



Faculty Spotlight: Using Wikis to Engage Student Learning

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This past fall semester, students in Dr. Mary Roger's *Organization Theory* class gained real-world experience in organization learning process through the use of Learning Objects' wiki tool that is integrated into Blackboard. The *Organization Theory* class is part of the Masters in Business Administration program and is taught as a hybrid course which allows the students to take two courses in the same evening.

In using the wiki, Dr. Rogers was able to achieve several learning objectives for her course. The wiki assignment not only engaged the students in the content for the course and in their own learning but it also allowed them to "think about the learning process for an organization and what that looks like today".

Students worked in teams to build the wiki in the Blackboard course site. Each team was assigned a different set of classic readings that went beyond the basic content for the course. In the wiki, each team had to summarize the readings and then engage the other students with the readings through challenge questions. The postings, though, had to be more than just a summary of the reading. This project was cumulative and students had to also read what other students had posted on the readings from the fall 2007 course. Then each group had to interpret the readings, integrate what they had read and enhance upon the previous postings.

The wiki allowed students to creatively express themselves verbally and visually while learning about the course content. Students could incorporate examples from their own work experience into the postings on the readings. The students also did some imaginative things in the wiki with humor, videos, comics, case studies and scenarios to analyze the readings. This allowed for a deeper and broader understanding of the content. Through the wiki, the topics became more alive and were not so dry. Students were excited about the project and learned a lot from each other in working on the wiki. It enlivened their work and their dedication for each other.

Through the wiki assignment, Dr. Rogers modeled the organization learning process in a cutting-edge way and provided her students practical and hands-on experience with a technology tool increasingly being used by organizations for the collection and transformation of knowledge. This awareness, in turn, gives her students an advantage in the workplace. In the wiki, students learned about the process of organizational learning by actually doing the process.

Dr. Rogers has also used the wiki tool at the undergraduate level in Business Policy for group document creation since the wiki provides one space where everyone can contribute. By integrating group document creation into the same space, students can learn how to "observe, complement and enhance each other's works in the same space". The wiki also allows the instructor to see group work in a different way. Instructor can see different versions of the document and can see how the students are working together to develop the versions.

The wiki tool was invaluable to Dr. Rogers in engaging students in the course content and in helping students understand the difference between individual learning process and organization learning process, which is often a hard concept to grasp.