

## **Fostering Online Reflection and Collaboration – the Wiki way**

**Type of strategy:** Asynchronous utilization of wikis with ability to post comments

**Purpose:** To foster reflective learning and collaboration as well as introduce new faculty to the institution's online teaching technology.

**Type of class:** new faculty members from all departments taking part in a course on Professional and Practice-Based Education that is also part of a Graduate Certificate in Higher Education. Class size is typically 30. This activity takes about 6 weeks.

**Overview:** The abilities to reflect deeply on one's professional practice and to collaborate with others are important learning outcomes in higher education. These abilities can be fostered in the online environment by careful use of available tools such as wikis. The learning activity requires reflective writing (about a page) on one's own educational or training experiences to be shared with the class via a wiki. Participants are then required to comment on, and then respond to, each other's entries in light of the relevant literature. Students eventually select some of these comments and responses as part of the final assignment, which also includes a statement about how their contribution has helped the quality of the online discussion, and helped other participants to learn. Getting students to select what will be submitted as an assignment encourages some critical thinking and makes the examiner's job much easier than having the examiner read and judge all student contributions. It has to be made clear from the start that marks are awarded for depth of insight and the ability to analyze the experiences of the class members in relation to the literature on higher education in general and practice-based education in particular.

**Comments:** Feedback from participants has been positive. The facilitator must be prepared to encourage participation by joining in and role modeling the kind of comments expected, as well as privately encouraging the quieter students to join in.

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