Wikipedia Education Program

How It Works

The Wikipedia Education Program means the end of throwaway assignments and the beginning of real-world impact for students.

The Wikimedia Foundation, the nonprofit foundation that operates Wikipedia, is working with professors who want to assign their students to write Wikipedia articles for class.

The Wikimedia Foundation provides professors assistance in two areas:

Help materials – We've created handouts, videos, and well-documented examples of how professors can easily integrate Wikipedia into an existing syllabus. Many of these materials exist in multiple languages.

Wikipedia Ambassadors – A free online training will enable your teaching assistant or another volunteer from your campus to become a Wikipedia Ambassador. Ambassadors offer students help as they navigate writing for and editing Wikipedia for the first time, both in person and online.

Student learning

Research shows students learn skills beyond a greater understanding of the course topic they write on, including:

- **Information literacy:** Students identify bias and partisanship; particularly with respect to Wikipedia, students recognize whether an article is credible or not. Increasing the students' information literacy skills also means that they are less likely to use Wikipedia for copy-and-paste.

- **Critical thinking:** In contrast to many class assignments which require an argumentative or persuasive paper, Wikipedia's neutral point of view policy helps students think about class material in a new way.

- **Expository writing:** Students practice writing in an encyclopedic summary style.

- **Collaboration:** Students work with classmates and other editors to develop high quality encyclopedia articles.

- **Research:** Students get a lot of practice finding and summarizing appropriate sources for their topic.

- **Technical skills:** In today's computer driven environment, it is common to work with people one may never meet in person; students learn this essential skill as well as how to edit wikis.

Student motivations

Research from the pilot of the Wikipedia Education Program shows 72% of students preferred a Wikipedia assignment to a traditional assignment. They found that they were excited to do a useful assignment for class, rather than a throwaway assignment that nobody but their professor would ever read.
Students are forced out of the academic bubble; rather than writing for just their professor, they have opportunity to have their coursework reach an international audience. They're able to share their work easily with their parents and friends. And many find writing for Wikipedia is fun!

Learn more

Visit http://education.wikimedia.org or email education@wikimedia.org.