

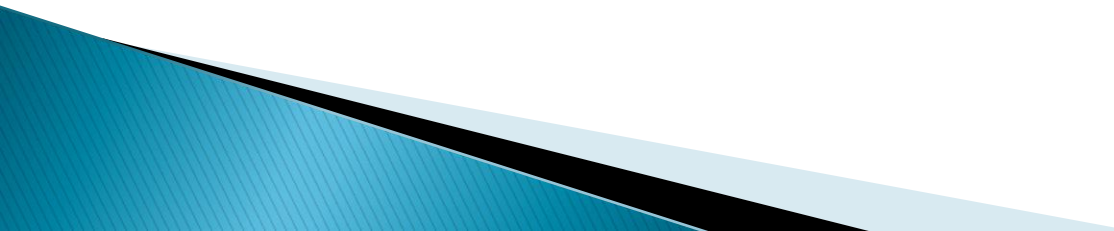
Using Wikis for Collaborative Writing Projects

Anne Loxley Baker, Tech It Up Conference

Collaborative Projects

- ▶ Common complaints
 - Someone didn't contribute enough.
 - Problems finding times when everyone is available.
- ▶ My solutions
 - Each group must create a group contract and sign it.
 - Each student must submit a group evaluation form at the end of the project.

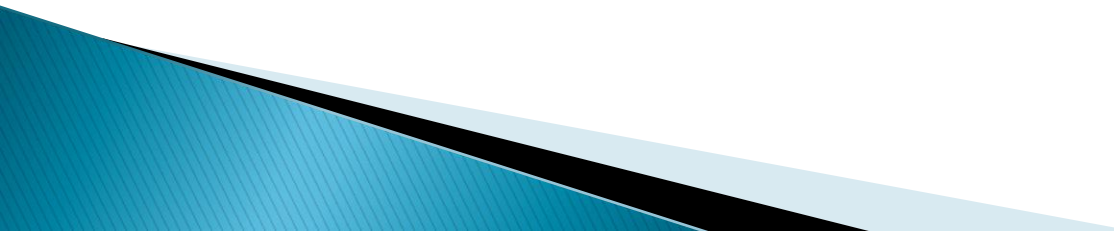
Experiment

- ▶ Gave students in two classes the option of using a Wetpaint Wiki for their collaborative writing project.
 - ▶ Asked for feedback.
 - ▶ Results varied: pros and cons.
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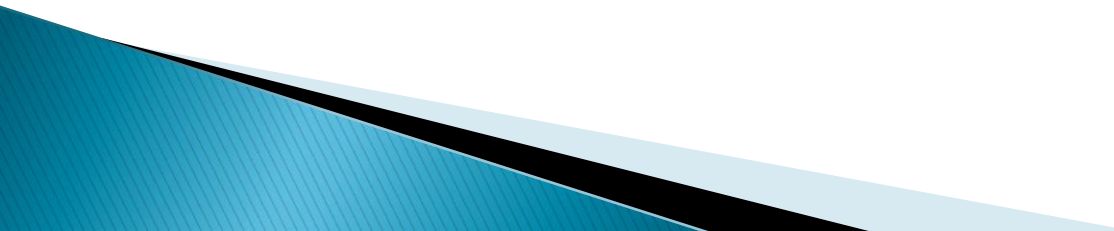
Sample Student Wikis

- ▶ <http://sempervivum.wetpaint.com/>
- ▶ <http://greentoproofs.wetpaint.com/>
- ▶ <http://pamtiarebecca.wetpaint.com/>

Oral Feedback from Engl. 131

- ▶ The two groups who tried using a Wiki, liked it very much.
 - ▶ One student complaint: Someone edited it after they were supposedly finished, and this student didn't like the changes.
 - ▶ Possible Solution: In the contract, put “no changes without consulting the other members first, either by chat or phone.”
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Written feedback from Engl. 110

- ▶ “This program made it more easy for our group to communicate without all the stresses of making times to meet personally to work on our essay. It was also easy to use. In the end I was very pleased with the outcome of the essay. It was done and all of us were able to edit it at any point in time. It was a great program and I would definitely [sic] use it for other classes.”
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Complaint

- ▶ Students in one group forgot how to log on after creating the Wiki and so stopped using it. They said:
- ▶ “...three out of four of us enjoyed working together and had fun and not once had any problems within the 3 of us over anything at all, whether it be meeting times or where, topics ect [sic]. [Student’s name] however on the other hand would not communicate with us, would not show up for group get togethers [sic] and gave us pathetic excuses like he did feel like it or he had better things to do.”

Cons cont.

- ▶ “Our group found Wetpaint to be less useful than sending Word documents back and forth mainly because formatting was a problem. It's just not as good of a word program for things like the works cited page hanging indents and the em dash. Just little things like that. It was, however, very useful for communicating with eachother [sic] and you. I just didn't think, overall, it saved any time or energy. It would have been equally efficient to do it over WebCT or e-mail.”

Results

- ▶ Two Main Problems
 - Learning curve for using Wetpaint
 - Lack of editing tools
- ▶ Recommended Solution
 - Moodle's Wiki Function

Moodle's Wiki

- ▶ Easy to use
 - ▶ More editing tools
 - ▶ Doesn't leave lots of unused Wikis in Wetpaint after the class is over.
 - ▶ Page isn't full of advertising, etc.
 - ▶ Only drawback: uses ErfurtWiki, which implements the WikiWikiWeb hypertext system—a simpler, user-friendly version of HTML.
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