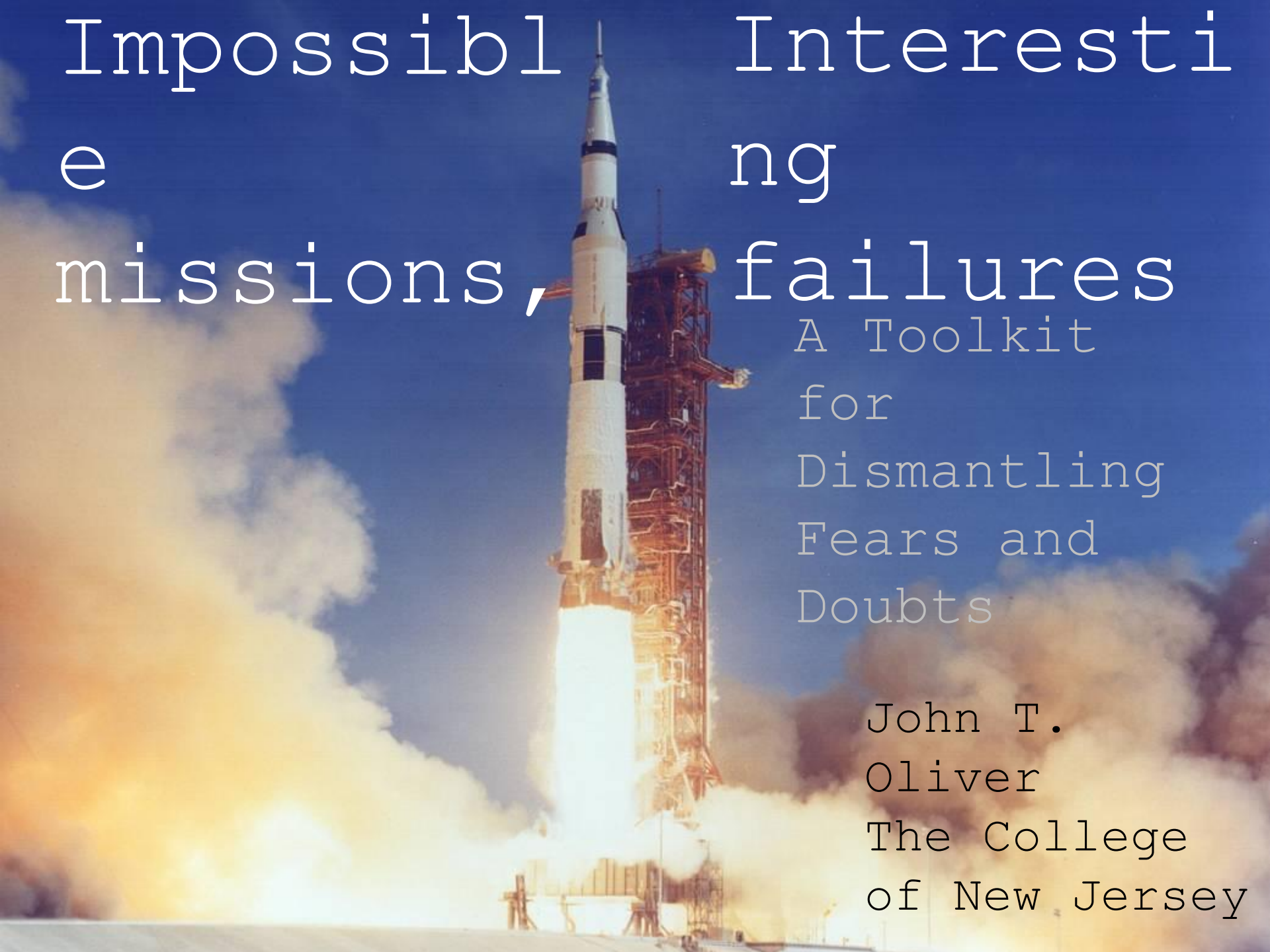


# Impossible missions, Interesting failures

## A Toolkit for Dismantling Fears and Doubts

John T. Oliver
The College of New Jersey

“[The US] should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth.”

# ….but this is not an assessment workshop

If it were, we'd be using words like "evidence" and "criterion" and "concrete" and "observable"

It’s about
moonshots!

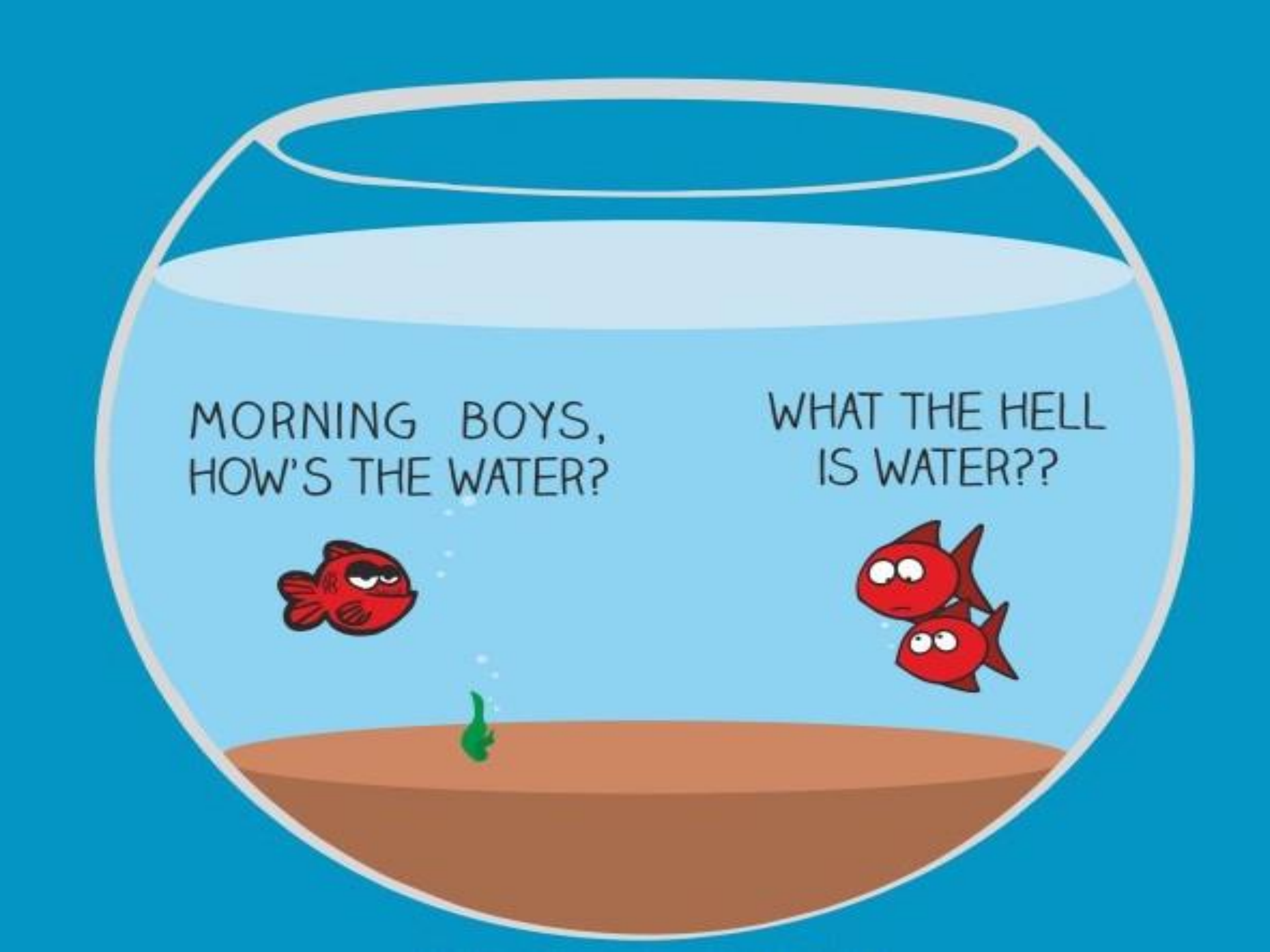
Or, the project(s) of YOUR dreams

# Today’s plan

1. Impossible missions! (Yay!)
2. Your dream project?
3. Fears & doubts?
4. Critiques? Discussion?

But first, some influences

Well, actually….


MORNING BOYS, HOW'S THE WATER?
WHAT THE HELL IS WATER??

So, I want YOUR “well, actually” responses

# Today is inevitable & impossible

Today's "yeah, so what"

was

…"that's amazing!" at the start

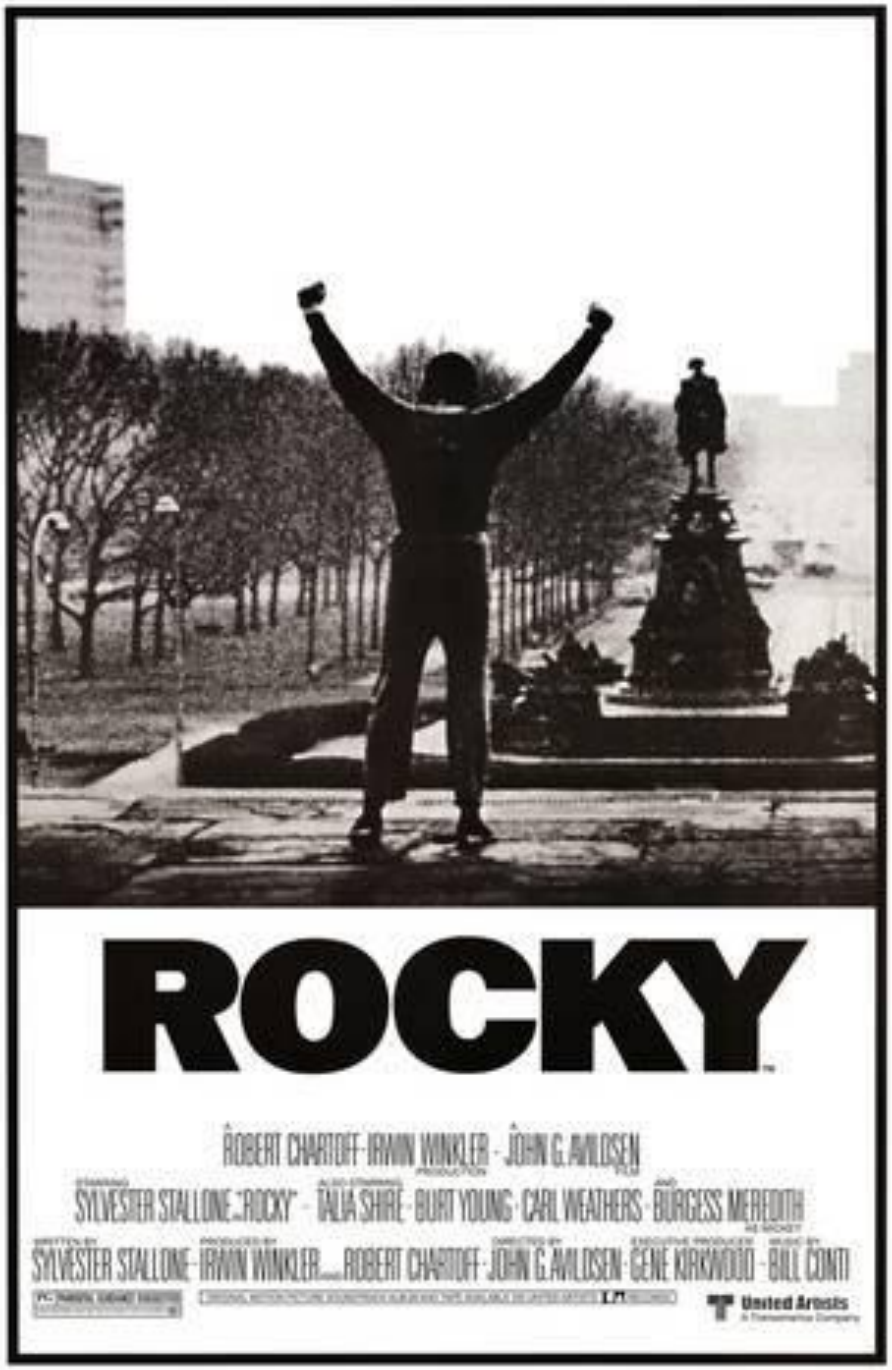
…"that's unrealistic" just one minute earlier

…"that's impossible" for **forever** before that.

# Impossible? More like sensible!

- Partial success is possible/likely
- No one expects success here (can only go up!)
- The energy & engagement of a challenge (…that's your dream project, after all!)

# Partial success is possible/likely




No one expects success here (can only go up!)

With a dream project, we find “11”

# But it’s scary!

# “We suffer more often in imagination than in reality”

*premeditatio malorum*

(or, pre-contemplation of evils)

“We suffer more often in imagination than in reality”

*premeditatio malorum*

(or, pre-contemplation of evils)

(“Fear Setting” adaptation: Tim Ferriss’ TED talk and blog post)

# Fear Less Toolkit

# A toolkit for articulating doubts & fears

# One-shot Wikipedia: an edit-sprint toward information literacy

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to investigate which learning targets can be achieved by using Wikipedia as a tool for teaching information literacy within the context of brief one-shot library instruction sessions.

**Design/methodology/approach** – In this case study, a Wikipedia-editing activity was incorporated into 2-hour one-shot instruction sessions. A variety of qualitative data were collected during these sessions: Student reflections during a facilitated discussion, student responses to exit-survey questions and instructor observations about the extent to which students completed Wikipedia-editing tasks.

**Findings** – Students found Wikipedia-editing activities and Wikipedia-related discussions engaging, and as a result they seemed to learn valuable lessons about research and writing. Students participating in this project effectively identified gaps in Wikipedia entries, critically evaluated and used sources to address those gaps and appropriately documented those materials. Students were easily encouraged to be critical about information sources, including Wikipedia and the more traditionally scholarly resources alike.

**Originality/value** – While a great deal of attention has been paid to teaching with multi-week Wikipedia assignments and coursework, evidence from this project suggests that Wikipedia-related activities can be used effectively within much narrower time constraints, including during brief one-shot library instruction sessions.

**Keywords** Academic libraries, Motivation, Library instruction, Critical thinking, Information literacy, Library instruction west, Teaching methods

**Paper type** Case study

## Introduction

Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia anyone can edit, has excellent potential for encouraging experiential learning of information literacy skills. Wikipedia-editing activities can be deeply and rapidly engaging for learners and teach a wide range of valuable research and writing skills. This article describes one librarian's effort to use rapid Wikipedia-editing activities to foster information literacy competencies and encourage critical thinking. Since one-shot instruction sessions are often the teaching opportunity available to library educators, this project investigates the extent to which information literacy skills can be taught using Wikipedia-editing in these brief single classes with students. Evidence collected during Wikipedia-related learning activities indicates some successful learning about identifying information needs, resource

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# One-shot Wikipedia (briefly)

Established: Students completing multiple-week writing-for-Wikipedia assignments

- Creating knowledge
- Participating in community
- Engaging, new experience in familiar tool
- Opens door for critical reflections

Novel: Fit it all into library one-shot session?

# What if I use Wikipedia-editing activity in a library one shot?

## DEFINE

What are the worst-case scenarios/outcomes?

1.Students will be confused about Wikipedia
2.There won't be enough time.

## PREVENT

Any way to decrease likelihood or impact of bad things?

1. Anticipate student experience; plan learning outcomes
2. Structure, chunks, milestones.

## REPAIR

If bad stuff DOES happen anyway, what would undo/lessen it? Recovery?

1. Plan to sum up key pts (spoon feed)
2. LibGuide. Some other learning object.

# What if I …[insert dream project]?

## DEFINE

What are the worst-case scenarios/outcomes?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

## PREVENT

Any way to decrease likelihood or impact of bad things?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

## REPAIR

If bad stuff DOES happen anyway, what would undo/lessen it? Recovery?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

# Thoughts? Helpful? Unhelpful?

# What might be the benefits of partial success (or even just an attempt)?

1. Students develop a better understanding of strengths and limitations of Wikipedia
2. Facilitate student interrogation of info resources via a familiar tool (while "peer review" and "scholarly" remain distant goals)

# What might be the benefits of partial success (or even just an attempt)?

1.
2.
3.

# What is the cost of inaction?

1. Risking irrelevance by not bringing a lesson to “student scale”
2. Missed engagement? (deepened connection, fulfillment, learning by student AND me)

# What is the cost of inaction?

1.
2.
3.

at 6 months, 1 year, 3 years

# Small start? (concrete, specific tasks)

1. one task <15 minutes?:
2. one task to complete before lunch?:
3.
4.

# Image credits

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