# Review for Session Topic: It's Not Just Web 2.0, it's All About Pedagogic Design

**Commentary on:**
**Atlay, Lawrence and Gamble "A Wikied Assessment Strategy"**
**Cubric "Using Wikis for Summative and Formative Assessment"**

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### A WIKIED ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

When it comes to learning a new technology, the best approach is often to experiment with all the available options. This approach does not come naturally to everyone and, as Atlay, Lawrence and Gamble found, a great deal of time (often in face-to-face settings) is needed to reassure participants that problems are not always due to their lack of expertise.

In Atlay, Lawrence and Gamble's case the experimentation was two fold, with this being the first time the module had been run in this format. They wanted the participants to experience collaborative learning and created an environment for discussing how readings from contemporary literature on teaching and learning related to some aspect of their teaching. The staging of the activity ensured that participants familiarised themselves with the technology and became increasingly comfortable with writing in this format.

Atlay, Lawrence and Gamble argue that experimentation with constructing a resource for their teaching and practicing how to give feedback that helps a colleague reflect on their teaching provides an environment in which participants can learn to collaborate. They learn this skill by seeing the variation in approaches to tackling the assignment and having the opportunity to refine their own offerings in light of other contributions.

While the assignments were not completed at the time of writing, the case study raises the question of whether it is possible to formulate assessment criteria for creative work? In this case the tutors commented on the evolving development of the materials and steered the participants to what they considered to be a successfully resolution of the task. Is it possible for the tutors to now assess the quality of the participant's work considering they have been so closely involved in the construction of the final product?

### USING WIKIS FOR SUMMATIVE AND FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

All educational technology has characteristics that influence how students approach their learning. As Biggs (2003) shows us a high level of congruence between the assessment and the teaching and learning activities is one of the qualities needed to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Marija Cubric's choice of wikis over chat, discussion boards or blogs has behind it the objective of getting students to engage at a higher level with other people's writing and, in the process, transferring those skills of analysis and reflection to their own work.

This example shows that choice of technology can open up new curriculum design options, but that this will only succeed when supported by carefully facilitation. In Cubric's case, the success of this trial with wikis comes down the tutor's choice of questions, clear deadlines, regular submission of work and the careful monitoring of student's progress by tutors. This is, however, as true for the face-to-face classroom teaching as it is for blended learning.

The kind of learning environment that wikis permit Cubric to create is one in which readers are able to edit the writing of fellow students. This allows multiple authors to create the final piece of written work that is submitted for assessment. 69% of Cubric's students thought that writing in a wiki helped them in learning the subject, presumably due to the requirement to comment on other student's written work. An additional benefit is that authors received multiple comments on their essays assisting them in refining the presentation of their arguments prior to summative assessment. Given the high proportion of international students, this alone would have dramatically improved the quality of the final essays.

Cubric approach raises for me two assessment questions on marking collaborative work:

1) How can a marker distinguish individual from collective work?
        Cubric notes that plagiarism becomes a nonsensical concept when the work is a collaboration among a group of authors. Yet in the end, an individual was awarded an A-C on the final assignment. Is  it fair for a writer to take credit for others work?

2) How can contributors be rewarded for the quality of their contribution?
        Cubric prescribes a minimum contribution of 2100 words over 10 weeks. How can the quality of this contribution be determined? Should a student achieve the same grade if they consistently contribute mediocre comments  compared to another student who mainly provides poor quality comments but makes one or two highly insightful comments that have a major impact on the final work?