Collective authoring of Wikipedia articles in schools

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Background of research

• Information literacy (IL)
  – Practices of/ability to locate, evaluate and use information
  – IL movement
• IL and learning
  – Promoting independent (life-long) learning
  – Self-governed learner
• Problems of IL instruction
Wikipedia (public wikis)

• Information source vs. publishing forum
• Potential advantages
  – Gives a taste of realism in essay assignments
  – Promotes assessment of information used, processing of information
  – Gives a standard for “scientific” writing
  – Keeps attention on the subject to be learned
  – Forces to work on focused topics
  – Group work -> collaboration
Research Questions

1) How do students perceive Wiki authoring as a learning assignment?
2) How do students collaborate in authoring of a Wikipedia article?
3) What kind of learning experiences do students report?
Two pilot studies

• Upper secondary school/City of Tampere

• Pilot 1: Geography (9 weeks)
  – 9 Students
  – Data collection:
    • Pre-questionnaire, pre- and post-interviews
    • Non-participatory observations
    • Instructions, Wikipedia articles, Teacher’s written feedback

• Pilot 2: Biology (9 weeks)
  – 16 Students
  – Data collection
    • Difference: observations replaced by ethnographic interviews
Findings 1: Wiki assignment

- Positive feelings
  - Learning
    - Easyness, depth, beyond topic
  - Independence
    - Form the teacher, own topic, decision making
  - Meaningfulness
    - Not for teacher’s eyes only
  - Nice because
    - Working in a group, different

- Negative feelings
  - Not enough subject content learned
    - Maturity exam ahead!
  - Personal pressures
  - Balance between classroom/self-organized activities
Preliminary findings 2

• Collaboration: three approaches

I. Students organize collaborative assignment into individual subtasks (may be efficient in terms of output)

II. Students work collaboratively on the assignment (may be effective in terms of learning outcomes)

III. Students are not able to collaborate or lack motivation to it
Preliminary findings 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
<th>Anticipated (n=23)</th>
<th>Experienced (n=18)</th>
<th>Should learn (n=16)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wikipedia as a tool</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information seeking</td>
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<td>55%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in Wikipedia</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject content</td>
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<td>72%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<td>Learning skills</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Further information

• Know-Id research project
  – Collaborative construction of knowledge and identities in school and teacher education
  – Funded by the Academy of Finland 2010-2013
  – Contact
    • Eero Sormunen (eero.sormunen@uta.fi)
    • Eero Ropo (eero.ropo@uta.fi)
  – Web pages
    • [https://www12.uta.fi/blogs/know-id/](https://www12.uta.fi/blogs/know-id/)
    • Slides of the presentation published here