



## TOOLS: WIKIS

### WHAT IS IT?

Would you like to enable group collaboration in an easy-to-edit set of webpages?

A wiki is simply a website that allows individuals or groups of collaborators to rapidly add or change its content, using an editor in the web browser. Wikis can be a powerful asynchronous collaboration tool in teaching and learning. Typical uses include structuring group work, or capturing a knowledge repository that has been built up by a class.

### WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE THAT WIKIS HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON LEARNING?

- Students' perceptions of wikis are positive, with students reporting benefits such as effective, collaborative problem-solving and the facilitation of group learning, as the result of the use of wikis in instruction (Deter, Cuthrell & Stapleton, 2012).
- Given the collaborative nature of wikis, learners are compelled to participate in knowledge building with and for others, a cornerstone of social constructivist theory (Parker & Chao, 2007).
- Cooperative learning leads to higher levels of thought and longer retention of knowledge than does individual work (Johnson & Johnson, 1986). The collaborative features of wikis make them particularly well suited for cooperative learning (Schaffert, Bischof, et al., 2006).
- Wikis support students' reflective learning, an element of social constructivist learning theory (Chen et al., 2005).

### WIKIS IN ACTION

Wikis can support a wide range of teaching and learning opportunities such as collaborative problem-solving, shared document creation, and deeper knowledge and concept construction among students.

- [Article Review \(pdf\)](#): Create an 'Article Review' wiki whereby students identify and summarize current research, issues, or events relevant to the course discipline and/or topics being covered in class as well as comment on one another's findings.
- [Research & Writing Project \(pdf\)](#): Divide students into teams to research a broad area in the discipline. Assign each group their own wiki page for posting research sources, ideas for topics, and getting feedback from their teammates. Through this process each individual member develops a focus or specialty area within that broader topic that they wish to investigate further and write about on their own.
- [Problem of the Week \(pdf\)](#): Create a "Problem of the Week" wiki in which students provide solutions to a problem that the instructor posts on a weekly basis to the wiki. In addition to posting a solution, students must also explain their approach to solving the problem.

#### HOW TO GET STARTED

- RIT wiki documentation ([link](#))
- Consultation request form ([link](#))

#### POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS

- Coordinating group work
- Building a knowledge base
- Collaborative writing exercises

#### ACCESSIBILITY

- Images included in wiki pages can include descriptive text for screen readers

#### RELATED RESOURCES

- RIT Faculty Stories: [Research and Writing as a Collaborative Process](#).
- [Online Teaching Activity Index: Wikis](#). Retrieved February 27, 2013, from Illinois Online Network website.
- [Instructor Preparation for Wiki Use \(pdf\)](#)
- [Student Preparation for Wiki Use \(pdf\)](#)

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## OTHER WAYS TO USE A WIKI IN A COURSE

- Use the wiki to generate a knowledge base for your course/discipline. This could include reference material, a glossary of discipline-specific terms, a collection of links, or other resources. For an example of this, see the [RIT Art History Resource Wiki](#).
- Have your students generate a course study guide wiki page as a learning activity.
- Include a peer critique of writing samples as a learning activity.
- Have students collaborate on group projects in a wiki (e.g., case studies, position papers, research projects, etc.)
- Develop a "Frequently Asked Questions," or "tips & tricks" wiki page about your course.
- Coordinate oral presentations and capture presentation artifacts on the course wiki.
- Assign a "wiki scribe" each week to post lecture notes in the course wiki.
- Use the wiki to simulate real-world working methods, such as team project workspaces.
- Incorporate other tools into your wiki space, such as video, digital imaging, storytelling, etc.

## WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

### Books:

- Cummings, R. E., & Barton, M. (2009). *Wiki writing: collaborative learning in the college classroom*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. Available as an eBook through RIT Libraries at <http://library.rit.edu/>.
- Wilber, D. J. (2010). *iWrite : using blogs, wikis, and digital stories in the English classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

### Articles:

- Edmondson, E. (2012). Wiki Literature Circles: Creating Digital Learning Communities. *English Journal* 101.4: 43-49.
- Cummings, R. & Barton, M. (2009). Wiki Writing: Collaborative Learning in the College Classroom. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

## REFERENCES

- Chen, H.L., Cannon, D., Gabrio, J. Leifer, L. Toye, G. & Bailey, T. (2005). Using wikis and weblogs to support reflective learning in an introductory engineering design course. Proceedings of the 2005 American Society for Engineering Education Annual Conference & Exposition, Portland, Oregon: June 12-15. Retrieved from [http://riee.stevens.edu/fileadmin/riee/pdf/ASEE2005\\_Paper\\_Wikis\\_and\\_Weblogs.pdf](http://riee.stevens.edu/fileadmin/riee/pdf/ASEE2005_Paper_Wikis_and_Weblogs.pdf)
- Johnson, R. T., & Johnson, D. W. (1986). Action research: Cooperative learning in the science classroom. *Science and Children*, 24, pp. 31-32.
- Parker, K., & Chao, J. (2007). Wiki as a teaching tool. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Knowledge and Learning Objects*, 3, pp. 57-72. Retrieved from <http://ijklo.org/Volume3/IJKLOv3p057-072Parker284.pdf>
- Schaffert, S., Bischof, D., Buerger, T., Gruber, A., Hilzensauer, W. & Schaffert, S. (2006). Learning with semantic wikis. Proceedings of the First Workshop on Semantic Wikis – From Wiki To Semantics (SemWiki2006), Budva, Montenegro: June 11-14, 109-123. Retrieved from [http://www.wastl.net/download/paper/Schaffert06\\_SemWikiLearning.pdf](http://www.wastl.net/download/paper/Schaffert06_SemWikiLearning.pdf)

This is part of the Teaching Elements series, <http://rit.edu/kwWbT>.

If you would like to work with an Instructional Design Consultant in the Teaching & Learning Studio to learn more about this technique, or share your experience using this technique, please contact Marybeth Koon ([mjmetc@rit.edu](mailto:mjmetc@rit.edu)).

This publication is available in alternative media upon request.

