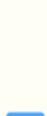




Wikis

SVEA TRAINING MODULES

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Introduction

This module focuses on developing collaborative learning experiences using wikis (a collection of web pages that can be edited by anyone). There are many public wikis available on the Internet and the principles taught can be applied to any wiki.

The module provides a range of wide range of resources for f setting up and managing wikis, ideas for collaborative online activities and case studies of wikis in practice as well as discussion on the educational and organisational use of them. At the end of each session, there will be an opportunity to engage in a wiki designed to discuss issues and practice techniques.

Session 1 - Introduction to Collaborative Online Learning and Wikis

This topic sets the scene by looking at the nature of collaborative learning and how social software tools, such as wikis can be implemented as educational tools to promote the learning process. The focus is on identifying group activities that can be developed implementing wikis and the role of the teacher within the process.

Session 2 - Creating Collaborative Online Activities Using Wikis

In the first session you edited an existing wiki with suggestions for effective online collaboration supported by a wiki. This session puts into practice the principles of collaboration where you can create a wiki of your very own to support your curriculum area or general interest which you can share with others.

Session 3 - Managing a Group Activity Using a Wiki

So far you have developed and created a group activity using a wiki. But this isn't the end of the process! It's important to your learners that you manage their experience. Have you allowed for differentiation in your group? Some group members may choose to dominate activities whilst others hide within the group. Have you considered assigning roles within the group? Have you provided all the information the learners need to complete the activity? Have your resources in your group activity catered for all learning styles? Have you included images, for example, for your learners with visual preferences or considered your use of fonts, colours and contrasts? There are lots of questions to ask yourself!

Session 4 - Wiki Case Studies

Case studies are valuable resources to demonstrate wikis in practice.

The following case studies are examples of wiki practices that relate to the sessions in this module. A wiki, *Case Studies in Practice* has been set upon this session for further discussion on some of the issues raised by these case studies.

Session 5 - The Wiki Debate

This debate, *Are We Ready for Wikis or Not?* is designed for reflection on the issues of collaborative learning and the effective use of wikis.

[Here](#) you can find the "Are we ready for wikis or not?" forum, while [here](#) you can find the "Are we ready for wikis or not?" wiki, which has been set up in PBworks.

Session 1 - Introduction to Collaborative Work and Wikis

Introduction

This topic sets the scene with an introduction to collaborative learning and how social software tools, such as wikis can be implemented as educational tools to promote collaborative learning. Groups can use wikis to write documents together online - how things have moved on!

A new generation of learner is emerging and new web-based tools, including wikis, are encouraging and supporting the way that they engage with the learning process. Students have more direct control over their learning. They can work together and share ideas and content online.

This session will look at how group work can be promoted and supported using a wiki. The focus is on identifying group activities that can be developed, implementing this technology and the role of the teacher within the process. To begin the session click here.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Identify the key features of effective collaborative learning and post to a discussion forum
- Suggest a collaborative activity which can be supported using a wiki and post to a discussion forum

What you have to do

A discussion, *Effective Group Work*, has been set up in this session for the purpose of identifying what makes working together effective. Perhaps you have used a wiki already in your teaching and you could identify what went well or the pitfalls to avoid. Engaging in this discussion will encourage you to think about what collaborative learning involves and how a wiki can support this. In taking part in this discussion, you will be sharing good practice and useful weblinks with others.

1.1 Web 2.0 Technologies



A decade ago learning technology was significantly different – broadcast media, audio, video being the means by which many educational establishments engaged with technology. Now



we have the new generation of learners – students who have grown up in a wired world, with podcasts, instant messaging, wikis, weblogs (blogs) being the social software tools that they can engage with – often referred to as Web 2.0 technology or social software. The Internet, rather than just a repository for information, now offers them wikis, blogs, managed and personal learning environments where they can interact with like-minded individuals in established networks.

What is different?

So why is this different? Students working together in groups and interacting with each other isn't new. The essence of this change is that these Web 2.0 technologies promote online groups to form which co-operate and share information. What makes it different is the more direct control that social software gives the learner in a space where they can share comments and content. *How* the learner engages with these social software tools makes them of use or otherwise, rather than the technologies themselves.

We'll take as an example a wiki. Creating a wiki (a collection of web pages that can be edited by anyone) isn't difficult to set up. It's what the contributors to the wiki do with it to develop its purpose and engage with its content that is the essence of making a wiki a learning tool and making it work.

Blogs are another example of social software and Web 2.0 technology. They too allow like-minded users, who often don't know each other or haven't worked together before, to share a group space on a common theme.



Facebook and MySpace, often seen as the curse of the classroom, engage learners in a shared space with others with similar interests or in the same locations. Whether we love or hate them, many of our learners are experts in their use.

What you may also notice is the informal nature of this learning or engagement. Perhaps the classroom environment is no longer the focal point where learning takes place as learners set up more and more social networks and have the freedom of choice when, where and how to learn? The jury is, perhaps, still out on this one!

A challenge for us as educators

How does one marry this open, decentralised, democratised approach of Web 2.0 with the more traditional, hierarchical, expert-focused, structured world of education? It is a challenge which faces educators (that means us!) and we need to develop and implement learning strategies that are appropriate to this new generation of learners. Whilst wikis, for example, encourage student control, there is also an element which stresses that a degree of structure and direction is necessary. So at least as teachers and lecturers we have a role in this. In fact, our role has, perhaps, never been more important. A major issue could be that learner doesn't necessarily know what it is that they need to know without guidance and direction. What has changed is that in an open, decentralised world the idea that the teacher is the person who will give you the content doesn't hold water anymore. That's a difficult pill to swallow but with one foot still in the past we have to reflect if our educational system was designed to teach this first generation to grow up with the new technology.

Try this out

Perhaps suggesting that this new generation (or net generation as it is sometimes referred to) doesn't include you and I is an injustice! Marc Prensky, in an article *Digital natives, digital immigrants* 2001 suggests that this new generation of learners sees this Web 2.0 technology as part of their everyday life – in work, communication and in their relaxation time. They've grown up with it. We, however, are being brought on board bit by bit, cautiously dipping our toes in the water. But maybe you see yourself as a digital native. Click on the link below and navigate to the *Are you a Digital Native? quiz*.

http://www.gotoquiz.com/digital_natives

How did you do? Did you surprise yourself or have you just confirmed what you knew already? If you came out as a digital immigrant it doesn't mean to say that this is where you'll remain and by the end of this course you will be more comfortable with how you can engage your learners in group work using this technology.

1.2 What's in a Wiki?

The growing range of social software tools in education is serving to support collaboration and group work. Students are coming to education with a familiarisation of these technologies which, at first, can be overwhelming to educators. Rather than stick to old tried and tested ways, educators need to harness this knowledge and capabilities and put them to good use in the classroom, providing it can be justified that they are of value in the learning process. This resource will examine the value of wikis in education if used effectively.

Listen to the following podcast where the collaborative nature of wikis is emphasised.



It has been argued by some educators that YouTube should not be allowed in the classroom. Some can envisage the potential for its use but others cannot. Some judged its use as disruptive in the classroom which, of course, it could be if the students chose to abuse its use, but there are some really useful video clips which can get the point over more than a thousand pearls of wisdom!

Take a look at the following [YouTube video clip](#) about the use of wikis. If YouTube works, wikis might work wonders too.

Background



You may be wondering where the name comes from. General agreement is that it comes from the Hawaiian phrase *Wiki-Wiki*, meaning 'to hurry'. Wiki-Wiki is also the name of the shuttle buses at Honolulu airport! It was a technology first launched by Ward Cunningham in 1995 with his WikiWiki Web. Possibly the most famous and public wiki is Wikipedia where users can freely engage with its content to produce a wealth of knowledge. Through editing pages knowledge is built on to produce this online encyclopedia. There aren't many subjects that you can't find in Wikipedia and if you do find one that's not included, you're invited to start a page yourself. What a dynamic encyclopedia! It must surely beat those old dusty ones on the bookshelves, or in my case, the attic!

Key Features of a Wiki

The YouTube video illustrates why wikis support group work and knowledge creation, but a well-thought out wiki can do much more. There are several key features of a wiki that make it different:

- Unlike conventional web pages It allows several users to create and edit its content, (both their own and that of others), in an ethos of open editing.
- It is built collaboratively, unlike conventional web pages, bringing together like-minded users – learners with a common purpose or interest.
- Users can work on a document together, making multiple contributions, without having to email revised versions back and forth.
- Pages can be created within a wiki and these can have many purposes – carrying out research activities, providing web links and social bookmarks, adding resources and images, posting assignment briefs, creating pages to keep rough drafts, technical help pages, general and specialised even holding brainstorming sessions – in fact, almost anything!

Wikis have the capacity to compare previous versions of a page and track who has edited their content and when. In this way educators oversee the content and users can self-police themselves.

How do Wikis Support Learning?

Think about the examples of how a wiki can be utilised, in particular, during group work. Participating in a wiki involves the group taking responsibility for creating its content. This way they learn from each other and build on each other's contributions to the wiki by editing pages. The key to this is that group members take on the ownership of their own learning and content in a supportive role. Think of a wiki set up for the purpose of problem solving. Group members will come along to the wiki with different personal experiences which they can share, discuss and move the knowledge of the group forward. Groups feed on the energy of its members and learn, with the less experienced gaining knowledge from others.

1.3 Group Work and Learning

There was a time in education when pupils in schools were encouraged to work on their own. Looking at someone else's work was viewed as cheating - a heinous crime! How things have changed now! We actively encourage our learners to work together and to share knowledge.



Group Learning is Engaged Learning

Engaged learning, is based on the simple belief that students of all ages learn better when they are active participants in what they are studying and group work is one way in which we can engage our learners. Our role as educators is to devise ways in which this can happen. Using Web 2.0 technology tools can help us in this process if used effectively. Wikis, blogs, social bookmarking or social networking sites such as FaceBook support, create and develop groups and communities using both individual and shared spaces.

Group work can provide a learning environment of support which leads to highly motivated learners. However, we need to provide a learning environment which serves to balance nurturing our learners whilst giving them the autonomy to learn with and from their peers, feeling comfortable when engaging in activities with others. We need to create a supportive but challenging environment – short-term goals, choices and constructive feedback.

Group work using wikis can stimulate the learner's curiosity. By devising relevant and authentic learning tasks, students are allowed to create and display their work which can serve as a permanent record of their interactivity and collaborative work.

Is the idea of group learning based on any particular theory of learning? One approach to learning is to consider it as social process of co-operation. Whilst recognising that the individual constructs knowledge, this approach suggests that effective learning needs to be set in a social setting.

How does group work support learning?

Group work on a structured activity works on the principle that co-operative groups learn to work as teams, to solve problems and to think things through without having the direct control of the tutor.

Try this out

Let's carry out a short activity to get you thinking about this from a personal perspective.

Consider the following statements and think of occasions in your teaching where this has been the case:



- Group work increases motivation as the learners learn from each other
- Group work changes attitudes and approaches to learning
- Group work creates more ideas than an individual working on their own
- Group work encourages a sense of security and belonging
- Group work provides support for the individual

A theoretical approach to learning

It's important to ground group work in a theoretical perspective. As educators, understanding *how* we learn influences how we approach our teaching. Such an approach underpins any course design, the pedagogical approach we take and the technology engaged with to achieve our learning outcomes.

It's beyond the scope of this course to visit the wealth of views on the way that we learn and I'm not sure that you would be too enthusiastic to do so! Let's look at one that supports the idea of working together as a way to learn, *social constructivism*. This view supports the principle that learning is a social practice based on co-operation and interaction. You may be familiar with the work of *Vygotsky*, a Russian psychologist born in 1896 (interestingly, in the same year as the child psychologist, Piaget).

One of his early observations was that children worked beyond their mental age if they were helped by adults or older children. Sharing ideas provides the scaffolding needed for learning to take place - think of brainstorming sessions, where ideas are pooled together collectively. Vygotsky was particularly interested in human dialogue – through this our learners can interact, negotiate and collaborate; thus, language and discussion are fundamental to learning and, although we internalise words, it is through language that we communicate our ideas and thoughts to others.

So where does this theoretical perspective fit in with our emphasis on group work? We've moved from the teacher-centred delivery and reframed the learning process through conversational and reflective dialogue. Web 2.0 tools, in particular, support a social constructivist approach to learning – discussion of ideas, writing, interaction and collaboration are afforded through these tools in a learning community with a common purpose.

So who owns the learning?

When we talk about the group are we suggesting that the ownership of the learning is transferred from the teacher to the student? The group can generate an energy all of its own through meaningful and valid activities. Through collaboration with others, students can gain verification and clarification of their ideas through sharing resources and engaging in activities to meet shared objectives.

Where does this leave you as the teacher? Are we to be made redundant or are our roles evolving – guiding students and acting more as the facilitator of the learning process rather than the 'fountain of all knowledge'. Teachers need to adopt a supportive role for individuals and groups.

So, for example, if our learners are seeking information, we can suggest a variety of approaches to seeking that information and putting forward, hopefully, stimulating ideas of how to search for it as well as keeping learners motivated through appropriate activities.



This is where a wiki can help us to create a structured activity and guide the students - encouraging them to discuss issues amongst themselves, problem solve, research and much more. You'll be trying this out for yourself in due course.

Hopefully this has got you thinking about how group work has supported your teaching. Have there been occasions where this hasn't been the case? Why do you think this was the case?

1.4 Netiquette

With Web 2.0 technology such as wikis, weblogs and established social spaces including FaceBook and Bebo, Flickr and MySpace, online communication and collaboration have become almost second nature to the younger generation. Network etiquette or 'netiquette' as it is referred to, involves a code of practice concerning what is proper to post or send. Without the face to face element of communication it's very important to set standards online. Body and tone of language must be inferred through how you write and what you say. It's important that we educate our learners on following certain codes of practice.

What's in a Word?

Wording is so important when working online and one inappropriate word can offend people, even if this may not be intended. You may misunderstand what others are saying too when again this was not meant.

Let's look now at some simple rules that you should encourage your learners to follow when online to prevent misunderstandings. Think about each one and ask yourself if you follow these rules religiously. You might be able to think of some situations where they are more appropriate than others. For example, you might be communicating in both formal and informal situations online – would you approach these situations differently?

- When you are dealing with people face to face, you have visual cues to put your meaning over. When you read attachments, emails or posts to forums and other shared spaces online, you only have the computer screen to look at and meanings can be misconstrued. So the rule is *'don't say online what you wouldn't say to someone's face. Remember that you're dealing with humans not a computer!'*
- Take time before posting or editing online *'Think before you write.'* Before you write to a wiki, for example, take one more look to make sure it is exactly what you want to say.
- We seem to be on the go all the time! *'Don't waste people's time and keep posts short.'* Before you write, make sure that you pay attention to the content of your writing. Be concise and accurate. Too much text doesn't equal quality – people read the beginning and then overlook the rest when they see a lot of text. Grammar and punctuation are an important part of language – they give meaning to what we write. *'Pay attention to your punctuation and grammar.'*
- Do acronyms annoy you? How many posts and documents have you read which contain them and you just don't know what they mean? For example, 'SMT' – senior management team; 'DYK' – do you know. So, *'Use acronyms sparingly.'* They don't impress and don't really save time, so use them only when necessary and if you're sure the recipients know what they mean!

Emoticons - are they appropriate?

What do you think of the use of emoticons and their place in online netiquette? Some users describe the Internet as faceless and emotionless and these serve to personalise your interaction with it.



They are the visual representations of facial expressions and have grown up to help overcome the problem of communicating electronically and to express the emotions experienced online – frustration or uncomfortable (sad face), enjoyment and comfortable with the online discussion (happy face), confusion or a more light-hearted posting in the form of a wink. Their use can set the tone for social networking. They should be used with care, however, so as not to set the wrong tone of a ‘conversation’; conversely, they can set the correct or desired tone. This emoticon represents either yawning or shouting – so be careful you want to convey the impression that you’re angry or frustrated or just downright bored!

So use them with caution to save your blushes!

Try this out

These does and don’ts are worth reflecting on further.



Think about your own experiences with netiquette. Do you observe all the above rules or can you think of occasions when you or your learners haven’t and have there been any consequences? What do you think of ‘weasel words’? These are words and phrases that claim meaning beyond what is actually being claimed. Is it more accurate to use plain English

online than ambiguous words. Research these and their use (Wikipedia is a good source). How appropriate do you think such words and phrases would be to use in social and educational networking?

1.5 Subscribing to a PBworks wiki

In this first introductory session a wiki *Is Global Warming Fact or Fiction?* has been developed in PBworks to show how a wiki can be used to support project work. You will be setting up a free account with PBworks, a wiki site, and accessing this wiki to see how wiki pages can be created and linked in a collaborative project.

A wiki is simply a set of structured and linked web pages that can be edited by anyone. This is referred to as 'open editing', although there are various permissions which can be set to limit or allow who can use it. A wiki tracks who has made changes, what those changes are and when they were carried out using the History tab within the wiki. So when you edit the wiki it's possible to follow the movements of its users and, if necessary, undo any unwanted edits or see who is engaging with the work!

PBworks provides a free educational wiki space for users to work in collaboration. The basic account is free and you will now be subscribing to PBworks to access your very own workspace where you can create and edit your pages, upload files and video clips and much more.

Setting up an Account with PBworks

PBworks is very user friendly with a wealth of help which is easy to access once you have registered on the site at <http://pbworks.com/>. On a daily basis you will receive tutorials via email about how to use the basics of PBworks as well as some of the management features. These include how to edit your workspace, creating and linking new pages, case studies to share good practice, monitoring activity, privacy and permissions and how to incorporate multimedia. PBworks will be the wiki site referred to in the sessions with an example of a basic wiki as well as wiki workspaces for discussion which users can edit. You will be creating your own workspace and managing your own wiki.

Firstly, you need to register with PBworks.

Registering with PBworks

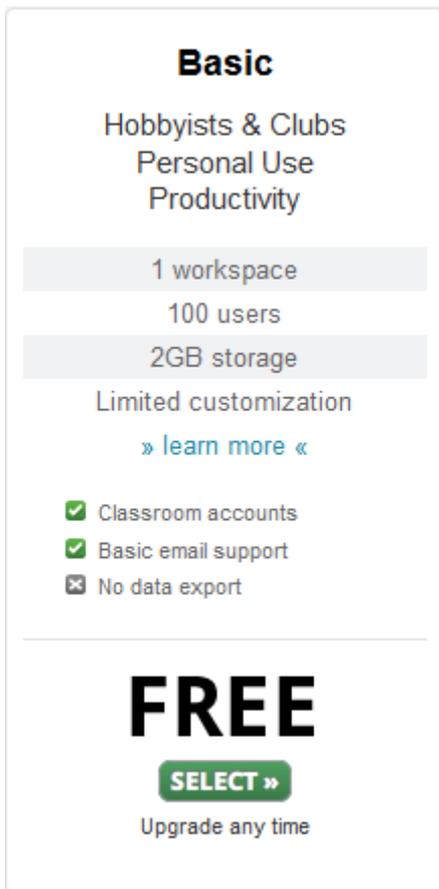
- Go to <http://pbworks.com/>
- Select PBworks for Education option and *sign up now* (Figure 1)



Figure 1

The next screen invites you to select which workspace you require.

- Select Basic which is free to use (Figure 2).

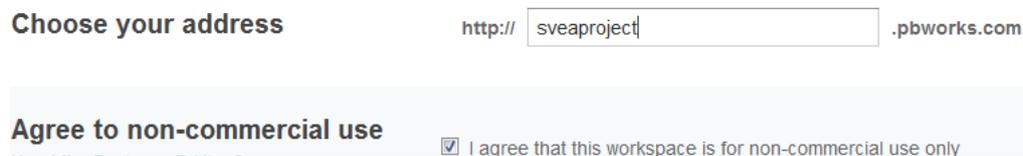


The screenshot shows the 'Basic' plan selection interface. At the top, the word 'Basic' is displayed in bold. Below it, the plan is described as 'Hobbyists & Clubs', 'Personal Use', and 'Productivity'. Key features are listed in grey boxes: '1 workspace', '100 users', and '2GB storage'. Below these, it says 'Limited customization' with a link '» learn more ‹'. A list of features with checkboxes follows: 'Classroom accounts' (checked), 'Basic email support' (checked), and 'No data export' (unchecked). At the bottom, the word 'FREE' is prominently displayed in large black letters, followed by a green 'SELECT »' button and the text 'Upgrade any time'.

Figure 2

The next screen asks you to choose an address. This can be your name, organisation etc.

- Create an appropriate address.
- Add a tick to the box *I agree that this workspace is for non-commercial use only* (Figure 3).

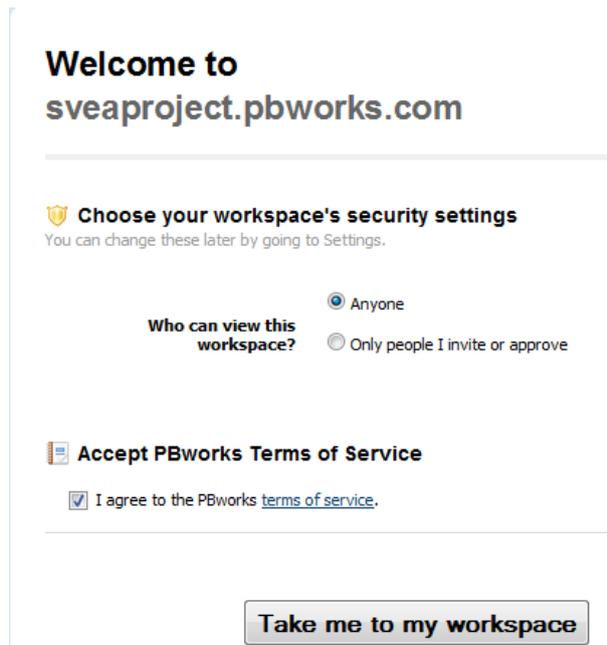


The screenshot shows the 'Choose your address' screen. It features a text input field with 'sveaproject' entered, followed by '.pbworks.com'. Below this, there is a section titled 'Agree to non-commercial use' with a checked checkbox and the text 'I agree that this workspace is for non-commercial use only'.

Figure 3

- Click on *Next*.

At the next window you can decide if you want anyone to view and join your wiki or to make it only for those that you approve or invite (Figure 4).



Welcome to
sveaproject.pbworks.com

Choose your workspace's security settings
You can change these later by going to Settings.

Who can view this workspace?

Anyone

Only people I invite or approve

Accept PBworks Terms of Service

I agree to the PBworks [terms of service](#).

Take me to my workspace

Figure 4

You are now ready to go to your workspace.

1.6 Conclusion and Discussion

A discussion, *Effective Group Work*, has been set up in this session for the purpose of identifying what makes working together effective. Perhaps you have used a wiki already in your teaching and you could identify what went well or the pitfalls to avoid. An example of a wiki in use has been set up using the free public wiki PBworks which you can view at <http://jowalton.pbworks.com/w/page/33099605/FrontPage>. Engaging in this discussion will encourage you to think about what collaborative learning involves and how a wiki can support this. In taking part in this discussion, you will be sharing good practice and useful weblinks with others.

- Open the discussion [Effective Group Work](#).
- Add to the discussion ideas of why you think group work is particularly effective in teaching and learning. You might wish to reflect on your own personal experiences either as a learner yourself or teacher.
- Suggest a collaborative learning experience which you think could be supported using a wiki and say why you think this would be effective.
- Download Activity Session One Checklist [here](#).

Checklist

- Add to a discussion your thoughts on why you think collaborative work is an effective way to learn.
- Suggest a collaborative learning experience which could be supported by a wiki.
- Add any useful weblinks that you think are relevant to the topic.

Session 2 – Creating Wikis

Introduction

This session puts into practice the principles of using wikis to collaborate. You have considered how Web 2.0 technologies, specifically wikis, could be used as tools to support your learners and in this session you will have the opportunity to create a wiki of your own using a public wiki. This could be for collaborative web writing, problem solving, compiling useful web links or any other collaborative work.

The nature your work or interests will determine the design and contents of your wiki activity. Take a look at the wikis in session one [Global Warming - Fact or Fiction?](#) to see how this has been structured with outcomes and clearly named wiki pages which tell the learner what each page is about.

Wikipedia remains the most famous wiki that has seen phenomenal growth in recent years as an online encyclopaedia and this session will demonstrate, using video clips, how you can create, edit a page and publish an article in Wikipedia.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Create an appropriately structured wiki to support a collaborative activity
- Name wiki pages clearly for the learners
- Know how to edit a page in Wikipedia as well as how to publish an article.

What you have to do

This second session shows you how to create a wiki (you don't have to use the same one if you have your own institutional wiki or use another free one on the web). The activity is to set up your own wiki on a subject or topic of your choice and set appropriate permissions for users to read, edit and manage the wiki.

2.1 Creating and using wikis

There are many wikis out there and available freely on the Internet. This resource will refer you to examples of public wikis which you can use to create a wiki for educational purposes. Once you have created an account with a wiki website which is an easy step-by-step process, you will be able to create, edit, and format pages. Most wiki sites will allow you to upload images and weblinks and it's a case of finding a wiki that best suits your purposes.

A wiki is easy to create and pages can be added and used for a variety of purposes - debates, developing collaborative projects, reports, resources, problem solving activities or simply to serve as an area for collaborative editing of a document. I'm sure you can think of lots of other uses from your own personal experience in the classroom.

YouTube is an excellent source to demonstrate how to create and use wikis and we will be looking at these video clips throughout this resource. The following wikis are samples of



what is available and you may have others in mind that you would prefer to use to suit your purposes.

PBworks

PBworks can be used for business requirements, personal use and educational needs, providing a vibrant collaborative learning experience.

For our purposes this session will focus on the educational workspaces which PBworks hosts. There are over 300,000 of these. PBworks state that these spaces have *helped transform teaching and learning for millions of students, parents and teachers*. They cater for all – universities, schools and individual teachers.

The basis edition of PBworks is free to use. Only if you upgrade is there a cost involved. This basic edition can be used for up to 100 users. Like other public wikis, it can be accessed from any web browser and any device that can be connected to the Internet. The following video clip from YouTube shows how to set up a PBworks account and some basic educational features:

So what are the key features of PBworks? You will have identified some of these in the video you have watched. These are listed below:

- Videos and audio can be included in the wiki pages due to the availability of multimedia plugins.
- History feature allows you to see who is contributing to the wiki, as well as when and where. Changes that are not desirable can easily be reverted automatically.
- Access to the wiki can be controlled. Specific users can be selected or the workspace can be open to the public which means it's available for everyone to use. Access can be set up for users to have rights as readers, writers, editors or administrators which gives plenty of scope for collaboration.
- No email accounts are required as students can be given personal logins and passwords which safeguards their privacy.

Watch the following YouTube video which demonstrates more features of a PBworks wiki:

Wikipedia



Wikipedia is probably the most famous wiki of them all. For those who aren't familiar with it, is a free encyclopedia that anyone can edit if they have access to the Internet. Most search results using a search engine such as *Google* will refer you to Wikipedia.

Watch the following video clips which take you through the process of setting up an account with Wikipedia, editing a page and publishing a new article.

Two other public wikis which you might like to consider and use to create a wiki are *Wikispaces* and *WikiAnswers*.



Wikispaces provides a free basic wiki space which free to use for individual and groups. Using a WYSIWYG visual page editor is easy to use where, like a Moodle wiki, you can format text, insert an image and files, embed media and link to other pages. It also includes a discussion area and history page.

<http://wikispace.com>

Watch the following YouTube video which takes you through how to create and manage



wikispaces.

Wikiversity

Wikiversity focuses on developing learning resources, research and projects, spanning pre-school to university. Teachers, students and researchers are invited to join with the emphasis on collaboration and sharing open source educational resources.

2.2 Writing Learning Outcomes



In order to provide structure to teaching a subject and collaborative work you will have thought about how you're going to tackle it. You might start off just thinking through ideas about how you are going to teach a session – what you want the session to achieve by the end, how much time you've got to deliver it, what activities you're going to include and, most important of all, who the learners are. We do this every time we walk into the classroom – if not on paper, at least in our heads! It's a brave teacher who can work

with a blank canvas! This principle is no different when you design your wiki. This resource will help you to plan a really productive group activity where writing learning outcomes will keep you focused on what you are aiming to achieve and how you are going to do it.

There is often confusion between the definitions of aims, objectives and outcomes. Without getting bogged down in the semantics of what constitutes an aim or objective, this resource uses the following interpretation throughout:

'By the end of this UNIT - SESSION - LECTURE – ACTIVITY (in our case a wiki) - TRAINING PROGRAMME - MODULE - LESSON, the learner will be able to:'

- DO SOMETHING (Learning outcome 1)
- DO SOMETHING ELSE (Learning outcome 2)

As you work through the resource you will see how the unit specification for *Wikis* was developed as a real example and how this was then broken down into the resulting session outcomes to ensure that the pieces of the jigsaw 'fitted' correctly.

What are Learning Outcomes?

There has been a change of emphasis in recent years when courses used to refer to content i.e. what the teacher or lecturer would cover in a programme of learning, to what the learner should be able to do (see introduction). The outcomes describe what the learner can achieve/attain/do/know on completion of the lesson/session/activity etc. Learning Outcomes written at unit level are more generic than those written at lesson or session level, but the same principles apply. They must be clear, obvious to the learner what they will be doing, measurable in terms of assessment and written at the correct academic level i.e. level 1, 2, 3 etc of study.

The use of definable verbs is also accepted as good practice to explain what the learner will need to do i.e. Acquire, Identify, Illustrate, Produce, Summarise etc. One of the most problematic verbs often used when teachers or lecturers are writing lesson plans is "Understand". It's very difficult to measure if someone actually understands. For example, carrying out an action doesn't necessarily determine that the person knows *why* they did it!



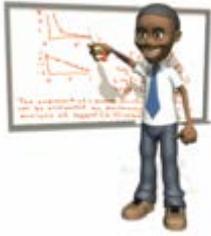
Figure 1

How to Write Meaningful and Measurable Learning Outcomes

A learning outcome describes what the learner will be able to do at the end of a learning activity - this means that the learner will need to provide evidence of some description that they have achieved the outcome by actually completing the activity. The beauty of a wiki is that this evidence will be there for you to see. By examining the 'history' of a wiki you can check, for example, who has edited or not and see their contributions to the activity.

Learning outcomes in effect are **targets** - in the business world, target setting at an individual, departmental or company level usually means bonus payments of some description. One approach commonly used to set targets is the SMART (Figure 1) technique, where the performance outcomes are measured against agreed set targets. By adopting a

SMART approach, it becomes very easy to match the learning activity to the learning outcome.



Let's break down SMART learning outcomes:

Specific – in order for the learner to know what they have to do, outcomes must be specific. For example, read the following outcome and decide whether you think it is specific. By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Use Microsoft Word

This outcome is too broad and not specific enough to be measured. If the outcome was rewritten as follows:

- Edit text by changing fonts, font colours and sizes

.....it would be much clearer and easier to devise an activity.

Measurable – an outcome must be measurable so that we can say if it has been achieved or not. So by setting specific outcomes, such as changing fonts, the achievement can be measured by setting an activity which shows that the learner has done just that.

Achievable – ask yourself when you are setting your outcomes if you are expecting too much of your learners. Do they have the appropriate knowledge to carry out the activity, enough time or enough group members to make the activity happen.

Realistic – think about your resources – are they sufficient to make the learning outcome happen? Careful planning of your wiki pages will ensure that your outcomes are met. Take a look at the wiki in session one [Global Warming – Fact or Fiction?](#) See how the pages are set out so that what you are asking the students to do – research, look for images etc before they make an informed decision. In this way you are providing the framework that the learners need to carry out the group activity. Have your learners the skills on how to use a wiki?

Timed – think about how much time you can allow for your activity. When do you intend to complete it – a week, month or a year? It's of no use setting an activity if the time you have to complete it in is just not enough or even too much.

Remember that learning outcomes should be written from the perspective of the learner and not the teacher. So keep this as your focus when you're preparing your wiki!

Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains, or as you may have heard it referred to as Bloom's 'Taxonomy Of Educational Objectives' was published in 1956 by Dr Benjamin S Bloom. His aim was to develop a system of categories of learning behaviour which could be used in designing and assessing learning. In 2001, the taxonomy was 'updated' by one of Bloom's ex-students and one of the original co-authors (Anderson and Krathwohl).

The Three Domains

In the original taxonomy Bloom identifies three domains: *Cognitive*, *Affective* and *Psychomotor*. This is easier to comprehend if the words: **Skills**, **Knowledge** and **Attitude** are used.

- Cognitive domain (Knowledge)
- Affective domain (Attitude)
- Psychomotor domain (Skills)

Each domain has its own levels of progressive competence. Figure 2, for example shows the Cognitive or Knowledge Domain.

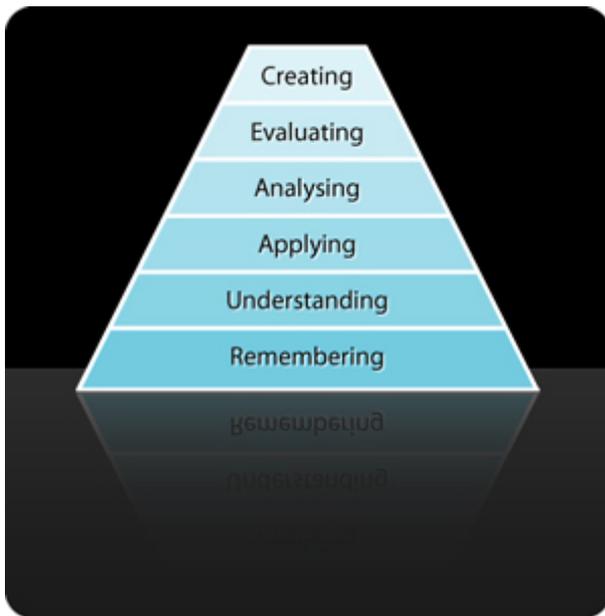


Figure 2

The three domains can be quite daunting. However, the models are logical and relevant in assisting the teacher/instructor or lecturer in the design, delivery and assessment of any educational course and in our case for designing activities, such as wikis.

Take a look at figure 3 below which sets out how useful Bloom's Taxonomy can be when writing outcomes by using appropriate verbs as a focus:



Table1. Bloom's Taxonomy

The Knowledge Dimension	The Cognitive Process Dimension					
	Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Factual Knowledge	List	Summarize	Classify	Order	Rank	Combine
Conceptual Knowledge	Describe	Interpret	Experiment	Explain	Assess	Plan
Procedural Knowledge	Tabulate	Predict	Calculate	Differentiate	Conclude	Compose
Meta-Cognitive Knowledge	Appropriate Use	Execute	Construct	Achieve	Action	Actualize

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 Designer/Developer - Dianna Fisher

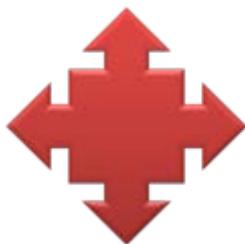
Figure 3

For example, take a look at the outcomes of this session:

- **Describe** an appropriate group activity within their curriculum area
- **Create** an appropriately structured wiki to support this activity
- **Write** appropriate learning outcomes for the activity
- **Name** wiki pages clearly for the learners

They all start off with an appropriate verb to describe clearly what the learner needs to do - describe, create, write and name. The verbs are appropriate to the three domains - cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Don't worry, writing outcomes based on this taxonomy becomes easier the more you write.

2.3 Signposting for Learners



It's really important to your learners to know where they are going in an activity. Naming your wiki pages appropriately signposts the wiki purpose and content.

Think about the sessions in this module and how they are structured. Do you find it easy to navigate because each resource has a clear heading? Notice too that the sessions are structured consistently throughout.



A brief analogy of Signposting

Imagine you have walked into a book shop (or buying online) and are looking for a thriller to take on holidays. The first bit is easy – you look in the Thriller/Mystery section. How do you decide which book to choose?

- The front cover?
- The title of the book?
- The number of pages?
- The reviews?
- Or something else?

Most people would want to know what the book is about i.e. the summary will give you a brief overview of the story. If you like what you have read you may go ahead and purchase it. You subconsciously work through the ‘signposting’ before making the final decision to purchase the book (and you will probably not even be aware of what you have done).

This resource looks at the importance of signposting wiki pages so your learners can successfully navigate where they are going and what they have to do.

What should be in a wiki?

Although a wiki can contain pretty much anything you want, it should not be a dumping ground for information overload. Remember that your audience is the **learner**. For example, naming wiki pages *Page 1*, *Page 2* etc is meaningless if you are not familiar with the activity?

Just as sessions need to be signposted, so do wiki activities. Take a look at the wiki [Is Global Warming Fact or Fiction](#) in session one. On each page is a short explanation of what is required on each page and the introduction page leads the learner into the activity.

2.4 Wiki Permissions

PBWORKS

PBworks Permissions

An important element of wiki design is management. Most offer a range of permissions which allow creators determine how and who can use the wiki and to what degree. Here are some common permissions on a PBworks workspace.

Administrator

As an administrator you can view, edit and change the content of your workspace, as well as have access to the workspace settings.

Editor

An editor has similar rights to an administrator – creating, editing, viewing, renaming or deleting pages. One major difference is that an editor hasn’t access to the workspace settings and cannot add new users.



Writer

Writers share many of the rights as editors, except they can't delete information from a workspace. They can only add new pages and files as well as edit existing ones. They can't delete any content from the workspace.

Reader

A reader has limited rights in the workspace and is only able to view the content of workspaces and download uploaded files.

The following table is a checklist of who can do what in a PBworks wiki. It also shows how versatile and collaborative a wiki can be if well managed.

Activity	Administrator	Editor	Writer	Reader
Create a Page	✓	✓	✓	
Edit a Page	✓	✓	✓	
View a Page	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rename a Page	✓	✓		
Delete a Page	✓	✓		
Change Page Security	✓			
Create a folder	✓	✓		
Rename a folder	✓	✓		
Delete a folder	✓	✓		
View the contents of a folder	✓	✓	✓	✓
Move a page or file from Unfiled Items into a folder	✓	✓	✓	
Move a page or file from a folder into another folder	✓	✓		
Move a page or file from a folder into Unfiled Items	✓	✓		
Change folder security	✓			
Upload a File	✓	✓	✓	
Upload a new version of a file	✓	✓	✓	
View a File	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rename a File	✓	✓		
Delete a File	✓	✓		
Access and change workspace settings	✓			
View comments on a page	✓	✓	✓	✓
Create a comment on a page	✓	✓	✓	✓ **



Delete a comment on a page	✓	✓		
Create page tags	✓	✓	✓	
Remove page tags	✓	✓	✓	
View page and file history	✓	✓	✓	
Revert pages and files to a previous version	✓	✓	✓	
Delete previous revisions of pages and files	✓	✓		
Add HTML to a page	✓	✓	✓	

2.5 Wiki Group Permissions



This resource will help you to think about designing your wiki. This will depend on what and who your wiki is intended for. So when you design your wiki you will need to think about who your wiki is for - the teacher only to edit, particular groups within your class or students as a general community.

We have established that when we plan collaborative activities we need to set our SMART objectives. We do this by thinking about what we want to achieve and this should decide how we tackle our activities. So at this point we should be thinking specifically about what we want our students to do to achieve these objectives. So when we design our wiki we need to decide what we want our wiki to do – do we want it as an area which the teacher only inputs into - putting up notes for the students to access, perhaps, or a specific group or any students that have access to the wiki who can work as one large community of learners. This is known as setting wiki group permissions. You will find that different public wikis will refer to these permissions as access control or something similar.

Think about who the two wikis in session one [Is Global Warming Fact or Fiction?](#) and *Effective Group Work* were designed for. They certainly weren't intended for the teacher only to edit; rather for the teacher and all users to view and edit them. Many wikis allow you to determine which students can access, read or edit your workspace. The possibilities and combinations seem endless. [PBworks](#) is an example of a wiki which is versatile in its management. Download PBworks Permissions document in this session and study the options of how this wiki can be managed.

2.5 Conclusion and Activity



Creating a wiki isn't difficult. What takes more thought and judgment is the appropriate use of a wiki to design and develop collaborative activities. What you have to do is to create an appropriate wiki to support a group activity. Initially it is suggested that you set out your interface with appropriate outcomes for the activity with clear signposting for your learners. Take a look at the wiki [Is Global Warming Fact or Fiction?](#) in session one to see how this is structured. Your wiki doesn't have to follow this exact format and, depending on your topic you can include whatever pages you wish so long as they are relevant to your wiki activity.

- Choose your subject and activity



- Create a wiki using a wiki account of your choice. Public wikis have been suggested in the resources where, once you have created an account, will allow you to build your own wiki. [PBworks](#) is recommended as the chosen wiki but it's entirely up to you.
- Ensure your wiki pages are well-signposted for your learners.

Checklist

- **Create** a wiki.
- **Signpost** a series of pages in your wiki with appropriate titles which should include learning outcomes.

Don't forget that you will need to send the link to any of the users of your new wiki otherwise they won't know where to find it! If you are setting this up for a class, the permissions need to be set and tested.

Session 3 – Managing a Group Activity Using a Wiki

Introduction

Once you've designed and set up your group activity it's important that you take time to manage it effectively and take into consideration your learners' needs and preferences. Learning preferences will vary, so use of images, sound, reading resources should be considered in your wiki.

Not all of your students will be at the same point in their learning and some may have specific needs. So differentiation is important. This is where you could assign different roles to students to take this into account. PBworks, as do many other wikis, allows you to set different group permissions - who can write to the wiki workspace, who can manage it or only read it, are some of the options (see session two resource PBworks Permissions). How your wiki pages look should be another consideration - have you used appropriate fonts, colours, sizes etc?

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Add images to their wiki
- Allow for different learning styles (audio, visual and kinesthetic) in designing a group activity
- Contribute to the discussion *Accommodating Learners* to describe how a group activity was managed. This could be assigning roles, group permissions, adding images, sound etc).

What you have to do

The focus of the resources in this session is to look at the wiki you've created and take into consideration the learners who will be using it. All learners have differing learning styles and these should be considered when setting up a wiki. You will be editing the wiki set up in a previous session and a discussion forum set up for you to reflect on the key issue of Accommodating Learners.

3.1 Adding Images to a Wiki

Inserting images and videos into a wiki page

Once you have set up the structure and the pages in your wiki, you will need to think about the differing learning styles your students will bring to the classroom. Some students will come to your classroom with a strong visual preference and using images will help to meet their learning needs. To illustrate how images have been used look through the variety of both pedagogy and skills resources used throughout this unit.

You might want to add images to illustrate the topic you have chosen for your wiki. Images have been used throughout this unit and it's worth taking a moment to reflect on where images have been used.

- To indicate an activity
- To relate information
- To emphasise a specific point or topic (ie groupwork)

The process of adding an image to your wiki is relatively simple. An illustration of this is the wiki in session one [Is global warming fact or fiction?](#) In this wiki a page was set up specifically for the purpose of encouraging learners to add relevant images to the wiki page to share with others.

In session two you created your own wiki and may well have included an image page similar to this one where you can add images or encourage your learners to do so. If you haven't, you can add images to any of the pages that you created.

Depending on which wiki you have chosen it is relatively easy to upload an image file.

[Here](#) you find help on how to upload a file on [Vimeo](#) from [PBworks Support](#).

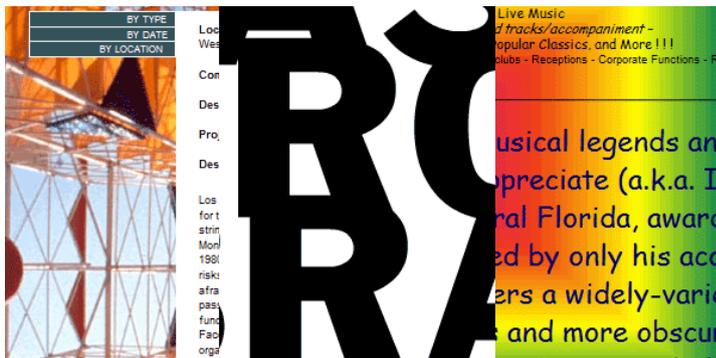
You can also add videos to your workspace:

[Uploading Video](#) from [PBworks Support](#) on [Vimeo](#).

3.2 Colour, Font and Contrast

In setting up a wiki, it's important to consider colours, fonts and contrasts and how user friendly these are to your learners. How easy is it for them to read resources online? You need to take this into account. One line of thought might suggest that wikis are plain and therefore not appealing; whilst others might argue that this is the nature of a wiki - anything else would detract from the main purpose of collaboration.

In preparation for writing this resource, a search across the internet revealed a large number of poorly designed sites. It has to be said that most of these seemed to have been developed by people with little or no understanding of the potential problems they were causing because of the font, font size, colour or layout of the web site, including some educational web sites!



If you want to find bad examples - use a search engine and search for 'bad+web sites' - there are even awards for the worst on the web! The general points to make about the examples shown is that they are difficult to read because of the font/font size being used, the design of the page (too many images hiding the text), appalling use of colour (and contrast) and poor navigation.



Which is the easiest font to read?

It ultimately depends on the end user. An important change in recent years has been the ability to change fonts in web browsers i.e. you can customise them to your own taste. If you really like a font, then as long as the font is stored on the computer that you are using you can very easily change this.

Take a look at the images below. Which is the easiest for you to read? How many of the recommended fonts do you think are displayed? All fonts were set at 12 point for these images. Although it could be argued that all are 'readable', some are more readable than others, especially if you were glancing through the text looking for a particular piece of information or key word. One other recommendation is that no more than TWO different fonts should be used on the same web page or document!

<p>Probably the most commonly used piece of software in education is Microsoft Word. It is simple to use, allows images to be included, has a range of fonts, colours and functions to give the user control on how information can be displayed.</p>	<p>Probably the most commonly used piece of software in education is Microsoft Word. It is simple to use, allows images to be included, has a range of fonts, colours and functions to give the user control on how information can</p>	<p>Probably the most commonly used piece of software in education is Microsoft Word. It is simple to use, allows images to be included, has a range of fonts, colours and functions to give the user control on how information can be displayed.</p>
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It will hopefully come as no surprise that the font bottom left is the easiest to read - the font is called Arial which is a Sans Serif type font. Sans Serif fonts are recommended for use when displaying information on web pages. There are many other fonts in the Sans Serif family if you don't like Arial.

What are the recommended fonts for the web?

This information is based on findings from a host of agencies involved with people with visual disabilities and are recommendations, not law. For web page viewing, fonts which are members of the sans serif (they have no feet or bits hanging off the end of the letters) family are most appropriate and include:

- Arial
- Geneva
- Helvetica
- Trebuchet
- Verdana



As opposed to the Serif family which do have 'feet', but tend to blur when viewed on screen. Members of the Serif family of fonts includes:

- Baskerville
- Garamond
- Goudy
- Times New Roman

Colours

Colours are a measurable entity based on a numbering scale (you are not expected to remember them) through the whole colour spectrum. If you had to allocate a number to every colour in the world, you would be here a while! Thankfully, its already been done and is a universal standard.

Time for a quick lesson in colour theory. Colours are made up of different amounts of Red, Green and Blue (known as RGB) or Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Key (black to you and me) - (known as CMYK). These are the two scales used universally to classify colours.

CMYK is used predominantly in printing where the CMYK is the order in which the ink is applied. RGB is used in computer software as it works in a way similar to how the human eye sees colour (this is a simplistic explanation but sufficient for this resource - if you want more information use the web to find out).

Each colour is given a particular number resulting from the amount of RGB that is contained in it. As a quick example to reinforce the understanding:

Contrast

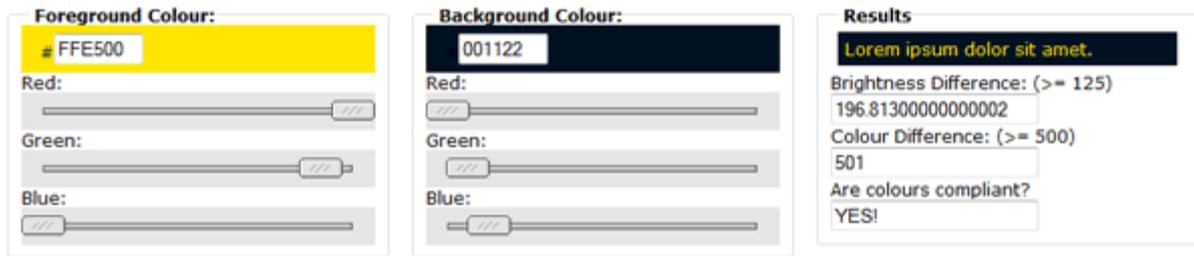
Contrast is the visible difference between two or more colours. In this case it refers to the font colour and the background colour on which the font is displayed (the web page or document).

How to measure Contrast

There are numerous online tools available to help with this and work by providing a numerical value between colour difference and brightness of the foreground and background colours. Dont worry where the maths came from - the minimum requirements are as follows:

- Colour difference between foreground and background - should be greater than 500
- Brightness - should be greater than 125

It must be mentioned that if either one of the values is exceeded, it 'almost' passes. However for best practice always try to ensure that both checks exceed the minimum values. There are 3 links provided for you to use. The first one Snook is probably the easiest to use as you can mix colours on screen and compare with what colours you have used. The image below shows a screen shot of a Contrast checker from the Snook website. If you don't know what the actual Hexadecimal representation is - use your eye when mixing the foreground and background colours. Also a brightness checker is included to make your life a lot easier.



The results box on the right hand side gives you some indication of whether the colour mix is a fail, partial pass or a full blown pass. Check out some of the links and simply choose one that you like - you will be checking your own as part of the learning activity. It is suggested that you add these (or your preference) to your 'Favourites' for future use.

- Snook.ca
- Juicystudio.com
- Etre.com

There are others out there - use the web to find one that suits you.

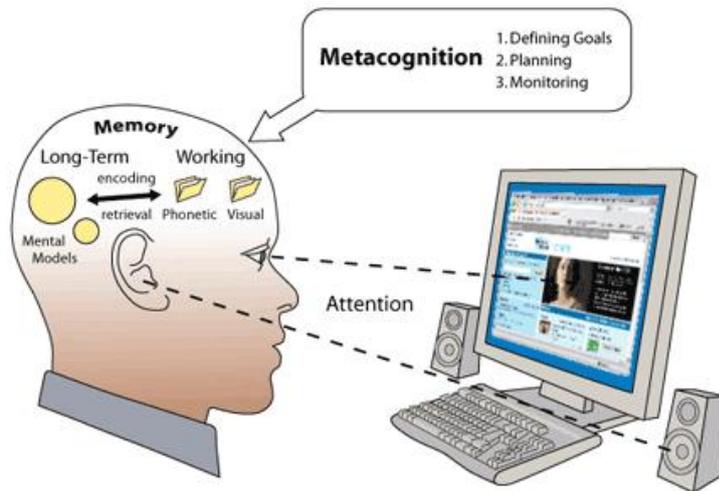
Some tips to think about:

The principles in this resource should apply to any 'screen based' viewing and is applicable to many software programmes, web pages, animated files etc. It is intended that a greater understanding of why colours are so important will be gained from reading this resource and take away a few tips on how to improve resources for your learners. Best practice should be considered and applied at all times.

- Are you using the right font family for viewing online - Sans Serif
- Are the background and foreground colours appropriate and with sufficient contrast?

3.3 Learning Styles

Learning styles are often portrayed as the 'overriding' factor influencing how people learn. There is a stage prior to this consideration, based on cognitive learning theory which explains how mental processes transform information received by the senses - eyes and ears into skills and knowledge in memory. The diagram below shows how information is received through two channels - auditory and visual commonly termed metacognition.



Consider the following scenario. At home, you are watching your favourite TV programme with the following set up:

1. You are watching the 'visual pictures' on the TV.
2. You are listening to the actors speak their lines.
3. You have Teletext on and words appear at the bottom of the screen.

As the viewer you can only process the information based on your preference at the time i.e. your visual channel will probably ignore teletext if your hearing is fine and concentrate on the actors' voices - think about trying to watch a foreign film with subtitles.

Cognitive theory explains several points that can be transferred to the development of learning materials which will allow information to be easily processed by the learner. It is based on the following assumptions (Clark and Mayer):

- Human memory has two channels for processing data/information - auditory and visual.
- Human memory has a limited capacity for processing information.
- Learning occurs by active processing in the memory system.
- New knowledge and skills must be retrieved from long term memory for transfer to the job.

The visual and auditory information enters the working memory (rehearsal) through the eyes and ears and is finally stored in long term memory. The circle of learning is closed only when the information is retrieved from long term memory - applied in a learning activity.

Learning Styles

Having a preferred learning style is an important issue to consider when planning courses and wiki activities. Students will think that they are good at some things and not at others. How can learning materials be used to accommodate the variety of learning styles our students will come to the classroom with and how can we appeal to both their auditory and

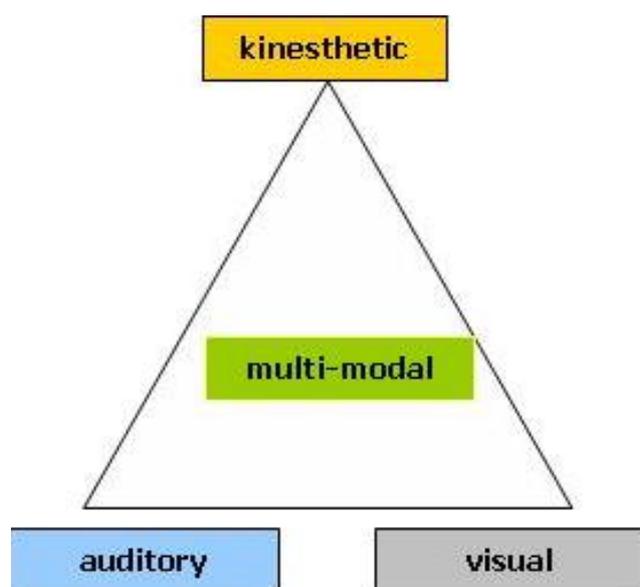
visual senses? These should influence how we design our wiki – ie using images, video clips, text etc. Let's look more closely at what these preferences might be.

Try this out

Think about how you learn – be honest with yourself! Try out the following quiz and confirm (or otherwise!) your own learning preference. Click on the link which will take you to the quiz.

<http://www.about.com/education/hubsearch.htm?terms=learning%20styles&SUName=education>

Sensory preferences are unique to each individual. The question is, should we be encouraging students to explore their less favoured preferences or building on the ones which they feel they are strong in? A variety of teaching strategies would be preferable and it is our responsibility to students to vary our resources and activities to accommodate all preferences and encourage a multi-modal approach to learning. So when we are planning our wikis we could assign roles that would encourage learners to explore all their preferences. For example, why not assign roles where students are developing their visual skills such as locating subject-specific images based around a project, at other times reading skills where they have to summarise articles or practical skills which they can report back to the wiki.



Kinesthetic Learners

Kinesthetic learners like to be hands-on. Typically they learn best by doing things and are naturally good at physical activities. So with these learners, involve them physically in your wiki activities – quizzes, role play, undertaking researching etc.

Visual Learners

Visual learners learn best by using mental picture techniques to remember things. Many prefer to read information rather than listen. You could include video clips, images, lists, bullet points with key words, diagrams, mind maps to accommodate these learners. Figures 1 & 2 in this resource are examples of images and diagrams which have been designed to appeal to this type of learner.



Auditory Learners

Auditory learners learn best by listening and talking. They typically respond and remember sounds. So think of ways in which you can prepare activities in your wiki which include sounds – this is where video clips come into their own.

Think back to some of the exercises in the resources in this unit – they have been designed with the assumption that there will be learners on this course who have different learning preferences. Some will learn best by having a go at an exercise or quiz. In session one the resource Web 2.0 Technologies asks you to complete an online quiz about your use of these new tools for learning and everyday living. In this same session, the resource What's in a wiki? invites you to complete a checklist. Those who have a visual preference or learn best by listening have clips provided from YouTube; whilst others will feel that they learn best by reading the text. A 'multi-modal' student – one who doesn't have one strong preference but learns using a variety of styles – will appreciate all activities.

3.4 Managing versions of wiki pages

One way in which you can follow how your students are interacting and using your wiki is to look at the history of your wiki activity by selecting the History tab whilst in editing mode to see who has been busy (or not!) and when. Where there are serious errors, older versions of the text can be reinstated without typing everything in again. The video demonstrates how to revert back to previous versions of the PBworks wiki.

Links have been included to the original support files. [Reverting Pages](#) from [PBworks Support](#) on [Vimeo](#).

3.5 Useful Websites

If you wish to explore some of the issues included in the resources in this session in more depth, a number of links are provided below for further reading.

Lighthouse International



A website dedicated to the topic of designing for people who are partially sighted and have colour deficiencies.

<http://www.lighthouse.org/accessibility/design/accessible-print-design/effective-color-contrast>

"This Web page contains three basic guidelines for making effective color choices that work for nearly everyone. Following the guidelines are explanations of the three perceptual attributes of color -- hue, lightness and saturation -- as they are used by vision scientists."

snook.ca

A website that provides a colour contrast tool to specify a foreground and a background and give advice on whether they provide enough contrast when viewed on a black and white screen or by users who may have colour deficits.

http://snook.ca/technical/colour_contrast/colour.html



About.com:Education



A very userfriendly and readable website that amongst many other subjects looks at learning styles in education.

<http://www.about.com/education/hubsearch.htm?terms=learning%20styles&SUName=education>

If you haven't done this quiz already in the pedagogy resource *Learning Styles*, try it out now. You might confirm what you thought your preference in learning is or you might surprise yourself!

<http://homeworktips.about.com/od/homeworkhelp/a/lstyleqz.htm>

Creative Common Search



If you are looking for images that are mainly royalty free, this is an excellent site.

<http://search.creativecommons.org/#>

3.6 Conclusion and Discussion

This session identified some of the practical considerations when managing wikis with learners, taking into account their different learning styles as well as enrichment with the introduction of images and multimedia resources.

This activity is a review of how your group activity will be an effective learning opportunity for your students. Having initially set up your activity you will reconsider some aspects of it. How can the wiki support learning most effectively. You will be editing your wiki to reflect some sound pedagogical issues such as differentiated learning and different learning styles.

- Go to your wiki which you set up in session two
- Add images/videos to wiki pages as appropriate for your learners
- Edit your group activity where appropriate to allow for differentiation and a variety of learning styles (visual, auditory or kinesthetic)
- Edit the discussion forum *Managing a wiki* identifying what changes you have made and briefly say why

A discussion forum has been set up for you to reflect on the key issues covered in this session.

Session 4 – Wiki Case Studies

Introduction

This session gives you the opportunity to read case studies on wikis in practice. They cover issues that have been raised in the unit and a wiki has been set up for you to reflect on your thoughts. Perhaps you have revised your ideas on the use of wikis in educational institutions and other organisations or what you have read and the activities you have taken part in have confirmed your own experiences.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session the learner will be able to:

- Identify key issues related to group work and the use of wikis
- Edit wiki pages with comments related to appropriate case studies

What you have to do

A number of case studies have been included from around the world discussing the use of wikis in education and collaborative working. After you have read the studies provided access the wiki that has been set up for you to discuss the issues raised in each case.

4.1 Case Study 1

This first case study, *Using Wikis in Schools – a Case Study* published by Futurelab – Innovation in Education looks at the collaborative nature of wikis and their potential to learning. This case study considers the importance of font, colour, background and use of images in wikis.

<http://www2.futurelab.org.uk/resources/publications-reports-articles/discussion-papers/Discussion-Paper258>

There will be an opportunity to discuss the Case Study in the conclusion to this session.

4.2 Case Study 2



This second case study, *Wikipedia*, examines the beginnings of Wikipedia, its development and debates and controversies that have surrounded it. Controllers of Wikipedia have made big efforts to strike a balance between the need to empower people without formal expertise and the need to ensure that Wikipedia remains accurate and reliable.

There will be an opportunity to discuss the Case Study in the conclusion to this session.

4.3 Case Study 3



This [case study](#), *Wikis: Collaborative Publishing or Reason to Plagiarize?*, looks at the power of wikis in the classroom due to their collaborative nature. There is evidence that students have improved their writing skills but along with this there has been an issue of plagiarism.

There will be an opportunity to discuss the Case Study in the conclusion to this session.

4.4 Case Study 4



The [fourth case study](#) was published by JISC in their guidance document *Effective Practice in a Digital Age. Building a Learning Community: Northumberland College*. It looks at the advantage of using a wikitool alongside the college's VLE to support coursework. The study illustrates how wikis were used for the exchange of ideas, peer-to-peer support, posting research findings and establishing a feeling of community.

There will be an opportunity to discuss the Case Study in the conclusion to this session.

4.5 Conclusion and Discussion

This session identified a number of case studies about using wikis in education. You now have an opportunity to discuss some of the findings in greater depth and consider how this type of activity can be applied to your own teaching.

This activity will help you to consolidate your understanding and learning on some of the issues raised in this session regarding group work and the use of a wiki as a valuable tool for learning. Having looked at four case studies you will then add comments on each study in a wiki set up for the purpose. **You can find the wiki by clicking [here](#)**

- Select the link to each case study
- Having read each study, go to the wiki set up in this session and edit the wiki with your comments on each one

Your postings need only be brief and feel free to comment on what others have posted. Each link opens in a new window.



Session 5 – Are we ready for wikis or not?

Introduction

So we have looked in some detail at the uses of wikis in education and the key issues that need to be considered. Having worked through the four sessions, the final session is to reflect on a series of questions where you are encouraged to engage with other learners through a discussion forum.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, the learner will be able to:

- Comment critically on the use of Wikis in education

What you have to do

The final session poses a number of questions for you to discuss that encompasses the use of wikis in general and their suitability as a tool in education.

5.1 Conclusion and Discussion

In this session a wiki has been set up in PBworks for you to debate the issues outlined in this session and any other issues around collaborative learning and wikis that you want to discuss. This is your wiki so feel free to add images, links and pages as you see fitting to the subject. The following questions are used as the basis for discussion and separate areas have been set up in each case for you to put forward your thoughts.

- Do wikis serve a useful educational purpose?
- Can you identify how you could engage learners through their use?
- Do wikis encourage plagiarism? How can you manage your wiki?
- Is there a place for Wikipedia in education?

Click [here](#) to take you to the wiki.