

Sleeping with the enemy: wikipedia in the college classroom essay sample



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Wikipedia is unequivocally useful in terms of information access given its broad spectrum of subjects it covers in over 3.1 million articles. It is however devoid of a scholarly backbone due to lack of restrictions as to who can alter information it contains. The merit of this lack of restriction is that its enthusiasts constantly update the free website at a rate incomparable to any encyclopedia in print media.

Research has demonstrated despite prejudice pertaining to the validity of its scholarly content, it only measures one point below renowned encyclopedias that undergo meticulous and assiduous vetting to eliminate errors (Chandler & Gregory, 2010). The academic value of Wikipedia cannot be dismissed given some contributions are made by PhD holders and other scholars and academicians.

It has a proven accuracy, versatility and dynamism which it has displayed by relaying useful academic information for purposes of quick referencing akin to traditional encyclopedias. The only impediment to its acceptability is the unquestionable fashion in which students accept its content. However, if critical thinking is inculcated in them, their instructors would not have to worry whether Wikipedia will corrupt their young scholars.

Prejudice by university professors has led to banning it as an academic reference deemed to be of low quality just like other internet sources. Nostalgia and reverence for the traditional publications are an integral reason for this action (Chandler & Gregory, 2010). A research carried out by two Lycoming College professors and their twenty six students on the credibility of Wikipedia demonstrated unexpected results. The research

showed that Wikipedia has stringent rules that censor, protect copyrighted documents and avert profanity.

Furthermore, Wikipedia is systematic in the modality and pattern of editing and confirms the traceability of the editor on the website. Any suspicious information that may be insightful is removed and recognition is given to major contributors to its bank of information. Finally, it was unanimously agreed that Wikipedia is an appropriate quick reference point as well as a good source of appropriate references. However, it cannot be made the ultimate resource center for research material (Chandler & Gregory, 2010).