

# Research Briefs: Student Perceptions of Wikipedia as a Learning Tool for Educational Leaders

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# RESEARCH BRIEFS

October 2012

Georgia Southern College of Education

## **Student Perceptions of Wikipedia as a Learning Tool for Educational Leaders**

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### **Abstract**

The primary purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate doctoral student's perceptions of Wikipedia as an instructional tool in Educational Leadership coursework. There is limited research available on this topic, as Wikipedia has been minimally utilized as a legitimate learning tool in the education setting. The researchers collected and analyzed data from 14 doctoral students enrolled in an Educational Leadership course who incorporated Wikipedia into a research assignment as part of their coursework. The researchers examined if completing this assignment changed students' understanding and anticipated future use of Wikipedia. Students responded that they felt Wikipedia was as effective or more effective than traditional research assignments for meeting learning objectives. In addition, their perceptions and expected use changed as a result of this assignment. Data suggested that students anticipated use expanded from primarily personal use to applications in academic and professional settings.

### **Practical Application**

The results suggest that this project may be useful as an authentic learning experience for graduate students. It provided an alternative means for students to hone their skills as writers and scholars. Information submitted in this medium should be objective and critically thought out – much like educational theses and papers. Students can critically analyze the content on Wikipedia and also actively contribute to literature that is constantly being peer reviewed. In addition, by exposing and educating school and university leaders to Wikipedia (including how to add and gauge the accuracy of content), we have a better understanding of how Wikipedia can be used appropriately in educational settings. Whether by training teachers on Wikipedia's accuracy and proper usage, incorporating it into instruction, or using it as an alternative method for student learning, the findings of this study may help school and university leaders make more informed decisions so they can better advise those under their guidance on how to best utilize Wikipedia as a learning tool.

### **Citation**

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