

# Engaging With Wikipedia Via Article Creation

## Assignment premise

### IMS 201: Information Studies in the Digital Age

This 3-credit hour course in the Interactive Media Studies Program focus on information and technological competencies, with an overall focus on how social media impacts these competencies. Wikipedia is discussed in depth, including usage in research papers, faculty perception of Wikipedia, and editorship.

## Student reflection

Students' initial take on this project was filled with questioning and doubt. Why? Who would look at these? Their doubt changed to surprise at the project continued. Some quotes from final student reflections on the project included:

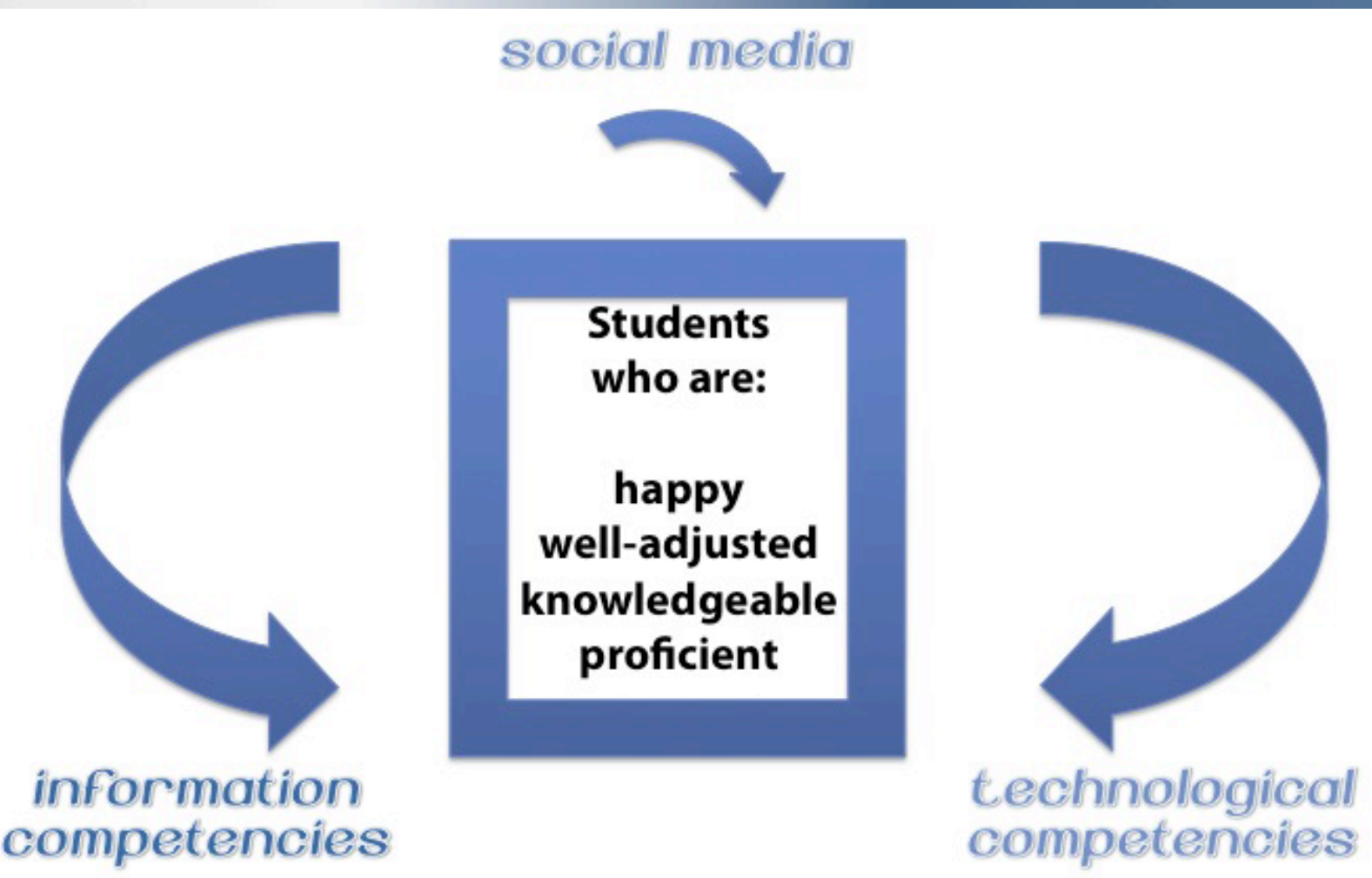
**"Many are truly dedicated to the quality of Wikipedia."**

**"While it is easy to change things, others almost always notice and flag it as necessary."**

**"I wish my professor understood how Wikipedia could be used in a positive manner."**

**"You Didn't Change our Entries?"**

**"Something was tweaked two hours after I posted."**



The screenshot shows the Wikipedia article for "Fisher Hall and Marcum Center (Miami University)". The article is in its early stages, with a "lead" section that is mostly empty. The "Contents" table of contents lists sections like "Construction and Planning", "History", and "References". The "Construction and Planning" section is partially visible, discussing the building's history and its location. The "History" section is also partially visible, mentioning the building's dedication in 1856. The "References" section is empty. The article is currently in a state of being a draft, as indicated by the "This article has no lead section" warning at the top.

## Assignment Timeline

### Investigation Stage (4 weeks)

Students investigated a Miami building of their choosing using websites, digital collections, and archival materials (including work in archives and special collections). They then completed an annotated bibliography with ten useful sources. A revision of the bibliography was also completed after feedback. An extensive of Wikipedia editorship was also conducted during this time.

### Creation Stage (4 weeks)

Students first created a 2-3 page entry in Microsoft Word, emulating many of the features that were found in Wikipedia (including a base set decided upon by the class). After feedback, a second revision was completed. Out of class workshops on Wikipedia syntax were available for those interested.

### Wikify Stage (1.5 weeks)

Students first transferred their Word articles to their Wikipedia sandbox. After feedback, they made their articles live. A snapshot of the 'infant' article was created.

### Observe and Reflect Stage (5 weeks)

Articles sat for four weeks, without input from myself or changes by students. After the four week period was complete, students took another snapshot of the article at its current state. They compared the two versions of the article, and responded to the following prompts:

- How did the article change?
- Why do you think the article changed?
- What the change better/worse? Why?
- Has this project changed your outlook on Wikipedia? Why/why not?
- Would you continue to contribute to Wikipedia now that you are knowledgeable of the process?



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