Never Use Wikipedia For Your Research

IL Palooza

Grant MacEwan University

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What We Tell Our Students

A "Wikipedia Advisory" appears on each RDC subject guide under the *Find Encyclopedias, etc.* tab.

Before Wikipedia

2007: This is not a University!

2008-2009: Focused Initiatives

2009-2010: Refocus Assignments

2010-2011: The Research Process

2011-2012: The Student as Learner

Proto-Wikipedia Project

HIST 208 : Modern World History from 1789

Pros:

Better than an essay

Less stressful

Cons:

More time needed

Wikipedia tutorial needed

Marking rubric needed

Wikipedia Education Program

"The goal of the Wikipedia Education Program is to engage students and professors across disciplines, universities, and countries in using Wikipedia as a teaching tool."[1]

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Canada_Education_Program

The Wikipedia Project

2012-2013: Constructing Knowledge

HIST 208 : Modern World History from 1789

The Research Assignment
The Proposal
The Bibliography
The Research Paper

The Wikipedia Project

What We Hoped For:

- enhanced research skills

- enhanced critical thinking

- enhanced technological abilities and confidence

The Wikipedia Project

Enhanced Research Skills:

Pros:
- Learning and re-learning how to use library resources
- Learning about and finding the right resources (esp. databases)
- Organization: Research takes time
- Referencing

Cons:
- Finding enough sources
- Finding information – spent more time on research than writing itself
- More time needed to find and request information (requesting archival material)
- Time management

The Wikipedia Project

Enhanced Critical Thinking:

Pros:
- Learning about history:
    - People will do anything for gold
    - Canada was not as progressive as thought
    - Things are forgotten/missing that seem very important

Cons:

The Wikipedia Project

Enhanced Technical Abilities and Confidence:

Pros:

Cons:
- Wiki code
- People deleting information
- General animosity toward Wikipedia
- Disappearing sandboxes

The Wikipedia Project

Other:

Pros:
- Contributing to the world via Wikipedia
- Satisfying
- Great appreciation for characters/article content
- Open-ended articles
- Learning about communication:
  - condense and summarize
  - less formal style
  - learning how to write historically/scholarly
- An interesting substitution to a term paper

Cons:
- Class time suffered

The Wikipedia Project

What We Learned:

- Students appreciated that their work had a larger audience.
- Students expressed a greater appreciation for research.
- Students had a better understanding of Wikipedia authority.
- Students can navigate technology but dislike creating using technology.
- Encourage students to work in pairs.
- Class time suffered.