

CCCC 2019

Critical Approaches to Wikipedia- based Education

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Wikipedia in Composition Studies

Teaching Opportunities: Observation & Practice

Process, research, social collaboration, and digital rhetoric (Gruwell, 2015; Hood, 2007; Kill, 2011; Kuhne & Creel, 2012; Patch, 2010; Purdy, 2009; Tardy, 2010).

Authentic audiences lead to motivation (Cummings, 2009; Sweeney, 2012; Vetter, 2014)

Critical approaches (Vetter & Pettiway, 2016; Gruwell, 2015)





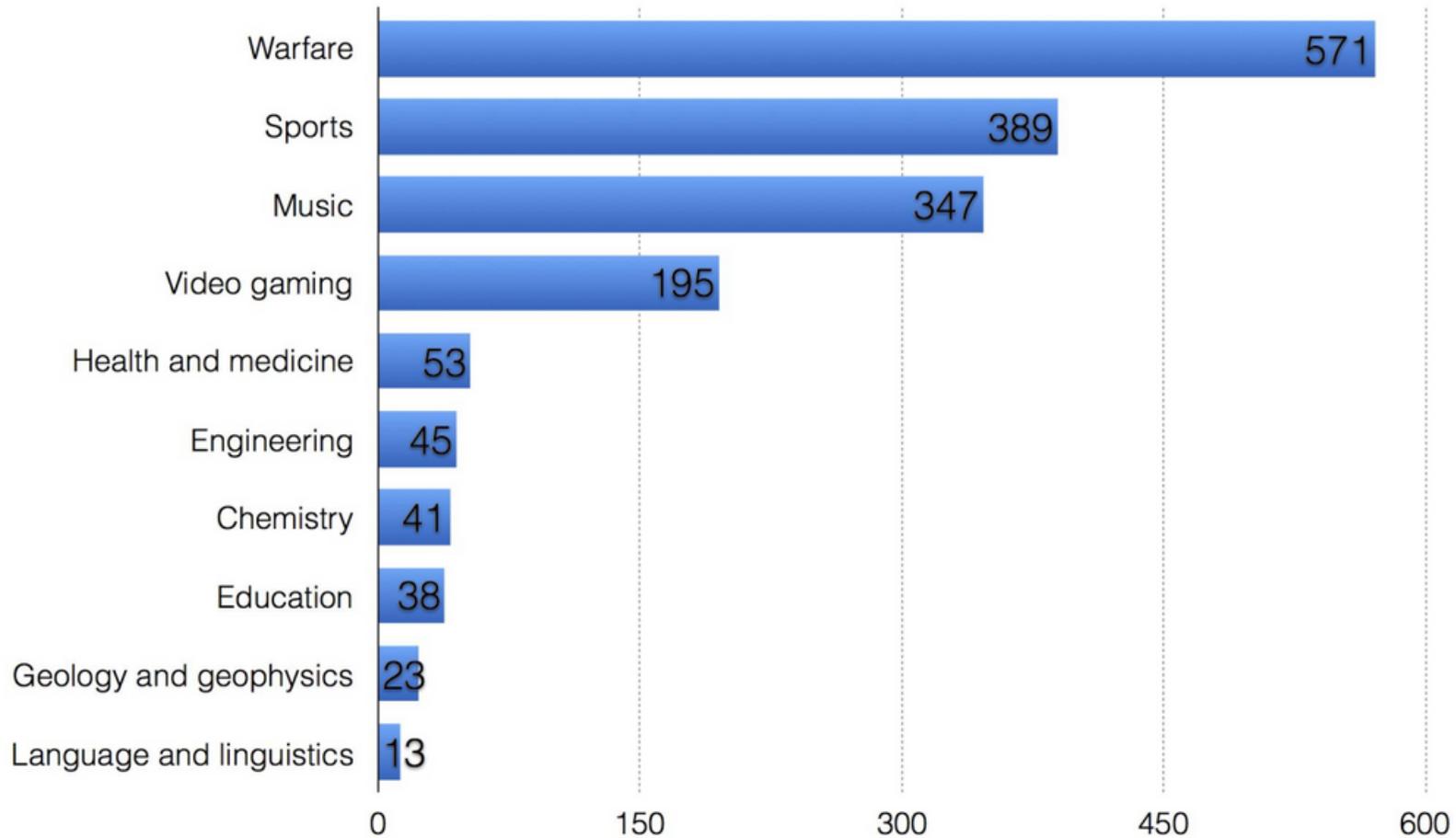
Wikipedia's Gender Gap

Editor Demographic Survey (Glott, Schmidt, & Ghosh, 2010) found that only 13% of editors are women.

Only 17.5% of biographies in the English Wikipedia are on women "Wikipedia Human Gender Indicator" (2017)



Wikipedia's Featured Articles



Credit: Jami Mathewson, Wiki Ed Foundation, 2016

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FEMINIST RHETORICAL WORKS

Composition scholars have begun to explore the potential of Wikipedia for promoting students' critical literacy (Gold, 2018; Nelson, 2018; Vetter, 2018; Vetter et al., 2018; Vetter & Pettitway, 2017; Vetter, McDevitt, Weinstein, & Sherwood, 2017).

GAP IN RESEARCH

Such studies have not, however, fully assessed the efficacy of these approaches through collecting qualitative data related to students' experiences.





WHAT CONSTITUTE Feminist Rhetorical Practices?



CRITICAL IMAGINATION

Identification of
marginalized or
previously unnoticed
perspectives in texts



STRATEGIC CONTEMPLATION

The consideration of
multiple and
conflicting perspectives
within texts



SOCIAL CIRCULATION

The critique of social
and power structures
through texts



GLOBALIZATION

The production of texts
across national
boundaries





METHODOLOGY

Grounded Theory



FORUM POST

Students described their perception of the Wikipedia assignment before editing



SURVEY

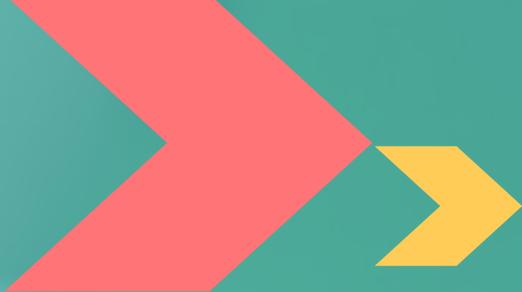
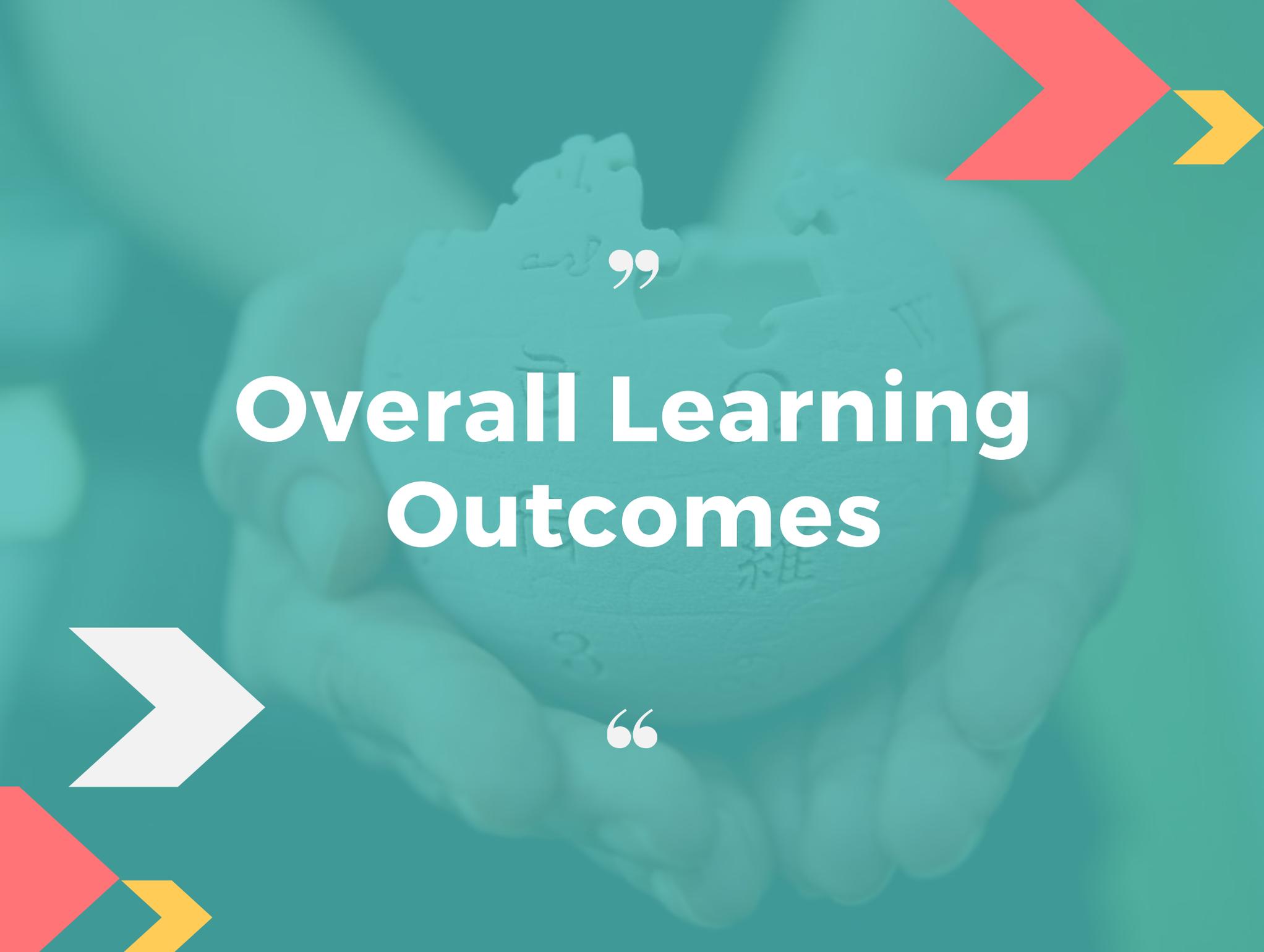
Students completed a survey on Qualtrics after publishing their final edits



REFLECTION

Students wrote group reflection essays after publishing their final edits

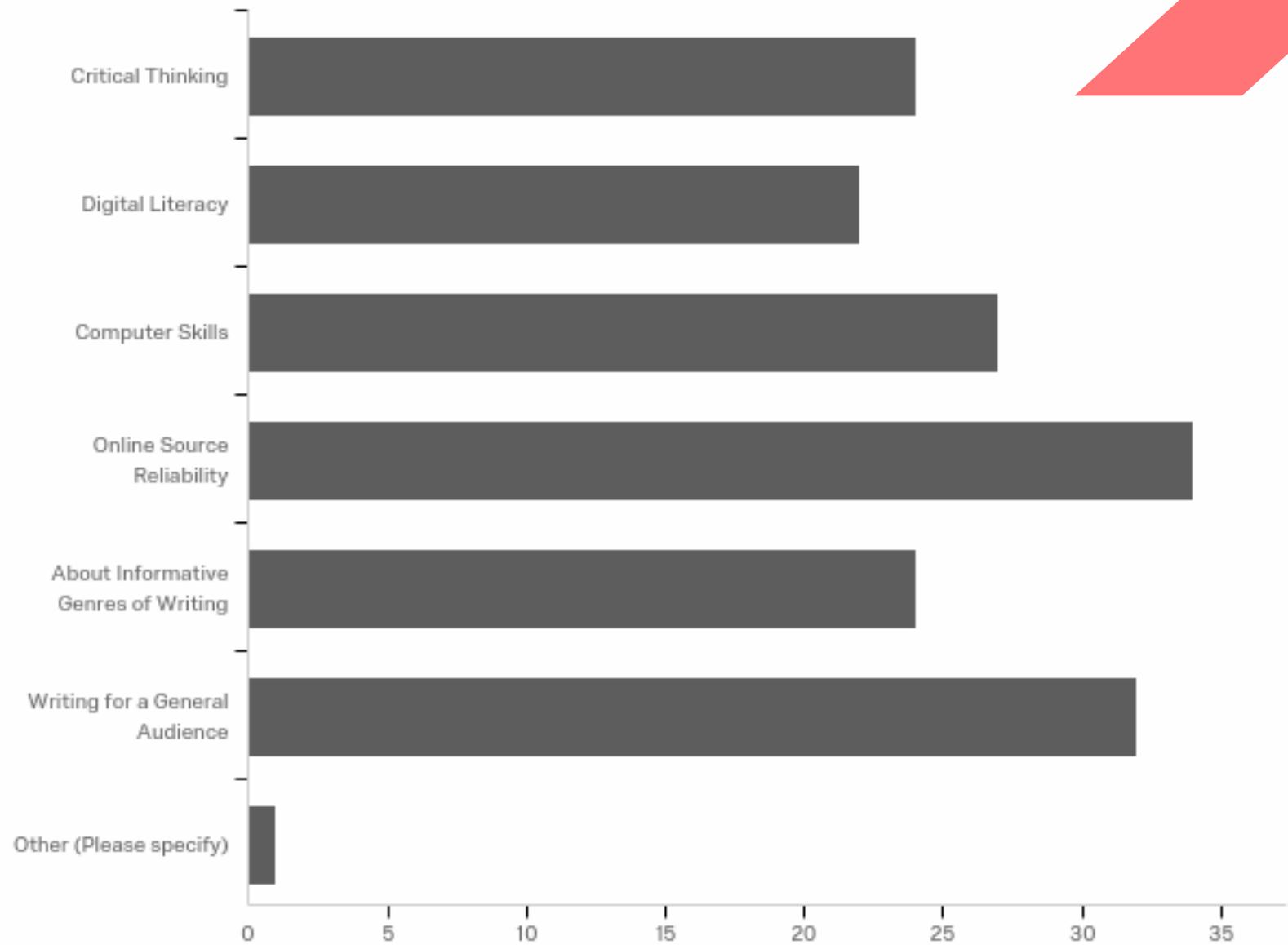




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Overall Learning Outcomes

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Critical Imagination: Identifying Marginalized Perspectives



Just over half of the survey respondents (22/39) reported a positive change in their thinking of marginalized social groups.

Challenges related to locating sources highlight a complex conundrum in Wikipedia-based assignments, especially those focused on social equity.

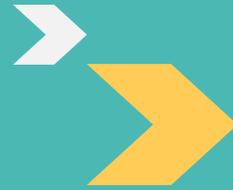
Strategic Contemplation: Considering Multiple Perspectives



Less than half of the participants (17/39) reported changes in thinking which resulted in consideration of multiple/conflicting perspectives on their topic.

Such views demonstrate the need for increased attention and discussion of the ways in which conflict and contestation occur in Wikipedia (both in article mainspace and talk pages).

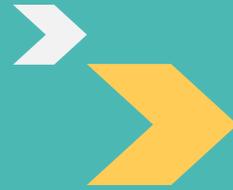
Social Circulation: Critiquing Social & Power Structures



A small number of groups in this study engaged in such a social critique: “The content of this section had many holes, showing one sided topics and American ideology, creating a biased appearance.”

However, the majority of students seemed to take neutral point of view (NPOV) as a given without questioning or critiquing such an ideology on Wikipedia.

Globalization: Producing Knowledge on Wikipedia



Before the Wikipedia assignment, most of the students (22/38) who submitted their posts expressed their feeling of Wikipedia as not a reliable source of information.

After the assignment, however, a majority of survey participants (26/39) reported positive changes to their perceptions about the online encyclopedia.



Discussion and Future Pedagogies

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Assignment Challenges

Neutral Point of View (NPOV)

Since NPOV is essential for being successful, it is difficult to do the ideological critique that would potentially undermine students' success in producing public knowledge.

Students' Level of Knowledge

The first-year writers in this study may not be ready to engage in more advanced feminist social critique yet. Teaching this framework at the advanced levels would pose fewer intellectual challenges.

Assignment Opportunities

System Bias

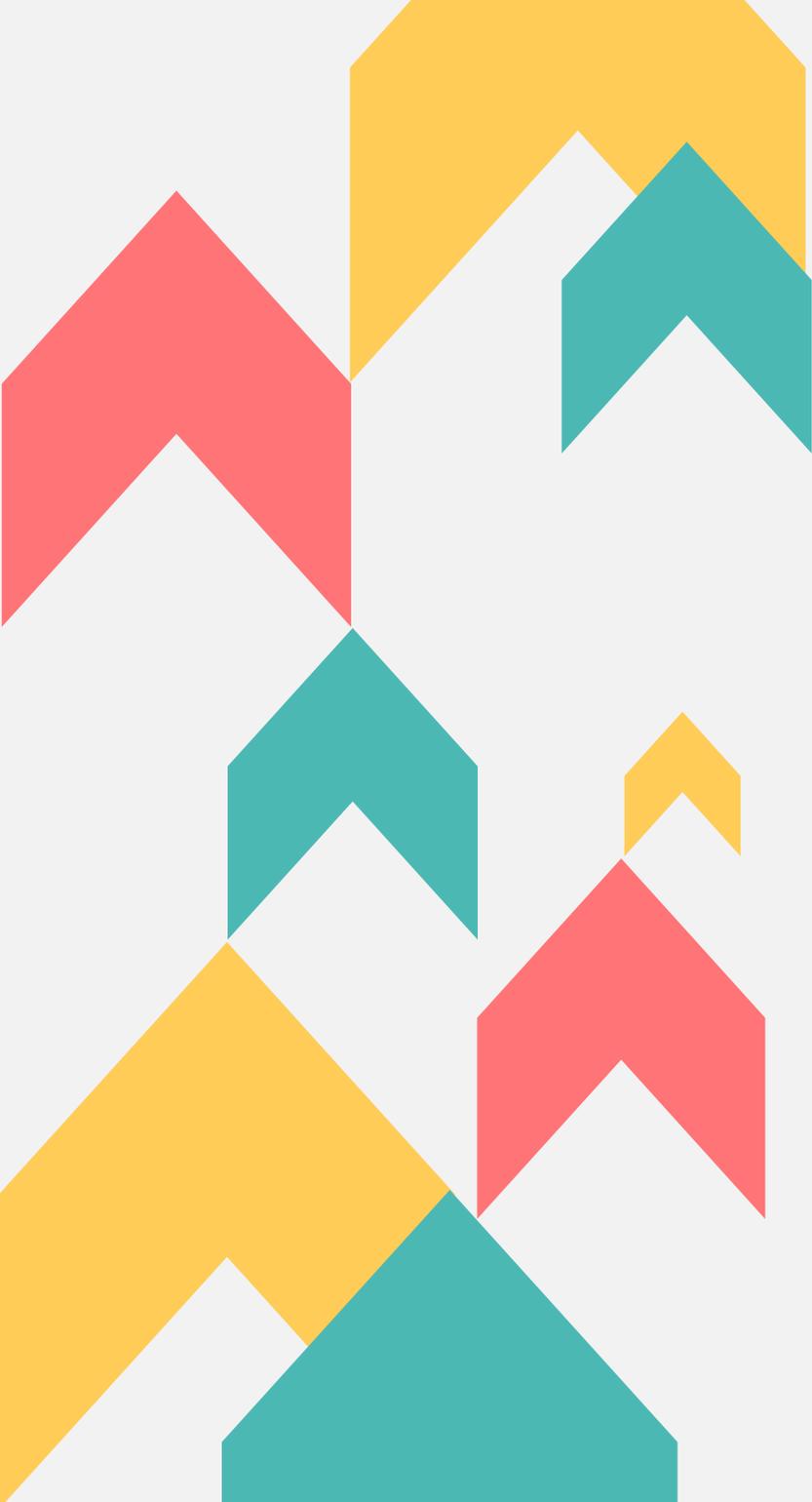
Addresss the issue of system bias in the encyclopedia more directly and consciously through readings and discussions on knowledge gaps (e.g., gender gap)

Knowledge Making

Be open with students about how knowledge-making practices in Wikipedia re-affirm traditional print-based epistemologies that omit and/or marginalize knowledge practices from other cultures

Global Audience

Engage students in discussions and low-stakes assignments that ask them to consider the global audience they are writing with and for when engaging in Wikipedia-based assignments



Thank You!

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