
Teacher Tips - A Wiki in Your Classroom

A wiki is an easy-to-use web page that many people can edit. The editing tools are like the tools found on a word processor toolbar. The wiki page will have an “edit” button right on it allowing you to make your Edits and then click Save. Use your wiki to create an extension to your classroom and students at home can post up homework or assignments, work collaboratively, or visit links you’ve provided. They will be able to read classroom information from virtually anywhere.

When first starting out:

- Create the wiki yourself and use an educational wiki that you can easily administer and moderate.
- Be the password holder, this way you control who gets access to the wiki.
- Be organised, use a table of contents and headings. Use Folders to organise files and resources. A class wiki is great for sharing files, or giving students access to a worksheet at home. When you put something, a lesson, a worksheet on it, it means you’ll have it on whatever computer you’re on.
- Include a help-file on how to write a bibliography and add a variety of hyperlinks to help them cite their sources and validate information to improve their source criticism skills.
- Hyperlink to your sources to give students and other readers additional information about the topic.
- Give students Writer Access and allow them to write to the wiki having first discussed some wiki-etiquette.
- Remind students that this is a workspace, not a chat page. It’s a learning space, a content page where knowledge is shared.
- Use a wiki that allows you to go back and forward in time easily. This way you can see which student made each change. You will also be able to revert back to an earlier edition of a page if a student makes an error and accidentally deletes the work of another student.
- Consider adding RSS to your wiki if you have student writers so that you will be notified by email of every change that’s made to your wiki. This way you can edit/amend any postings that are inappropriate.
- Remember to use graphics and visuals. Video clips and podcasts will provide a multimedia learning experience and will add to the message. Using sound and/or video will gain impact, encourage students to create slideshows to demo their work.
- Use wikis for group work where the group shared a page or create a page for each student to use as their e-learning portfolio.

A wiki as a teaching tool:

A wiki is a collaborative effort and will allow all students to contribute. Each student will bring their own strengths and knowledge to the project.

1. Teach students how to summarize information, to make notes, never just to copy and paste. A wiki will be good for demonstrating comprehension and communication skills.
2. Help students learn how to check their sources of information, see Surfwise lessons at www.webwise.ie/LearningResources and how critically evaluate websites <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/eval.html> and to validate their research <http://kathyschrock.net/abceval/index.htm>
3. Teach your students about Copyright www.cyberbee.com/cb_copyright.swf and Creative Commons <http://www.imagebank.ie/moreinfo.aspx?id=creativecommons> and Fair Use.
4. Encourage students to store files, links, and ideas on it, all organised into their own sub-folders.
5. Encourage students to correct one another's grammar, add items to clarify facts etc.
6. Use it to model good web tone, language and practice: e.g. cite sources, good English.
7. Give praise. If a student adds useful content to the page or has spent a great deal of time cleaning up the page, praise them.