Using Wikis to Enhance Student Learning and Faculty Output

Caleb W. Lack, Ph.D.
University of Central Oklahoma

“A wiki is a website that allows the creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages via a web browser using a simplified markup language or a WYSIWYG text editor.”

Wikipedia
A wiki...

1. invites all users to edit or create new pages
2. promotes meaningful topic associations
3. seeks to involve the user in the process of creation and collaboration

Cunningham & Leuf, 2001

The life of a typical class paper

Student writes  Teacher reads  No one cares

Student + Teacher = ?
Goals

1. Allow students to create and contribute to a meaningful project
2. Have an end product that was useful to both students and others
3. Make it an ongoing, dynamic project
4. License under Creative Commons

Abnormal Psychology: An e-text

- Utilized Wikispaces – free wikis for K-PhD educators
- Allowed anyone to see, but approval to join for editing
- Began with 90 members the first semester, now up to 170 members

- In four semesters, grew from 0 printed pages to almost 600
- Covers all DSM disorders, plus treatment and associated information
- Now the textbook for PSY 4753 at UCO
Timeline

• Spring 2009 – gave students specific disorders to cover and what to include

• Fall 2009 – had students doing “clean-up” editing and expansion of topics

• Spring 2010 – students were assigned to “make it pretty” and incorporate media and external links

Timeline

• Fall 2010 – adopted as course text

• Fall 2010 – students were given specific pages to further clean up and include references for

• Spring 2010 – students adding case studies on fictional characters

• Spring 2010 – contract w/ publishing company

Lessons Learned

• Be specific and detailed

• Distributed contributions

• Bell curve of ability

• Natural selection takes time
Next steps...

- Continue to improve Abnormal Psychology
- **Science, Pseudoscience, & Critical Thinking**
- Engage faculty in developing a Gen Psych text
- Assist other faculty in creating their own class textbooks
Final Thoughts

• Very positive feedback from students as an assignment and text

• Faculty are editing producing edited, scholarly work from courses

Additional Resources

• Citizendium.org

• Wikiversity.org

• 10 Best Practices for using Wikis in Education

• Using Wiki in Education (book)

Additional Resources

• Wiki is not a four letter word

• Wiki as a Teaching Tool

• The Use of Blogs, Wikis and RSS in Education

• Educational Wikis