and to reinterpret these contents to find the most suitable strategy for themselves. These contents and productions became the work material for the following weeks. In the prototype stage

of the design, we presented a course [curriculum](#), which served as a didactic contract, as well as class models with their corresponding activities, which we adjusted as we went along, according to the response of our participants.



Finally, during the stage of assessment we analyzed the rate of participation and the quality of the productions. These were the metrics that allowed us to make adjustments in our proposal. This strategy was repeated each week, achieving a 70% course completion rate in both editions of the course. It should be noted that during the first edition we had an additional disadvantage: the course was organized at the end of the academic year, a period when educators in general do not engage in learning proposals.

RELPE required an 8-week course proposal from the beginning. This is vital when we think about the sustainability of a training proposal which grants no teacher scores.

To achieve the dynamism that we wanted for the page, we included a link to twitter on the platform as well as videos. Free digital tools were embedded, among other strategies. However, the reality of the unavailability of internet connection in some places made us think of alternatives to make the content of the classes downloadable, allowing the participants to access them at any time and place.

5- Course platform and technological resources

Where did the course take place? RELPE gave us access to their [Moodle platform](#), and allowed us to customize its design. In this sense, the design of the platform was also part of the content, with an aesthetic approach which was clean, and attractive, and used logos from node.org (to be coherent with the values of free culture)

Campus | References

Each thematic block is divided into sections containing different course-related information and proposals.

In the general Introduction block:



GPS: It is called like this because it is a sort of roadmap which explains how to find your way around the Campus, from the technical and pedagogical point of view.



Dialogues: these are communication forums where you can ask technical questions and read news updates.



Time for Mate: for many countries in Latin America getting together to drink mate or coffee is an excuse for relaxation and informal exchange. There will be a forum for participants exclusively, where you will have the opportunity to talk with your colleagues about different subjects and make the most of each other's experiences and interests.

In the weekly blocks:



Trailer: this is a preview of the subjects we will work on during the week: the contents, how they were designed and what we expect to achieve in them.



The Classroom: this is a downloadable version of the theoretical content of the subject which invites to the analysis, questioning and contextualization of the different issues that mainstream school, digital and free culture. They are based on different sources and are related to trending topics. Its extension may vary depending on the subject.



Co-creating: this is a space to develop the production activities proposed each week. It provides instances of collaborative exchange that will be helpful to meet different challenges.



To achieve the dynamism that we wanted for the page, we included a link to twitter on the platform as well as videos. Free digital tools were embedded, among other strategies. However, the reality of the unavailability of internet connection in some places made us think of alternatives to make the content of the classes downloadable, allowing the participants to access them at any time and place.

6- Course objectives

One of the constants that is present in online education proposals is the issue of participant drop-out. Generally speaking, over 50% of participants discontinue this type of course. For this reason, one of our leitmotivs was to promote activities which motivated educators enough to guarantee their continuity and active participation in our distance learning course.

We wanted to put forward an innovative proposal which was so solid that participants were motivated week by week to continue with the itinerary. To achieve this, we implemented different strategies related to participant follow up, course flexibility and

constant invitation to participate through different means: the course platform, mailings and social networks.

The objectives that guided us through the design of the course were varied but all of them linked to pedagogical purposes:

a) **Generating appropriation**



[2014 Edition](#) and [2015 Edition](#)

The call for participation was open to anyone who felt appealed by the word “educator”. This allowed us to enrol a variety of profiles in the field of education: secondary school teachers, professors in tertiary education, educational technologists, professionals into teaching, researchers... this diversity of participant profiles gave way to the challenge of coming up with activities which were adequate for each participant, with independence of their area or discipline of work. It also contributed to enrich the exchange of experiences and ideas that took place over the course of the program.

We are convinced of the importance of bringing together school, digital and free culture to the point that each class included microproposals which implied a certain degree of incursion in the Wiki world, where participants could understand the logics of working in this type of environment, introducing some specific concepts which are key in free culture, and never losing sight of the pedagogical purposes of the proposal, for which the practical activities became particularly relevant.

Below is an example of an activity proposed for the third week of the course (extracted from the educational platform):

Design of a Wikipedist log in 3 clicks

From: Melina Masnatta- Thursday 16th October 2014, 10:09

Welcome! You are all invited to create a log of articles describing topics you would like to cover with your students (for instance: visiting an article about Museums, then an article about a particular artist, and finally another one about an artistic movement). You should specify the topic/content and the related urls. The important thing is to think carefully about hyperlinks. What is it that makes the focus or the nodes more powerful?

Re: Design of a Wikipedist log in 3 clicks

From: Karina Fernandez- Saturday 18th October 2014, 13:32

Here is my log:

1) Visiting articles about the **Boedo Group** and the **Florida Group** (from these you can access the pages of both neighborhoods, where their respective history is explained, in order to reach a better understanding of the supposed rivalry between them and of the ideological views supported by each one)

2) Choosing articles from a representative of each group, Borges and Gonzalez Tuñon, for instance. Comparing their ideas and productions.

3) Reading the sections of the **History of Argentina between the years 1919-1939** to frame these intellectual views into context, in a walkthrough that allows us to see how the position of each group was not the result of the ideas of a few intellectuals in their ivory towers, but they were part of greater discussions taking place not only in Argentina, but also in the rest of the world. Although Wikipedia does not link to this point directly, there is a link to the articles of both groups in the general article on the 1920's decade, which gives us a better perspective of the above intellectual discussions in the frame of the discussions and events occurring in the rest of the world.

Image extracted from Campus

Re: Design of a Wikipedist log in 3 clicks

From: Mauro Travieso – Monday, 20th October 2014, 16:09

Hi everyone! The wikipedist log in 3 clicks that I propose is:

1) Reading the following three articles on Wikipedia:

- **Harlem shake**
- **Flashmob**
- **Ice Bucket Challenge**

2) After going through and analyzing these phenomena/movements/cultural expressions we can work on the concept of Web 2.0

3) At this point we can discuss what the differences are between Web 2.0 and Web 1.0 to reflect, not only on the characteristics but also on the risks of Web 2.0. I chose these cultural expressions to reach a better understanding of how their viralization is facilitated by Web 2.0: everyone can have their own version of the Harlem Shake on the Web! Our own Flashmob! This is why I dedicated the second click to the concept of Web 2.0. Although these expressions can obviously be analyzed from the perspective of several different discipline areas, I thought it would be interesting to "look at them" through this lense, as they are clear examples of what the "Upload" "edit" and "share" buttons mean on the web, to then go on to reflect on other ways of participating in the web.

What the third click does is to broaden our perspective (also from the historical point of view) on the web, and to start thinking about our role as critical users. I hope my proposal is interesting for you! Any suggestions will be welcome! Regards!

Image extracted from Campus

Re: Design of a Wikipedist log in 3 clicks

From: Delia Vázquez – Sunday, 19th October 2014, 22:40

Hi everyone!

Here is my log: I propose working on the life and writings of **Edgar Allan Poe** in the relevant article on Wikipedia. Then focusing on the poem "**The Raven**". I think it is important to work with later adaptations of the original as the version made, for instance, for an episode of **the Simpsons**.

Regards for everyone,
Delia

Image extracted from Campus

b) The factor of real/local context in the application of the course

The call for participation was wide, not only in terms of recipient profiles, but also in terms of territory since, although issued by an Argentine organization, it was open to all countries in Latin America. This meant that every educator would give their productions the local imprint they thought was more adequate for their context. See the contributions below for instance:

Contribution of a teacher from Argentina:

Re: Wikipedia's backstage

From: Vanesa Lorena Rodríguez – sábado, 18 de octubre de 2014, 00:14

Hello everyone.

I have chosen an article on **clandestine detention centers**, because although there are articles on clandestine centers in other places, it is necessary to have an article talking about this issue in general terms. My choice responds to the fact that throughout the history of Argentina a number of coups have occurred, de facto governments which have used these centers to carry out inhuman actions. Knowing what happened and how is vital for this to never happen again, and for these events, which have marked our local as well as the world's history, to never be forgotten.

The article I have chosen is **Cacerolazo** (a demonstration where people bangs pots and pans as a sign of protest). This article needs references to attest its truthfulness, as well as a reorganization of its content to meet Wikipedia's style guidelines.

I chose this topic because it is an event that affected Argentina profoundly in the decade of 1990, it marked a turning point in our history, and also happened in other countries, which I did not know.

Regards, Vanesa

Image extracted from Campus

Contribution of a teacher from Bolivia:

Re: on Wikimedia Commons

From: David Bernardo Quintana Lima- Sunday, 2nd November 2014, 00:12

Hello all,

The image I just uploaded is related to an article I am working on about the Municipality of Machaca:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nu%C3%B1o_Qollo.JPG

Greetings, I look forward to hearing from you

Image extracted from Campus

We must remark that there are [education policies for the massive inclusion of technology in the classroom](#) which differ from one country to another. At a smaller scale, there are particularities which conform each school's own identity. Educators in general have a good knowledge of how things work in their institutions and take these particularities into consideration at the time of planning the use of technology in their classes.

c) Creating community

We are humans. We establish relationships by bonding with the rest of people. Aside from being grouped in a single place -the platform- for a same purpose -participating in the course- we thought it was important to have a space where participants could talk and bond outside the formality of the course.



This is why we created “Mateando” (drinking mate), a space within the platform dedicated to building the community. In addition, we looked for places where the community could expand outside the platform, on Twitter for instance:



Here we talked to each other and shared productions, links to topics of interest and images through the common use of the hashtag *#wikipuentes*

Also, based on the level of participation and the quality of the work produced, we selected a few wikiambassadors- high profile participants who collaborated in the following edition of the course in 2015-. The wikiambassador figure was created by the Wikimedia team as a way of recognition for the effort and interest that some educators show in continuing their training.

d) Self-directed learning

This was a nodal point in our proposal. Educators are used to being rushed with delivery dates and submission deadlines in order to obtain accreditation for whatever online course they are taking.

Our proposal was focused on achieving high quality contributions instead, so granting flexibility in the deadlines for submission of activities was a key aspect of the design. We allocated a space for co-creation and activities every week. In this space, educators were given two leads: thread A and thread B. They could participate in the thread of their choice or in both. This made it clear to our participants that the expectations of the Wikimedia team were quality-focused, prioritizing the quality of

the productions. Secondly, this way of work allowed us to retain participants who for some reason were delayed to join in the proposal.

It must be pointed out that “Self-directed learning” never meant “alone learning”. Each participant received close support by the teachers of the course. This helped participants to understand what was happening at any given moment, and allowed for an ongoing evaluation and adaptation of the course activities, to respond to the needs and difficulties of the participants. This flexibility and attention to their needs translated into a close and genuine bond between participants and teachers, which at times seemed stronger than that of physical presence.

In addition, at the time of working on Wikipedia, each participant had a choice among different levels of participation and collaboration: edition of articles, addition of content, upload of multimedia or photographic material, correction of data, addition of sources or creation of new articles. Everyone followed the itinerary with independence of the rest of participants, which also made them aware of their own possibilities of access and creation. The biggest hindrance to overcome at this point was the frustration which sometimes users feel when editing for the first few times. For this reason, we encouraged each participant to choose a coequiper, either another participant in the course, or a work colleague, neighbor or relative, who could help them through the challenge of edition.

e) Evaluation strategies

Finally, we did not use a numerical/linear method of evaluation for each activity, instead we chose to let participants go as in-depth into the proposal as they wanted to, and in the direction that was most interesting for them. This is one of the innovative features that make our proposal a unique experience since, in most formal educational environments (either presential or online), we are used to seeing linear and ascending proposals, where going through an evaluation is a requirement to access higher levels. The novelty here was to be able to generate a project which was sustainable by itself, having interest -rather than evaluation- as the motivation of the participants to complete the activities proposed.

The first productions of our participants involved collective creation, like the creation of a digital wall of culture-related Wikicites. This generated a feeling a co-creation, allowed them to see how the fabric of a project is weaved through collaboration, and the colors that each participant could bring in.

At the end of both editions of the course we conducted a survey where we asked participants about their level of satisfaction with the proposal. Several educators were disappointed not to have completed the itinerary, but they admitted that they had

improved their knowledge about digital and free culture and learnt how to contribute in wiki environments. This will allow them to use wiki tools in educational projects designed by themselves.

Re: Education Wikiproject

From: Karina Wainschenker- Friday, 5th December 2014, 17:08

Hi everyone!!! Really late I know, but here I am...

First of all, let me tell you that although I have not participated much, I followed the topics and activities weekly through the Campus summaries.

I send attached my proposal for and Editathon and another one for a Course/Seminar. I am at your disposal for anything you think I may have to correct/edit to improve either of them.

THANKS!!! Love <3<3<3

Image extracted from Campus

7-Overview of the itinerary

Working on the premise that it was necessary to find links between the interstices of school, digital and free culture, we looked for theoretical references in the fields of Education Technology and Social Education that could serve as the grounds on which to analyse how the three currently relate and the way information is produced and spread.

On that basis, we generated a curriculum of some general subjects which narrowed down into more specific topics¹:

- **Class 1: "Beyond Wikipedia" free culture and school culture.** We questioned current digital uses and practices, examining Wikipedia as a dynamic project which expands at social, cultural and educational level. Our aim was for educators to realize the need for us to take an active role and defining ourselves as users, makers and carers, to find interstices and potentiate school culture.
- **Class 2: Digital school practices (Digital classroom).** The proposed exercise here was to compare common school practices with parallel digital tools, for instance using a dictionary (Wikidictionary), reading the news (Wikinews), finding quotes for different events (Wikiquotes), or consulting specialized books (Wikispecies) as tools we have always used in the classroom and are now available digitally.

¹ The above is the original curriculum which was later updated and adapted for the following edition according to the comments and suggestions of participants. This was specified on the initial digital didactic contract and was one of the points of the proposal as we mentioned.

- **Class 3: The free encyclopedia: the largest collaborative project in history.** Wikipedia as a great work of reference and the roles it involves: readers and editors. We analyzed Wikipedia as a contemporary cultural phenomenon: what the implications are of having thousands of users worldwide contributing real-time to the encyclopedia in different languages and with specific knowledge of what happens in their particular region. The system of hyperlinks, the semantic field, the network of thought behind an article, the forms of co-creating articles, in sum: what makes Wikipedia the world's largest encyclopedia? What is it made of? These were the key questions to learn the rules of the game and the reason for them.
- **Class 4: Be brave, be a Wikipedist.** A class dedicated to production and co-creation in a real setting: Wikipedia
- **Class 5: "On cutting, pasting and reinventing" and "A thousand images and a word".** - What do these two sentences have in common? We start from the idea of "cutting and pasting" as a metaphor of those expressions of digital art which involve "reinventing", this is, appropriating -creatively speaking- a content by adapting and changing it, and which can be applied to the active and creative participation on Wikimedia projects. The second sentence presented visual reading as an exercise which acquires a particular meaning in digital environments. The expansion of fixed and mobile images (photographs and videos) plus audio as another tool for registry and valuable resource in education. Mashing-up and remixing as strategies proper to digital culture, analyzing these from the perspective of free culture and appropriating them from the logic of education.
- **Class 6: "Your place, my place".** We examined the concept of "Glocal" to highlight the knowledge which stems locally and is shared and used globally thanks to the use of digital platforms. We tried to deconstruct the classical view of what cultural patrimony means, and how popular culture is enriched, both being the raw material for Wikipedia.
- **Class 7: From school to the world: Education Wikiproject.** We set out from the analysis of current case-studies, to propose the creation of material for the classroom through the design of educational projects. Participants were encouraged to review the itinerary completed so far and extract a glossary of new digital practices in the classroom. In addition, we tried to define strategies in education that could allow us to detect the challenges we currently face in matters of digital inclusion: the gender breach and the preservation of native languages among others. In sum, we worked to create a Wiki educational manifesto for the region.

Reviewing our journey: Course highlights

The design and development of our proposal considered the local/real context as well as the previous knowledge and experience of the participants.

The first activities involved sharing personal views and experiences in regard to Wikimedia projects, and Wikipedia in particular. Acknowledging the challenges and preconceptions presented by the participants was a starting point to get to know the reality, obstacles and difficulties we may find in actual educational environments. This first step generated an atmosphere of trust and recognition.

In addition, we focused on search strategies that would provide reliable information and sources, working within specialized settings provided by RELPE, such as [MAPEOTIC](#).

The production activities were aimed at overcoming the challenges presented by each participant's own local context, for instance, examining their school curriculum and teacher planning to see which Wikimedia projects could articulate with their classes.

We chose trending topics and current issues, from news such as the [monkey selfies](#), to concerns related to the use of search engines or the validation of sources of information. These are current issues which concern and worry teachers, and at the same time question our role as users of the Internet, for instance in everything that is related to the legal aspects of the use of information, such as [copyleft](#) or [copyright](#). The monkey selfies issue was a clear example of this. We work in an ever-changing environment where knowing the rules while staying actively involved is part of the challenge that any user faces. This challenge is even bigger for educators, who have the critical role of teaching others in these digital environments.

Editing Wikipedia was one of our intermediate proposals. The initial approach was to get participants to understand the logics of editing; next we worked on the practical application of Wikipedia's educational potential, finding topics of interests for classes and education projects. The purpose was to give editing a new dimension, beyond a mere exercise of writing.

The forums and the use of hastags such as *#wikipuertes* facilitated the exchange of information and ideas outside the set course hours, and the construction of a community aside the formal activities presented in the course. Social networks were a useful tool in this regard.

Finally, participants were invited to take part in two **active contests (or Collaborative Experiences as we called them)** which Wikimedia Argentina was holding at the

time: [Banco de imágenes de Escuelas Argentinas](#) (*Bank of images of argentine schools*) launched in cooperation with [IBERTIC OEI](#) and [Wikitour](#). With this activity we tried to engage educators into different initiatives which take place outside training courses.

For the second edition of the course in 2015, we planned the immersion in Wikipedia from the very beginning. This was one of the most valuable lessons we learnt from the first edition. This strategy made it easier for participants to familiarize with the Wikipedia platform from the start, and to have a better understanding of the pedagogical approach of the course. Wikipedia was the platform shared on campus from the beginning which translated into a higher rate of participation in it.

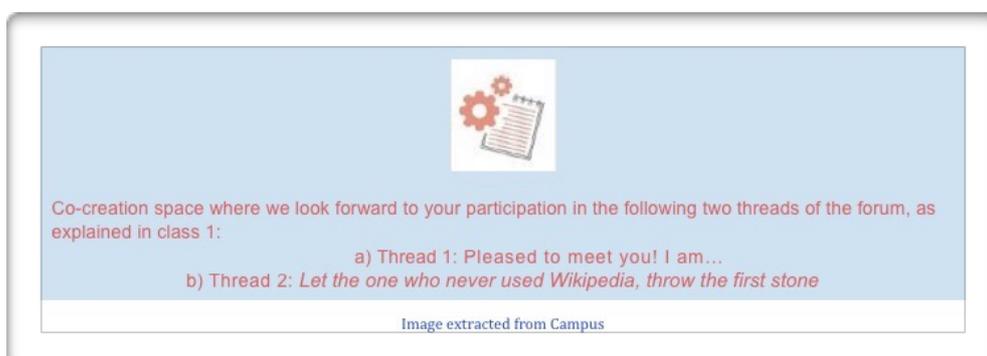
Another change we made was related to the duration of the course. Our proposal of 2014 was an eight-week course (a requisite for RELPE). However, we organized six classes only, allocating more time to the editing of Wikipedia and the creation of the Education Wikiproject. In sum, we reversed the order of the course agenda and adjusted it to allow more time for production during the process, to meet our participants' needs and learning times. The above didactic strategies were consolidated in the 2015 edition of the course.

8- Organization of individual classes

We designed a class structure which we mainstreamed into all our classes and which is linked to school culture:

- 1) Pre-class: introduction and questions on a subject.
- 2) Class: development of the main contents of the subject.
- 3) Co-creation: activities exploring the possible actions arising from the subject.
- 4) Break time: links to contents of interest to be read as a way of a break. These were articles or notes related to other subjects or issues.
- 5) After class: suggestions of links where participants could continue learning about the subject of the class.

This structure allowed for a “friendly” access to the material. In addition, we chose not to use technical language but language that readers/receptors would use day-to-day. Ordinary expressions used for common situations such as:



During the classes, we used images as metaphors to introduce the nodal subject of the day. In the words of Edith Litwin (2008): “Metaphors are interpretative sources that can enrich a process, being alternative sources and ways of interpretation. It is likely that changing the way we explain ourselves will motivate students to explore and find new dimensions to the subject in question.”



We used this image from Wikimedia Commons to explain, through a metaphor, what happens to web contents and to Wikimedia projects in particular. What do you think? Please take a minute to look at this computer graphic. What does it mean to you? The title of this image is “The train that never stops. How the continuous transit system works” and it shows how people imagined a never-stopping train would look like, back in 1913. It would be an underground train which would run on mobile rails and would be in constant service. Why did we choose this image? To date, Wikimedia (yes, Wikimedia, not Wikipedia) has 14 ongoing projects, 30 million articles in 285 languages (the “superstar” among the projects is indeed Wikipedia and we will later explain why). However, this is not an absolute or completed work, because everyday thousands of people from different places around the world are increasing these figures, creating new articles, uploading images, providing resources and sources, editing existing articles or adding information to them. In other words, Wikimedia never stops. In this case, the people in charge of keeping the rails moving are the thousands of Wiki contributors who selflessly help to expand the reach of Wikimedia projects.

Fragment from class I

We have no doubt of the relevance of visual impact in our present time, and this is why we looked for inspiring images as opening tools for our classes, helping us transmit the importance of image in digital culture.

At the same time, images leave a permanent imprint in relation to the content of a subject, as we tried to establish links between the images presented and the subjects already studied in the classes.

Another distinctive feature of the course was the “reinvention” of the contributions made by educators into new collective creations, using the resources and tools freely available on the web:



- <https://www.symbaloo.com/mix/wikireferencias>
- <https://www.symbaloo.com/mix/wikireferencias2015-a>
- <https://www.symbaloo.com/mix/wikireferencias2015-b>
- <https://www.symbaloo.com/mix/wikireferencias2015-c>



- <http://wikimedia.org.ar/wikipuentes/img/wikicitas2014.png>
- <http://wikimedia.org.ar/wikipuentes/img/wikicitas2015.png>

9 - Wikipedia as a pedagogical tool

Wikimedia Argentina fully supports the idea that us, educators, must teach our students how to use Wikipedia, specially in countries which count with programs and education policies of technology inclusion in the classroom. We know that students are using Wikipedia anywhere in the world where they have an internet connection, so really, the debate on should it be used or not is past its due date. What we need to discuss now is how to teach students to use it correctly and what role we want it to have in our education plans.

Wikipedia is an encyclopedia, the largest one in history, with the advantages and disadvantages this involves – mainly because it proposes different forms of co-creation of knowledge. No editorial could produce what thousands of users are producing worldwide, in different languages and with accurate knowledge of what is happening in their local contexts. Precisely, the proposal for people to become editors was aimed at offering the world the knowledge that only people in the particular community or city have: a monument, an institution, church or cultural point of interest, an event, a personality, a landscape in their area can be known to others thanks to the visibility provided by the publication of an article.

We firmly believe that the only way to learn when we talk about technology is through experience, so it was key for us to be able to work within the real context of application of the theory: Wikipedia. We started with activities that allowed participants to become familiar with the platform, then we moved on to the search, edition and creation of articles and finally we arrived to the design of what we call a Education Wikiproject: using Wikipedia as a tool or pedagogical resource in the teaching of specific contents of the annual academic curricula.

The screen captures below show examples of participant experiences posted in the exchange forums.

Re: Wikipedia's backstage

From: Carolina Havrylenko- ~~saturday~~, 18th October 2014, 12:41

Hi, nearly drowned in the links...

After much exploring something called my attention. There is no article on Alphabetical Order. Wikipedia redirects to Alphabet and requests for a translation of the corresponding article in English. This is the subject I am working on with my third grade students.

Also, in the "problem articles" I came across an article on Ethnomathematics which is "orphaned". This was interesting for me because I studied the subject of didactic approaches to Mathematics some time ago and I thought it was a new and valuable concept to add to the curriculum.

Love, Carolina.

Image extracted from Campus

Re: Wikipedia's backstage

De: Mariana Ferrarelli – Monday 20th October 2014, 10:57

Hi everyone!

The article I chose, which does not appear on Wikipedia, is the one referred to the House of Borges in Adrogué, Buenos Aires, and is not on the list of pending or already requested articles either. It is the only residence where Borges lived that's open to the public worldwide. It was inaugurated yesterday, after months of works and preparation. It would be great to visit it with students and write an article about it afterwards.

In regard to the "problem articles", I think Speech is an article which I could work on with my students, after studying the different perspectives from which it can be conceptualized: semiotics, ethnography, the archeology of culture (Focault), etc.

Mariana

Image extracted from Campus

10- The Wikiprojects: on-site productions

The course concluded with the creation of a Education Wikiproject. For this activity, participants were asked to develop an education project which was real and viable, and that was relevant to their own students and to the content of their respective academic curricula. It included some items that involved an analysis of the contents covered throughout the course. We defined these as:

- **#wikibridges**: to define the components of digital, school and free culture contained in their proposals and specify the reason for including them.
- **Wikichallenges**: to try and mainstream in their proposals some of the lines of action promoted by Wikimedia projects, for instance: gender breach, visibility of minority or native cultures, etc.

The productions returned were varied in their themes and degree of depth. Among the most remarkable projects we found:

Supersized reality (Mauro Travieso)
Journeys guided by the names of our cities (Delia Vázquez)
Representations (Valentina Guffanti)
Revisiting Cortázar on Wikipedia (María Bazán Lezcano)
Business administration (Paola Dellepiane)
The organized community (María Soledad Ortiz Suárez)
Revaluation of local cultural heritage (David Bernardo Quintana Lima)
Cultural centers (Karina Wainschenker)
Antigona, the figure of the heroine with a tragic fate (Giorgina Riestra)
Native communities which still survive (Carolina Del Bell)

From marathon to editathon, the editathon on Physical Education (Cristina Carosio)

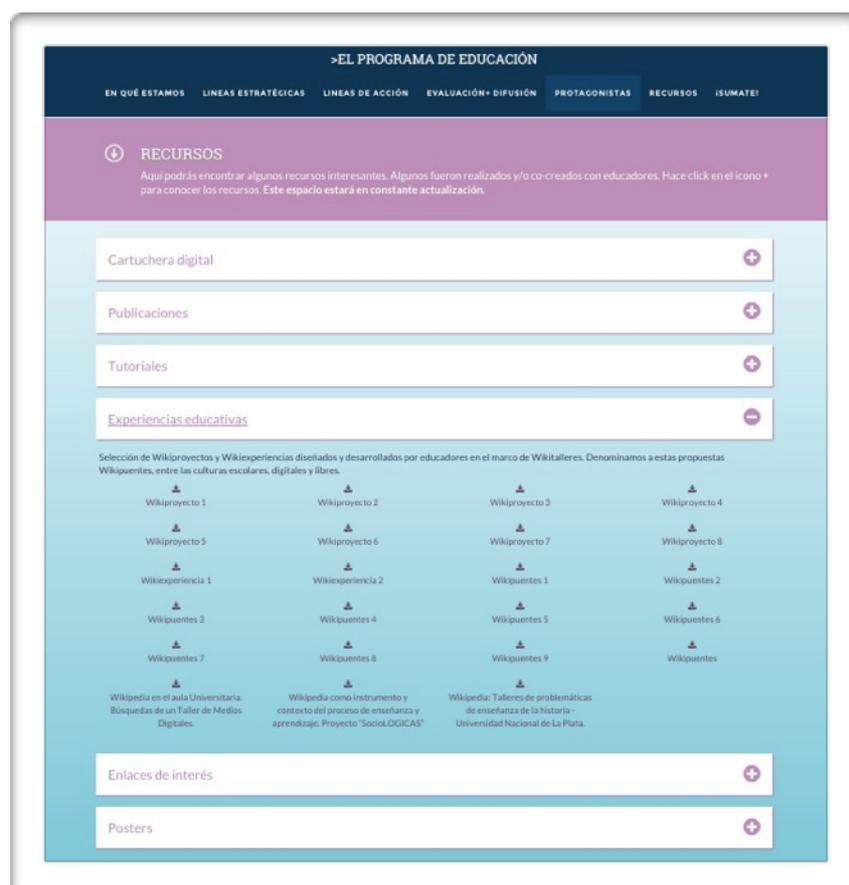
Ruins of Jesus and Trinidad del Paraná (Silvia Riveros)

Our community, cultural impositions and our language (José Saravia)

The Samborombon river as a public space (María Rosa Stábile)

A visit to the mocovi community of "Aim mokoilek" (María Fabiana Filippa)

All of them are available in spanish in wikimediacommons an in the WMAR Education Program ´s digital site: <http://www.wikimedia.org.ar/programadeeducacion/>



10 – Multiplying yet customizing

The organization of this course granted us not only a quick positioning within educational environments, but also a network of new relationships that enriched and multiplied our proposal. We always kept in mind the customization and consideration of the different contexts and institutional needs. This way, we offered a course at university level together with the National University of la Plata, and another course for teachers in primary and secondary education, in cooperation with the ICT Coordination office of the General Council of Education of the province of Entre Rios through the @prender portal. Each of our partners in these projects offered their own

platforms and spaces, but they also gained a new identity, for instance, @prender created a special logo "[Ser Wiki](#)" (being Wiki). We are currently working to continue to reach other key institutions with our proposal.



On another hand, we counted with high-profile participants such as one of the coordinators of the PENT Flacso program, a leading faculty for training of educators and specialists, with which Wikimedia continues to carry out activities.

¿Por qué Wikipedia en la Universidad?

Empieza 27 de Mayo

organizan

Mitos, Usos y Posibilidades

Se acercan herramientas para diseñar estrategias didácticas con los proyectos Wikimedia, buscando interpelar e incorporar la cultura digital y libre en las prácticas universitarias desde una perspectiva crítica y creativa.

Destinatarios
Profesores UNLP

Duración
6 semanas

Inscripción
8 al 15 de mayo de 2015 - goo.gl/0Z5Nik Cupos limitados

Consultas
capacitacion.ead@presi.unlp.edu.ar

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flyer_Seminario_UNLP.png

Local reference cases

Because the first edition of the course took place in October 2014, and considering that Wikimedia Argentina's Education Program was created in April that same year, we had few local references at the time of organizing the course. For this reason, we worked on the basis of some experiences gathered in that short time, which we considered valuable to inspire the creation of proposals validated by their own authors and actors in education.

- The first one was set at university level: <https://medium.com/@pbongiovanni/wikipedista-se-nace-o-se-hace-9800719bd7ae>



The second one is framed in the context of a broad educational proposal and reached us via twitter. After an interview we made in Bahia Blanca, these are the words of professor Marcela Spezzapria:

"As I already let you know on Twitter: it was very useful for my students to watch/listen to the video of your "lecture" about Wikipedia. They are studying our language while they continue their secondary education, so I designed a proposal where different items were covered:

+listening comprehension

+spontaneous speech

+2 varieties of Spanish language

+important considerations regarding a means of information and knowledge that they use on a daily basis.

+Spoken counterpart: prompting students to ask new questions.

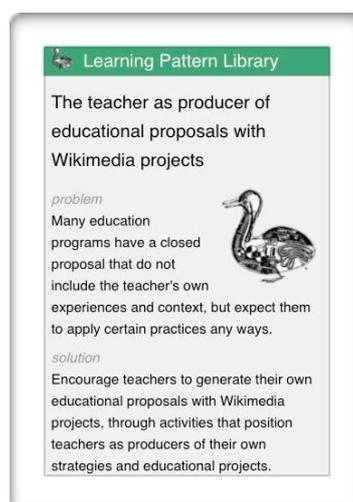
In sum, I believe we all enjoyed and really made the most of this document and of the activities arising from it. Here are the questions asked by the students Victor, Emma, Édouard, Natan, Richard, Élora,

Hanan, Séléna, Alice, Kendra, Grégoire, Adrian, Louise, Jérôme, Adélie: <https://soundcloud.com/radiomermoz/preguntassobreelmundowikipedia>”



12 -Learning patterns

Wikimedia’s Education program is linked to chapters all over the world. It counts with an evaluation portal which is a learning hub to share and understand experiences. To analyze and reflect on how the programs work. It is there that learning patterns are generated. Learning patterns are guidelines or strategies which explain how the proposals for innovation developed by each chapter work. The first edition of the course provided three learning patterns, which we shared with the global community:



https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Learning_Patterns_created_by_Wikimedia_Argentina

- 1) Design of a distance learning proposal in Education: https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:Learning_patterns/Design_of_a_proposed_distance_learning_resource

- 2) The teacher as producer of educational proposals with Wikimedia projects: https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:Learning_patterns/The_teacher_as_producer_of_educational_proposals_with_Wikimedia_projects
- 3) Strategies to generate interest, motivation and continuity in the digital education community: https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:Learning_patterns/Strategies_to_generate_interest,_motivation_and_continuity_in_the_digital_education_community

Further, there was a number of actions aimed at sharing information inside the community, the Newsletter for instance, which reaches the whole of territory: *Argentina contributes to a massive cross-border course of free knowledge in Spanish-speaking countries*: https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education/Newsletter/June_2015/Argentina_contributes_to_a_massive_cross-border_course_of_free_knowledge_in_Spanish-speaking_countries

13- Educator training: expanding roles and new Wikiambassadors

At the time of designing the proposal, our expectations in the medium-term were conditioned by several factors. On one hand, we wanted it to be a “reusable” proposal, which does not mean it is not a finished, ready-to-use product. The potential to reuse the program lies on the fact that it is an open proposal which goes in-depth into current topics linked to school, digital and free culture, but at the same time leaves room for the introduction of improvements to the content or even for new subjects. In fact, the learning proposal is slightly different between the 2014 and 2015 versions, and there were on-the-go changes made as particular activities, materials or actions became relevant at a given moment along the course. At the initial stage of design, we made the pedagogical decision to include “on-the-go” as part of the proposal, as we consider it is vital to maintain its validity and relevance.

On another hand, as the course was designed for teachers from all educative levels, we knew we would likely count with the participation of very experienced professionals wanting to continue their training. With this in mind, we took on the challenge to engage some of the educators participating in this experience, to join our teaching team in the following editions of the course. At the end of the 2014 edition, participants were invited to become *Wikiambassadors* in their regions and educational institutions. They were motivated not just to have a **Wikipedist Kit** (which was purposely designed with a specific aesthetic reference) but to become the raw material and live voices of this publication.



https://outreach.wikimedia.org/wiki/Education/Countries/Argentina#/media/File:Kit_Wikipedista_2014.jpg

We also designed certificates of participation. Below are the models of the 2014 and 2015 editions:



That is how Paola Dellepiane -a teacher of Mathematics and a specialist in Educational Technology- and Mauro Travieso -a University professor and Educational technologist- who participated in the 2014 edition of the course, changed their roles from educators in training to educators who train other educators. This is not a minor thing, and that is why we have dedicated a section to it. Finding out how they had actually put into practice the knowledge and skills adquired in the course, and showing our recongnition of the important role they play in education, condensed into a concrete action: making them become part of the pedagogical team. Mauro and Paola are the representatives of the first cohort of participants in the course “Bridges between school, digital and free culture” expanding their roles.

We invite you to read their testimonies:

Mauro Travieso. My wikitestimony



I took part in the 2014 edition of the course “Bridges between school, digital and free culture” and it was through its itinerary that I got to know the projects of the Wikimedia Foundation aside from the well known Wikipedia. Although we did analyze Wikipedia in the University Professorship where I collaborate, I was unaware of the depth of its philosophy, the different roles of its members and its working mechanisms. I was glad to become acquainted with this brilliant proposal, not just as a reader but as an “amateur” editor. Editing Wikipedia, although a familiar activity for me (I should mention that our Professorship counts with a Technology wiki) was a big challenge for me.

Delving deeper into the projects of the Foundation, participating in them (by uploading images, editing articles and adding phrases), reflecting on their potential in Education, and designing my own teaching and learning proposals using some of these projects, helped me to go further in my own reflections about the relationships (either existing ones or still to be built) between Education and Technology.

I was very happy to be asked to join the course again, this time as a tutor, in the 2015 edition. The objectives proposed are varied and all of them very valuable, with a special emphasis on building bridges between “School”, digital culture (or cyberculture as some people call it) and free culture. As an educator, I am convinced of the need to build these bridges. Taking part in the course as a tutor, not only was -and is still- useful to receive further training on the appropriation of projects (as tools), it was also an opportunity to further my training along with other colleagues who were part of the team that carries this proposal: improving my skills as a tutor, evaluating educational proposals on different subjects, acting as moderator in forums, taking part in collaborative productions and learning different 2.0 tools which I had not used before, were part of the skills that I improved or gained thanks to my participation as a tutor in the course. I believe it is necessary to stay in “alert mode” to improve our roles as virtual tutors:

How can we engage a higher number of students to complete the learning itinerary proposed? How can we manage increasingly valuable and relevant input and output for our students? Do we have any clues as to how to design educational proposals which are “embedded” in the professional contexts of virtual students??

It is still necessary to debunk some myths which concern Wikipedia in particular (the course is helpful in this sense also): who “controls” Wikipedia? Can anyone write anything in this great encyclopedia? Is it reliable? Are some of the questions that come to mind when Wikipedia is mentioned. I believe we need to make a commitment to transform our teaching practices with the aid of ICTs. One of the necessary steps is to review the way we present activities to our students: instead of just asking them “to bring information on X subject”, why not asking them to explore the “debate history” on Wikipedia (where they will find the controversy and different points of view arising from a particular issue) to learn what debates are going on in relation to

a certain subject or area of knowledge? Finally, I hope to be able to continue contributing to the construction and sustainability of the bridges between school, digital and free cultures.

Paola Dellepiane. My wikiproject testimony



In September 2014 I found out via Twitter that there was a call for participation on a course concerning the subject of Wikipedia: "Bridges between the school, digital and free culture". I knew immediately that I wanted to participate, so I sent in my application.

A big motivation for me was the fact that the course was organized by Wikimedia Argentina through the RELPE network, which meant having the possibility to share experiences of integration of educational proposals with technology inclusion. Up until then, my experience with

Wikipedia had been limited to being a "reading user" -like the majority of people-. So it was thanks to my participation in the course that I learned in more detail about the objectives of this wonderful digital encyclopedia, its philosophy of work, and its standards and rules.

Over the course of my participation I was able to incorporate the Wikimedia projects for identification and creation of primary sources into the didactic itinerary we followed during the classes, through activities which were presented to us along the course, the opportunity to co-create projects and collaborate in activities provided a firm ground on which we could "build" something new on the basis of our own experiences (learning by doing), and at the same time develop our collaborative abilities and improve our skills in the integrated use of digital tools. Other capacities such as responsibility, communication, direction and problem management came also into play.

I really valued the emphasis put into the process of problem solving through Education Wikiprojects in the classroom and the way they encourage autonomy and personal initiative, as these abilities are used to plan strategies, take on challenges and participate in decision making.

In sum, the course allowed me to "put into practice" some specific uses of Wikipedia, such as becoming an editor, a provider of content and updates, rather than being "just a reader", and to enjoy the different dimensions in meaning and the possibilities offered by the active contribution to a digital, collaborative encyclopedia.

Around the middle of April 2015 I received an invitation from Wikimedia Argentina to join the teaching team in a new edition of the course.

I was immensely happy and proud to be invited to take part in the program. Being part of such a great learning experience, after having followed the same itinerary as a participant, meant a new challenge for me and I was thrilled to be able to support a community of my own colleagues in the process of construction of bridges between digital literacy and new educational scenarios.

These 2 months of participating in #wikibridges again, gave me a new insight on the concept of “learning with others”; supporting, monitoring, encouraging interaction and social learning, allowed me to strengthen and boost my own learning environment.

One of the strategies that the team of tutors agreed on from the beginning was to focus on the development of communication skills, on being able to put ourselves into another person’s shoes, to give them encouragement and to create bonds of empathy with others. We decided it would be easier to put this strategy into action if we divided the class in groups. In regard to group messages, we also agreed that they should be a means of encouraging and supporting the participants, trying to build bridges between the familiar and the unfamiliar, between previous and new experiences, but always from a position of reaching the others.

The forum activities were extremely enlightening, but we also gave space for interpersonal connection through personalized communication. In particular, I have been in continuous bidirectional contact with several participants who preferred this time of interaction.

The best reward, and what really makes me keen to participate again in collective projects such as this, is to hear the testimonies of participating educators who have become familiar with the use of Wikimedia projects and find a new range of possibilities before them, to enrich their classes with the inclusion of activities and projects facilitated by the use and participation in this collaborative encyclopedia. However, I do see a big challenge in the short-term, which is to be able to generate projects at institutional level which continue the work we have started along this line, allowing for the “construction of bridges” and adding more educators and actors in the educational field to the culture of collaboration and cooperative construction of knowledge. As a member of the team of tutors I can only thank the whole Wikimedia Argentina team for their support, and of course my fellow travelers in this journey: Mauro Travieso and Miriam Latorre.

Miriam Latorre was part of this initiative from the start. You can read her testimony below:



My name is Miriam Latorre. I finished my B.A in Education Sciences and specialized in Education Technology. As my field of knowledge, I find it extremely attractive and necessary to examine in-depth the construction of the current trends that the cultural and school scenes -and I mean school as an institution that represents both a formal education system and a wider range of teaching institutions- must pick up, incorporate and apprehend. We should not just “watch technology pass us by” as something separated from education, but we should be able to think about schools as places where “things happen”, in other words, where the current means of production and diffusion of knowledge are incorporated into the way that educational content is taught at schools.

I studied at the University of Buenos Aires and, coming from an inland province, I had to move to the capital for some time to support my studies, but it was always clear to me that I would come back to the province where I come from... Over the course of my degree I met educators who introduced me to Educational Technology and transmitted their passion about what they do on to me. I got closer to them and set out to learn their teaching and educational approaches, their bibliographic referents, and their perspectives for the future and for their careers. This gave me a privileged insight into the field and the people who work in it, and helped me achieve my first jobs linked to the inclusion of technology in the classroom: sometimes as a researcher, or as a trainer, some other times as a developer of educational proposals or as a tutor in online training courses.

This way, after graduating I went back to my hometown. I was a bit concerned about my career since, as everyone knows, there is a voice that says that "everything is boring" or "it is different here, this is not the capital". In any case, I set out to work doing what I like in the town where I was born, with the words of a colleague of mine in mind "A light in the middle of a big city will go unnoticed, but it can light up a small town more than you would believe"

I started to work in distance learning projects, in a non-formal training proposal for social leaders, as a pedagogical advisor at a public secondary school. I taught at a Teacher Training Institute and then I was invited to take part of the team of educators from Wikimedia Argentina, with a very specific proposal: to design, together with the area coordinator, a distance learning course including different work proposals with wikiprojects. From there, my work extended to other areas and at present I still collaborate with them.

Until then, I was unaware of the extent, depth and importance that the Wikimedia projects involve in matter culture. I could only see myself as a user who checked Wikipedia just when I needed a definition or some information about a place or a person.

After diving into wikipedist waters, I had an insight of the cultural and educational relevance of embedding wikiprojets in educational proposals, not just as a source of information -debunking some myths about the reliability of its contents. The Wikimedia universe allows for ways of producing knowledge which mirror -at different levels- the way knowledge is built within the scientific community: there is debate, writing standards, sources to support our work, elements which ensure the objectivity of the information. Knowledge is constructed in a collaborative, collective way, adding the voices of different users to ensure the neutrality of the content of the articles.

This new definition of neutrality is an interesting concept to bring into the classrooms. I think Wikipedia may become a reference case of study from the perspective of Educational Technology: it presents dilemmas, reflects the ways in which knowledge is constructed and spread, it is known worldwide, it stands out as the most visited reference site and students use it because they know it contains the information they need. For educators, who are naturally interested in bringing technology into the classroom with a pedagogical purpose, Wikiprojects are tools of great potential for their students to understand the importance of negotiating meanings and styles of writing, always on a solid basis that allows them to debate and finally decide, because this is a valuable and socially appreciated capacity that will be useful for them in every aspect of their lives.

On my side, I included a section dedicated to the production on Wikipedia and the role that educators can take in regard to it, within the program of the subject I teach at the Teacher Training Institute. "Learning by doing" is essential, not only for students but also for educators who want to bring these digital and free culture proposals into their classrooms. It is only by practicing that we learn, and only by learning that we drop our prejudices.

My personal wish is to have schools which are more than just spaces for transmission of knowledge, but places where knowledge is actually constructed. It is a challenge that requires increasingly stronger personal commitment from each educator, beyond the macro policies on Education which direct the educational system.

How can this be achieved? The Wikimedia projects and the production methods related to them give us a few clues that us, as educators, must interpret through our “pedagogical lense” which gives us the potential to change the course of events in our schools and turn them into spaces for creation. It takes courage, creativity and decision to take the quantum leap such change would require.

A Wikipedist manifesto

Educators throughout the region put together the following manifesto with their prospects and motives to include Wikimedia projects in the classroom.

Wikipedist Manifesto on Education
Main ideas and reflections from participants in the 2014 and 2015 editions

To define and take an active role in EDUCATION CHALLENGES

The greatest challenges ahead are to continue to work together, compromising to give our best and offering this to others. In regard to the influence that the Wikipedist spirit could have in the world of education, the possibilities are immense, as Wikipedia and its projects offer hundreds of possibilities for growth in

1-To break free from technological determinism

To make a fresh start, to see through the walls around education, to capitalize “what is outside” to review “what is inside”, to achieve higher participation in Wikimedia projects and encourage good practices, are all part of the challenges we face.

2-To approach Wikipedia as a didactic strategy

Wikipedia is a widely use consultation source, however, there are still educators who are reluctant to accept it as a source of information for their students.

3-To jump in and explore in order to become protagonists

This is our opportunity as educators to grow from being transmitters of knowledge produced by others, to assume the responsibility and protagonism of generating new knowledge in a collaborative manner.

4- To review the existing structures of knowledge

Having free access to the infrastructure required to build knowledge among peers, and counting with validated rules for its use is something that gives us great power. Abandoning the high hierarchy of those who have always imposed “their” knowledge, and replacing it with clear, public and agreed upon rules, allows us to learn the truths and opens spaces for dialogue in those areas of the human world that are always subject to discussion.

The greatest challenge of all is not only to apply all this knowledge in our classrooms, but to become active collaborators of Wikipedia.

Because editing Wikipedia, is editing the world.

Spanish version: <http://wikimedia.org.ar/wiki/puentes/img/padlet.png>

14–Final considerations

The balance of Wikimedia Argentina’s first experience launching a distance learning course is definitely positive. We received over a thousand applications to participate in its second edition- a proof of how keen educators are to learn about free culture and mainstreaming it into their teaching practices- and there are other institutions who are conducting similar training programs for their students and teachers in cooperation with Wikimedia Argentina. In the surveys we conducted at the end of each edition, the majority of participants emphasized the quality of the proposal and its innovative nature. Although some participants found that editing Wikipedia was not that simple, they believed it is something that can be learned. The important thing to stress is that the participants have confirmed the pedagogical relevance of working with Wikimedia projects. In this regard, they valued receiving strategies for inclusion of technology, which responds to their actual needs, local contexts and contents of their educational agenda. In other words, they had access to the tools required to customize a technological proposal for their own classrooms.



Wordstorm of key concepts extracted from the closing forum of the 2014 and 2015 cohort.

At the end of the course, the majority of participants “confessed” to having prior prejudices in regard to Wikipedia. In that sense, they think that one of the biggest efforts to make in the future is to demystify these prejudices, specially in educational environments. They believed however, that “doing” and diving into free culture -following the itinerary we proposed-helped them comprehend, at user level in terms of technology, but considering their identity as professionals of Education. They even discovered that the “prototype” idea of design thinking is nothing but working with the emerging, something that educators do continuously in their classes, taking what is already known and, acting as a compass, finding its “pedagogical

north". In this case, using reality as raw material, the people, the doubts, the events of daily life. These reflections can only be appreciated when we build bridges which are solid yet flexible.

Let us share with you the testimonies of some of our participants:

Ana Alicia Moyano: *"The main challenge is, in my opinion, to debunk the prejudices that society in general and educational institutions in particular have towards the Wikimedia project. We have been trained under the idea that Wikipedia contains low quality or incorrect information. We have not yet understood the positive impact that this initiative and its constructivist approach to learning could have.*

Cristina Emilia Rohvein: *"It is great when you say goodbye feeling that you are taking so much with you. This course has meant a lot to me, in terms of valuable training and in the opportunity I now have to incorporate Wikipedia editing in my class. This was a pending issue I had as an educator. Encouraging collaboration in content writing and respecting the standard of citing sources for every content written. There is a lot of work to do, but this is the beginning to transmit what I have learnt to my students. I think this cite summarizes the experience as Wikipedist: "We all know something. We all ignore something. Therefore, we are always learning" (Paulo Freire) Thank you for the quality of the didactic material and the support of the tutors."*

Yanina Elizabeth Santamaria: *"Hi everyone!!! Like my colleagues, I would like to thank you for the quality of the material given in each class, it is excellent. This course allowed me to reflect on my own teaching practice and how to improve it through Wikipedia. The biggest challenge for me will be not only to apply all this knowledge on my classes, but also to be an active collaborator in Wikipedia. Thanks everyone for sharing this beautiful experience together, and Miri, I can't thank you enough for your constant support. My warmest regards."*

One of the main suggestions for improvement made by the participants was for the tutors to have a more active role in promoting debate in the forums where activities are developed. Although we did not design these forums for debate, there is a demand from participants to be able to interact with their colleagues. Some of them suggest the possibility of making small groups for the activities related to editing Wikipedia, to feel accompanied in the process and join others who are also learning, in a collaborative construction.

Last: can we actually say that the teaching methods (which were) applied in classrooms worldwide, at schools, universities and lyceums is dead? We have institutions, buildings, spaces, classroom furniture that has been used for many years in the transmission of knowledge in our society...

Educational institutions maintain a delayed temporality in respect of the changes taking place in the world in relation to our ways of bonding, of developing our imagination and knowledge, of being and being part of society...

We have tried to give a vision of **schools-** as educational institutions representing the rest- not just as privileged spaces for the transmission of knowledge, but as **privileged places for the production of knowledge**. Is it possible? What do we need to achieve this? Which would be the meeting points and breaks with the current education model -still in place but unable to meet the world's new needs?

On another hand, the reluctance towards Wikipedia may be due to the fact that it promotes a different way of construction of knowledge, but at the same time it works on the basis of primary sources, just like any researcher does. Wikipedia is an entrance door to any type of knowledge. However, it presents us with the challenge of changing our role from passive readers to active, wise users who not only identify how knowledge is built, but also -and most importantly- participate in its construction.

During the course we also introduced Wikipedia's sister projects, to show the different language registers in writing, the forms and formats of co-creation such as an image or audio file, and how it is close to [multimodality](#) as a format boosted by digital technology. We live in a world where content is continuously created -think of how we produce images, such as selfies, all the time. However, we cannot imagine taking a picture, uploading it to Wikimedia Commons and link it to an article on Wikipedia to contribute to free knowledge, recreate a dialogue between image and text, image and audio, text and video, to create powerful messages and enrich the act of learning about any given subject.

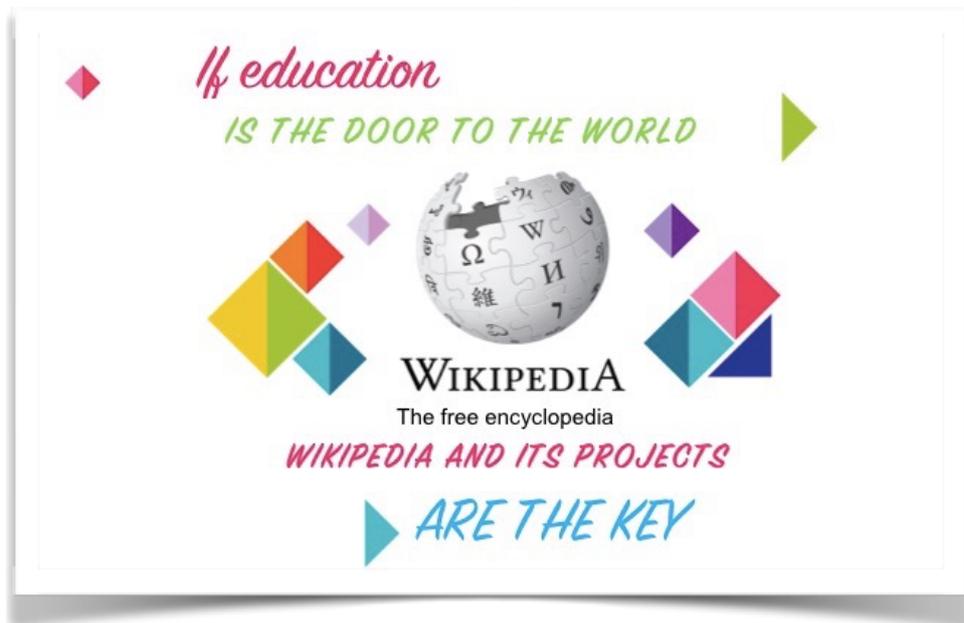
There are many challenges and questions ahead of us, but they would not exist without the first edition of the course. The possibility of reaching further and obtaining results in a short time led us to think of the community of educators in the region and the country, and to engage our first Wikiambassadors in Education, in other words, to create an installed capacity. We now face the challenge to achieve a bigger involvement of the community of Wikipedists in generating strategic bridges.

The itinerary we designed was to work through a learning platform such as *Moodle*, practice the use of different free digital tools to familiarize participants in current digital practices giving them an educational orientation. Finally, we introduced participants to the world of Wiki platforms, and encouraged them to start co-creating knowledge, being part of Wikipedia, understanding its rules and interacting with volunteers throughout the world.

Wikimedia Argentina had set the ambitious goal of reaching far, many territories, with scarce resources and materials and a complicated reality of reluctance and mistrust towards Wikipedia in educational environments. And from here, we aimed to promote a community, to support practice and co-create an identity which today is reflected on [our site](#).

We expect to generate gamified proposals for our future projects, or more specific learning objectives, a digital menu of learning itineraries for each educator to choose and customize according to their interests and needs.

We believe that editing and educating must be part of one same action. That editing is participating actively, critically and creatively in the world. And if education is the door to the world, Wikipedia and its projects are the key.



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16- Credits

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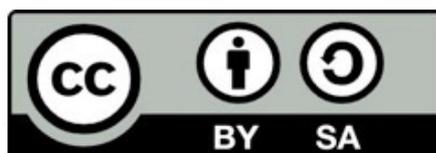
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