

Group Research Project Wiki

Brief Outline of Sample Group Research Project Wiki Activity

In this activity a wiki is used to present and organise a group research project. This wiki may have as few or as many pages as the pupils see appropriate to present their research and conclusions. The pupils are given a broad title (i.e. sustainable design) and are asked to research and present their work through a wiki. Each group, 4-6 pupils, is given a wiki each and are asked to work collaboratively to create a valuable resource for their peers to use and for them to present to the class group. Collaboration and group organisation are vital in a successful project being produced during activity. In many ways this project is very similar to other group research projects people will have completed, such as, poster presentations, in class group work, etc. except for this project they will create a wiki.

Duration

Once the pupils have been given their topic, it would be recommended to give the pupils 3-4 days to complete their group research wiki.

Pedagogic Rationale for Activity/ Research Testing Results

Lyndsay Grant (2008) conducted small scale research into using wikis for collaborative group research projects. She found many interesting points about her pupils' experiences with wikis for this activity, these included:

- "While students grasped the opportunity to publish their own work on the internet, very few edited material on others' pages;
- several students included their names in the title of their pages;
- [A pupil commented] "writing's what gets you your grades, not pictures" (Jamie)... the design elements were perhaps seen as outside the discourse of individualised assessment and therefore a legitimate area for collaborative practice;
- Individuals or pairs took charge of a topic based on their own personal interest and they saw no need for cohesion between topics within a group
- The knowledge content produced during this project appears to be limited to each individual or pair's research, rather than shared as a group" (Grant 2008)

What Grant's research shows us is that the pupils in this case were unable to relinquish individual ownership when they considered the content to be vital to their grades, but when they saw a part of the project that they didn't feel they would be graded on they were very willing to collaborate and modify each other's work. This also shows that for a collaborative wiki to succeed the teacher must:

- Emphasise that marks are being given for collaboration. The more practical solution would be to give group grades instead of individual grades as (Slavin and others 1996) looked at in detail.

- Ensure that it is explicit that pupils may not include any of their names in the pages
- Ask the pupils to look at fewer topics within the open subject given to them at the beginning (give a more specific topic so all pupils within the groups have to look at the same area)

Subject Matter of Activity

This is up to the teacher. The teacher may choose a broad topic or a very narrow topic. The results that the different topics will give include:

- Broad Topic:
 - More wiki pages
 - A wider variety of projects
 - Could result in less collaboration
- Narrow Topic:
 - Less wiki pages
 - Similar projects
 - Collaboration should thrive if the teacher makes it explicit

Aim of Activity

To encourage collaboration during research activities using a wiki

Objectives	Assessment
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pupils will research a given topic using books, articles, the internet, or whatever resources they wish 2. Pupils will work collaboratively to create a wiki that best illustrates their work and their given topic 3. Pupils will contribute to a collaborative wiki in a constructive and collaborative manner 4. Pupils will relinquish ownership of the information they contribute to the wiki page 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The validity and volume of information the pupils have in their finished wiki 2. Constant monitoring of the pupils wikis and the comments which the pupils leave on their pages 3. The accuracy and relevance of the work submitted to the wiki and the pupils' ability to edit and build upon the information that is submitted by their peers 4. The volume of information each individual pupil adds to the wiki (the more information a pupil adds the more they are able to let go of their work). Monitor the content of the comment section of the wiki for pupil aggravation or anger at their work being changed

Assessment of Activity

The assessment criteria of this activity are important. It is vital that a group grade (each member of the group receives a grade based on the group's achievement rather than individual grades) as this will encourage and more importantly not discourage collaboration and team work.

Teacher/Pupil Activities

1. Divide pupils into groups of 4-6 pupils. It is important that you know your pupils well, before choosing the groups and ensure that all the pupils in each group get along thus facilitating the group work activity
2. Give the pupils their topics of study
3. Give the pupils the rest of the lesson to decide what each group member will begin by doing and how they are going to approach the project
4. Ask pupils to collaboratively research and complete a wiki on their topics without asking the teacher for too much help.

Resources

Organisational Resources

- Demonstration equipment
- Working drawing for demonstration
- Wiki headings handout
- Access to computer room/ school laptops for pupils
- Whatever resources needed for each topic

Technological Resources

- A wiki per group. Privileges must be set up that only the pupils' who's wiki it is can edit the content but everyone must be able to see the wiki
- An individual wiki login (username and password) for each pupil
- Digital Camera(s)

Other Group Research Project Wiki Activities

- Any topic which you would like the pupils to research during your lessons

References

Slavin, R. E. and others (1996) 'Research on cooperative learning and achievement: What we know, what we need to know', *Contemporary educational psychology*, 21, 43–69.

Grant, L. (2008) 'Using wikis in schools: A case study', *Retrieved March*, .