

# SCHOLARSHIP AS CONVERSATION

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## Scholarship as a Barrier to Scholarship

Tat-Siong Liew (2017) writes of his struggle to access his chosen field of academic research. Liew is a first generation Asian immigrant in America who specialises in Biblical interpretation. Over the course of his journal article he raises the argument of whether or not his background has hindered his progress in his chosen field. He repeats the phrase 'who's scholarship counts as scholarship', wondering why some scholars question his expertise due to his ethnicity.

I initially thought the only citeable sources were scholars with a lot of credentials. I now realise that accuracy is more important, and those with credentials can sometimes be less authoritative than those without.

## Scholarship as Groupwork

More unique ideas are generated through group work than is the case when working individually. This is the finding by Dugosh and Paulus (2005). A contagion effect is generated in group work where the idea generation of one enhances that of others in the same group – exposure to productive brainstormers enhances performance of the collective. The study involved 160 participants who were assigned groups of differing numbers, including some who worked alone. It showed that higher numbers of people in a group correlated with higher numbers of ideas for each individual member.

In the White Paper project for SK108, ideas were brainstormed in our group which led to more ideas.

## Scholarship as Conversation on Social Media

Students respond positively to academic work which they have previous experience in and through a recognized framework (Dasler, 2015). Twitter is discussed as a way of scholarly conversation (Pew Research Centre, 2017). In academic work, students use citations, references, paraphrasing and footnotes when giving credit. Similarly, Twitter users use '@reply and mentions' to respond to another person's tweet which they can also 'direct quote' and give their own view. They can retweet another's tweet so it appears on their profile for their followers to see. (Dasler, 2015).

In Law lectures, we have been encouraged to follow relevant experts in particular legal areas and use the # function when researching for essays.

## Scholarship as Collaboration

Collaboration between Wikipedia and University libraries can enhance knowledge creation and improve access to it (Soito, 2017). Wikipedia is perceived as a lower quality and generally non-citeable resource. It is beginning to appear more frequently in academic fields and calls have been made for academics to contribute as a professional responsibility. Wikipedia and library collaboration would be a natural synergy and both would benefit, creating a global site for people to visit to gain access to high quality, academic knowledge. It would also provide libraries with a new mechanism for connecting to people.

MU Library runs LIST seminars throughout the year, one of which focusses on utilising Wikipedia effectively.

## Scholarship Evolving

Gobell (2014) questions whether brainstorming is outdated in terms of the creative process of the modern human mind. She suggests a hybrid approach to brainstorming, in which a person undertakes an individual brainstorm and then brings their ideas to a group platform. This is a more powerful and constructive method of brainstorming. Although brainstorming may be outdated, there are other methods of forming ideas that may suit the modern mind better.

For the SK108 White Paper, we individually found sources for our topic between meetings. Doing this, we found that our individual brainstorms complemented each other.

## Scholarship as Conversation in Action

An exercise for students in an introductory course was conducted in 2015 which involved them searching for an article and writing a summary (Cugliari, 2017). They participated in a class discussion, researching and summarising their own journal article (ibid.). Participating in brainstorming, class discussions, using books and internet as resources when researching is scholarship as conversation. College students are constantly part of scholarship as a conversation when attending lectures, peer-to-peer learning, group projects and debates on academic topics.

In SK108 we regularly participate in class activities, discuss topics and peer-review each other's work.

## Promoting Scholarship as Conversation

The State University of New York describe how students can improve their information literacy skills by learning to use and edit Wikipedia effectively. Students develop their information literate abilities by "contributing to scholarly conversation at an appropriate level" (Walker, 2016, p.511), by simplifying expert opinions in a way that the public understand through paraphrasing. Wikipedia editing also helps students to "value user-generated content and evaluate contributions made by others" (ibid., p.511) by reviewing an editors' contribution to Wikipedia and respecting the contributions made by other editors.

In SK108 we were introduced to the "Talk" function on Wikipedia whereby users can look at edits and comments by experts in the topic, a useful tool for research.

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