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WIKI TECHNOLOGY AS A TEACHING TOOL FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH LEARNERS

Wikis are one of many Web 2.0 components that can be used to enhance the learning process. A wiki is a web communication and collaboration tool that can be used to engage students in learning with others within a collaborative environment. This chapter explains wiki usage, investigates its contribution to various learning paradigms, examines the current literature on wiki use in education.

Web 2.0 tools are characterized by ease of use and rapidity of deployment, making possible powerful information sharing and straightforward collaboration. Further, these tools afford the added advantage of reducing the technical skill required to use their features, allowing users to focus on the information exchange and collaborative tasks themselves without the distraction of a difficult technological environment.

Wikis can be used to facilitate computer-supported collaborative learning, i.e., the development of collaboration by means of technology to augment education and research. This enhances peer interaction and group work, and facilitates sharing and distributing knowledge and expertise among a community of learners. Wikis enhance asynchronous communication and cooperative learning among students, and promote cooperation rather than competition.

Collaborative learning becomes even more powerful when it takes place in the context of a community of practice. A community of practice consists of people

engaged in collective learning in a shared domain. Thus, learning becomes a collaborative process of a group. Wikis can serve as a knowledge platform for a community of practice where members of the community can share their knowledge with the group, put up interesting pieces of information, work together, discuss issues, etc. Wikis are characterized by some of the elements fundamental to a successful community of practice, including a virtual presence, a variety of interactions, easy participation, valuable content, connections to a broader subject field, personal and community identity and interaction, democratic participation, and evolution over time.

Although the wiki was introduced more than ten years ago, its use is relatively new in academia. Higher education has only recently begun to explore the potential educational value of wikis as a means to promote deeper learning and integration of learning experiences from both inside the classroom and out. Despite their potential impact on business, the wiki phenomenon, by and large, has not yet made it to the classroom, either as a research topic or as a teaching method (G. Kessler, 2009). However, the popularity of wikis has begun to attract the attention of educators, who expect that wikis will facilitate not only communication but also the collaborative finding, shaping, and sharing of knowledge, all of which are essential properties in an educational context. As a consequence, papers related to wiki use in education have finally begun to appear in recent years.

A literature search reveals the current state of the wiki education. There are a variety of applications, primarily in writing assignments, group projects, and online/distance education, although innovative uses in other areas can be found as well.

There are several papers that, among their discussion of wikis, present a list of uses for wikis in the classroom, along with a discussion of each in most cases. Mader's site focuses solely on wikis in education, citing uses such as simple webpage creation, project development with peer review, group authoring, tracking group projects, data collection, and class/instructor reviews. His online text contains writings by several authors discussing such topics as integrating a wiki in instruction, collaborative writing projects, group wiki projects, using wikis within course

management systems, constructing science knowledge, and wiki-based collaboration and academic publishing. G. Dudeney (2005) presents a survey of wiki use in education, and suggests several additional uses of wikis. Co-creating and co-monitoring projects are discussed, as is collaborative concept elaboration.

Hulstijn (2000) list several possible educational uses of wikis:

- Students can use a wiki to develop research projects, with the wiki serving as on-going documentation of their work.
- Students can add summaries of their thoughts from the prescribed readings, building a collaborative annotated bibliography on a wiki.
- A wiki can be used for publishing course resources like syllabi and handouts, and students can edit and comment on these directly for all to see.
- Teachers can use wikis as a knowledge base, enabling them to share reflections and thoughts regarding teaching practices, and allowing for versioning and documentation.
- Wikis can be used to map concepts. They are useful for brainstorming, and editing a given wiki topic can produce a linked network of resources.
- A wiki can be used as a presentation tool in place of conventional software, and students are able to directly comment on and revise the presentation content].

Wikis are tools for group authoring. Often group members collaborate on a document by emailing to each member of the group a file that each person edits on their computer, and some attempt is then made to coordinate the edits so that everyone's work is equally represented; using a wiki pulls the group members together and enables them to build and edit the document on a single, central wiki page.

Literature:

2. Godwin-Jones B. Blogs and wikis: Environment for on-line collaboration // Language Learning and Technology. 2003. № 2.
3. Kessler G. Student-initiated attention to form in wiki-based collaborative writing // Language Learning and Technology. 2009. № 1.