

## 4 **Proposals for Teaching Innovation**

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**Summary** 4.1 Peer Review. – 4.2 Creating a Wikipedia Entry. – 4.3 Research Diary or Reading Diary.

This part of the guide is aimed primarily at teaching staff. When designing and carrying out the type of project we have described, it could be beneficial to implement innovative teaching practices that reinforce students' ethical commitment and encourage collective reflection and self-reflection. The intended goals and, logically, other determining factors such as the nature of the course, the academic level, the theoretical approach and the methodology used will determine which type of practice is most suitable.

We present three innovative teaching activities that can help students to gain or strengthen the skills and knowledge needed to write an essay linking literature and male violence. These can be carried out while students prepare their final projects or in advance.

## 4.1 Peer Review<sup>1</sup>

### Basic Description

The point of this exercise is for students to improve the competencies involved in the **critical and purposeful evaluation of another person's work** addressing violence against women, as well as the ability to formulate responsible, thoughtful and respectful **opinions** and **spoken language**.

In pairs, students will comment on their peer's draft essay, exchange recommendations and suggestions, and point out strengths in the argumentation, structure and formalisation of each other's work. The aim is for humanities students to **acquire socialisation and group learning skills** that go beyond those traditionally associated with literary analysis, which are more individual in nature, and to make relevant and rigorous use of concepts and vocabulary relating to male violence in their arguments. The purpose of the peer review exercise is for students to engage in constructive debate about the doubts and insights that they have encountered while identifying and problematising the various forms of male violence depicted in literary works. The aim is for them to reflect on the **methodological processes** involved in carrying out academic research from a gender perspective.

This exercise has three pedagogical aims: to encourage students to produce **well-argued constructive feedback** on the draft of a peer's essay; to cultivate their **ability to address** the feedback given to them and **integrate it into the essay** they are writing, and to check that they are acquiring a **gender perspective** in their discourse. The exercise can be carried out in person or online. If it is done in person, it takes place in the classroom. The pairs take turns conversing in front of the class, with no involvement from the teacher (who is a direct observer, but does not participate). If it is done online, the pairs converse over the internet at a time they have agreed upon, without any teacher intervention. They will need to use a platform that allows the exercise to be recorded and thus viewed and assessed at a later time by both the students themselves and the teacher. As this exercise requires students to have a draft essay written, it should be scheduled for the last part of the course.

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion see the Spanish-language article *La revisión entre pares sincrónica en el aula virtual: leer críticamente la representación literaria de violencias contra las mujeres* (Synchronous Peer Review in the Virtual Classroom: Critically Reading the Literary Representation of Violence Against Women) (Iribarren, Serrano-Muñoz, Gatell, Clua 2023).

## Methodology

Below we describe a basic peer review format that can be tailored to the particular needs of any classroom. There are four phases to the assignment:

1. Start of the course: students are given a description of the exercise, instructions for using the videoconferencing platform if it is to be done online, and the assessment rubric. They should also be told what they are meant to learn from the activity and why.
2. Preparing for the exercise: a due date is set for the drafts, these are collected and the teacher puts the students into pairs. We recommend having students submit their drafts via an open access digital platform so that everyone can read them.
3. During the exercise:
  - a. If it is done in person, the teacher assigns a turn to each pair. If it is done online, the best course of action is to let students meet up when it suits them best.
  - b. The exercise should last anywhere from ten to twenty minutes, but no longer. Every student will have between five and ten minutes to present their feedback on their peer's draft essay and to listen to the feedback given to them.
  - c. This time constraint teaches students to speak concisely. Having the assessment rubric ahead of time will allow students to be focused and efficient when preparing what they are going to say.
4. After the exercise: the teacher sends the feedback and assessment to students individually and as a group only after everyone has done the exercise, in order to avoid complaints based on comparison.

## Assessment

The assessment rubric should cover argumentation, synthesis and speaking skills, as well as the ability to make arguments that include the gender perspective. Emphasis should also be placed on the need to use concepts and vocabulary relating to violence against women in a confident, rigorous and relevant manner. Although students are asked to integrate the feedback they find most valuable into the final version of their essay (the last submission of the course), the assessed competencies for this exercise should be more closely linked to the review itself and how students handle the feedback given to them in the moment, so as not to unevenly mix different groups of competencies.

## 4.2 Creating a Wikipedia Entry

### Introduction

Wikipedia is the **number one source of scientific information among everyday people**. This online encyclopaedia, which has been collectively built by a huge transnational community and small local communities, makes knowledge based on scientific studies and reliable information sources available to anyone connected to the internet. There are currently around three hundred Wikipedias of varying sizes depending on the language.

Multiple studies have shown that Wikipedia, like many cultural institutions and projects, displays a **gender bias**, which is more or less pronounced depending on the disciplinary field or the community that writes the entries. As an instrument of scientific dissemination, Wikipedia's gender bias derives from the **traditional patriarchal conception** of all areas of **knowledge** and culture, and is correlative to most current fields of academic research. As regards the literary discipline, this bias reveals itself most notably in the lack of entries on women writers and works by them, in the poor content of entries that do exist and in the paucity of bibliographical sources on which these are based. This overall deficiency, in turn, stems from the secular **androcentrism** that has governed canonical development, educational and literary institutions, the publishing industry, literary studies and policies for promoting reading.

In an effort to tackle this issue, various institutions and grassroots initiatives committed to gender equality have been carrying out a wide range of actions for years. They create, enrich and translate **entries and Wikiprojects** on women and topics related to them; base entries on women-authored academic sources; improve entries by applying a gender perspective, and correct sexist language.

Creating, improving and translating Wikipedia entries is a learning practice with great **educational potential** for secondary school and university students. It allows them to work on skills such as finding reliable sources, managing information and graphic resources, reading comprehension, critical thinking, synthesis, writing, creativity, ethical and transnational commitment, and teamwork. It also encourages them to participate collectively in the construction of knowledge through an activity with a **social impact** and meaning outside the classroom.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on Wikipedia's educational potential, see the Catalan-language *Guia de bones pràctiques per a l'ús docent de Viquipèdia a la universitat* (Good practices guide for using Wikipedia in university teaching, 2015), by Maura Lerga and Eduard Aibar (<http://hdl.handle.net/10609/38241>).

Students commonly use Wikipedia as a source of information when working on their bachelor's and master's degree final projects. If they consult it to carry out a project linking literature and violence against women, they are likely to encounter a lack of entries on women authors and their works, or very poor or biased content. Some entries may even **entrench and reproduce** elements of **structural and symbolic violence against women**, or, more seriously, contain literary interpretations that **normalise and justify** the literary representation of **male violence**.

Given the educational potential of the many possible exercises linked to Wikipedia, we urge the academic community to implement them in order to fix or at least minimise the issues we have just described.

Before going into the details of the exercise, we would like to highlight ten features that every good Wikipedia page should have:

1. The page should start with a clear, rigorous definition of the title concept.
2. The text, of a primarily descriptive nature, should be written using **formal, gender-neutral language**. The **register** should be **encyclopaedic** and rely on the **third person**. There is no room for personal opinions.
3. The text should **give a balanced account of different viewpoints and include a gender perspective**. If you are writing about a controversial topic, you will need to present all stances on the matter.
4. The entry should provide **enough information** for readers with no prior knowledge of the topic.
5. The entry should be **structured in different sections** and should have a **common thread**. It is not about producing a list of statements, but about building a story.
6. The **information should be cited** and drawn from **reliable sources** (published and with no conflict of interest regarding the topic).
7. Wherever possible, the page **should include images**. Keep in mind that you can only use those under a CC BY SA<sup>3</sup> license or higher.
8. If you are improving an existing entry, **the result should combine the information that was already there and the information that you have added**. Make sure to maintain a **coherent** story.
9. The opening text is always a one- or two-paragraph **introduction** setting out the most important points, to be expounded on later.

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**3** <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/es/legalcode.ca>.

10. You should **insert internal links** (to other Wikipedia entries) when naming key concepts or concepts that allow readers to dig deeper into the topic, to make their browsing experience easier.

### Basic description

The aim of this exercise is for students to create a Wikipedia page on a **relevant** author or literary work that depicts violence against women. The entry must be **original** and **pertinent**, strictly adhering to the **conventions of encyclopaedic writing**. Therefore, the information must come from eminently academic sources. By preparing the entry, students are expected to develop the following competencies:

1. The ability to search for, select and process information, and manage documentary sources effectively.
2. The ability to construct concise, cohesive and convincing expository discourse that draws on consulted sources and presents them in a dialogical manner.
3. The ability to think and reflect critically about knowledge in all its dimensions, showing intellectual, cultural and scientific concern and a commitment to rigour, honesty and quality.
4. The ability to exercise active citizenship and individual responsibility with a commitment to democratic values and sustainability.
5. The ability to show in their own work an ethical, responsible and respectful attitude towards natural, social, epistemological, cultural and gender diversity, as well as to recognise the integrity of others' work.

If the entry already exists in another language, it is important to ensure that the proposal is not a mere translation, that it includes new information (content, links and citations) and that it is properly updated.

### Methodology

The activity should be carried out in the following stages:

1. Presenting, justifying and discussing the entries in the classroom. Each student will present the topic of their entry and justify their choice, focusing on the relevance and innovativeness of their proposal. They will also have to explain what sources they intend to base it on. Their classmates should ask questions, make suggestions and offer words of warning (provided that these are well-founded) under the supervision and guidance of the teacher. This exercise can be done in smaller

groups if there are many students, or with the whole class. Before holding the discussion sessions, students should be provided with key information by means of a digital communication channel shared by everyone, following a template. How much time is spent on each student and discussion, and thus the number of sessions, will depend on the number of students.

2. Creating an editor account. If they have not contributed to Wikipedia before, the students will need to create an editor account for themselves. To do so, they should follow the instructions on the **Create account** page.<sup>4</sup>
3. Writing and publishing the entry. Students should be given around three weeks to write up their entry, while integrating the observations made by their classmates and teacher. After publishing the page on Wikipedia, they will share the link with their classmates (via the chosen digital channel) and submit the entry as a PDF to their teacher (downloadable).
4. Group session to discuss the content of the entries and what it was like to write them.
5. Optional activity to improve the entry of fellow classmates. If this is done, students should send a document with evidence of the improvements they have made to the teacher. (Even though these will show up on the page, having this document will make correcting the activity easier).

## Assessment

Using an assessment rubric is particularly beneficial in this exercise. It should be given to students at the very beginning of the activity so that they can use it as a road map. It should cover the key components of a good Wikipedia entry:

- Relevant topic
- Original topic
- Quality content (interpretive and synthesis skills)
- Effectiveness in disseminating information
- Rigorous use of concepts and treatment of violence against women
- Expository discourse
- Structure
- Openness (internal and external links)
- Citations section
- Images

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<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:CreateAccount&returnto=Wikipedia:Why\\_create\\_an\\_account%3F](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:CreateAccount&returnto=Wikipedia:Why_create_an_account%3F).

Importantly, the teacher should assess the entry as it appears in the PDF given to them by the student, as online Wikipedia entries can be edited at any time.

### 4.3 Research Diary or Reading Diary

#### Basic Description

As students research and write up their essay or paper on the subject at hand, one good idea is for the teacher to ask them to prepare a text that is more **creative, personal and unconstrained**, in which they compile pieces of information, findings, intuitions, doubts, hypotheses and speculations: a diary.

Given the characteristics of the discipline in which this guide is framed (i.e. literary studies), there are two possible types. These are not mutually exclusive, but rather complement each other: the **research diary** and the **reading diary**. The difference between them is in the name. A research diary is a document in which students systematically compile the various ideas, impressions, reflections and data they come up with during their research (making it broad in nature). In turn, a reading diary can be for creative writing based on the works they read. This diary usually contains entries with information, impressions, opinions and references about literary works of fiction. It can open spaces for more subjective expression linked to the student's experiences, sensibility, tastes, emotions and feelings. If a student decides to submit a paper or essay in which they state the position from which they have carried out their **situated reading**, this type of reading diary can be especially useful, as it encourages them to express their experiences of suffering or inflicting violence. It can therefore be the ideal framework for students to self-reflect and identify their own position of privilege or subalternity from an intersectional perspective. Despite their differences, these two types of diary can complement each other and, in any case, either of them can be used for the same idea.

One of the goals of these diaries is for students to document the information they find in the literary works they are analysing and any critical and theoretical texts they read. They can also write down questions, apprehensions, feelings of discomfort, connections to life experiences and reflections on how to identify and problematise the literary representation of male violence, as well as notes about conversations with classmates and comments made by the teacher. Considering the massive amount of reading that students have to do and the long research process, diaries will help them to order any ideas, reflections and impressions that come to them throughout the process



and to compile insights that may later aid them in their literary analysis. It does not, therefore, add to their workload in any way.

Another goal is to make it easier for students to present the methodology they used in their research: if a final report is requested for evaluation, they will have detailed qualitative information on how they carried out their analysis. Because these diaries contain reflections on how the research process unfolded and why a certain avenue of analysis was chosen, they prompt students to reflect on their own learning. They also highlight the progress made by students in terms of their theoretical knowledge, reading practices, academic writing proficiency and analytical skills.

Given their difference in nature, it is our opinion that research diaries can be assessable, while reading diaries are better treated as a personal tool for the student, who will only share it with the teacher if they feel it is appropriate.

## Methodology

Both the form and content of the diary can vary. Whatever the form, it is important that it contains dated entries and, if works are commented on, properly cited references. The writing of the diary should also be consistent, with similarly structured entries made at regular intervals. This way, the diary can contain different types of information but still adhere to this model:

- The different research steps followed, with the option of describing any incidents, obstacles or shortcomings that have been encountered.
- References to works consulted or read, whether literary or theoretical. In both cases, there may be direct quotations, which should be accompanied by a full reference for future consultation and for preparing the references list.
- Impressions, ideas or reflections on either of the two previous steps, which can later be used to justify some aspects of the research and the student's position as a researcher and to prepare the discussion or conclusions.
- Ideas for future or broader lines of research.

## Assessment

We recommend assessing this tool in terms of the length of the text, the frequency and length of the entries, the number of works consulted, the diversity and depth of the aspects discussed, the ability to ask questions, self-assessment and self-reflection, and language use. If a rubric is used, it should address all these parameters.

