**Critique of eLearning4Global Citizenship**

Collaborating on the *elearning4GlobalCitizenship* wiki was my first experience in online project completion. It is easy to look at the end product and find ways now that the wiki could have been designed better both in content and design. Upon reflection, I have realized that the process to get to the end product was a key element that highlights the achievements we made as individuals and as a group.

**Background To The Initial Wiki Set Up**

Through personal investigation six months ago, I acquired an understanding of a wiki, the types of wiki tools available, how to set up a wiki and began to understand ways that wiki’s could be used in group collaboration in online environments. I utilized search tools within Google, the Massey links and tutorials, as well as forums and message boards on Wikispaces.

Once our group was formed, we made contact the hard work of starting out collaborating with people that I had never met had begun. We chose, for better or worse, to only communicate asynchronously. It fit our busy lifestyles the best. Shaun had the brilliant idea to move our work and dialogue to a Google Doc. A great idea but I was back to the search tools on Google to understand how to navigate my way around a Google Docs. The Google Doc proved to be an excellent place to collaborate. We assigned tasks and responsibilities to group members. As the wiki project leader I set up a timeline. The smaller weekly and bi-weekly tasks I wrote helped us to meet project deadlines.

I now remember that our Google Doc at one stage resembled a collection of mismatched ideas, content and links. We struggled as a group for some time to define a focus and aim for the wiki project. We had the added challenge that we had expertise in three different areas: primary, middle years, and secondary. Upon reflection, much of our planning revolved around trying to find a common focus, understand the real expectations of the assignment whilst displaying our findings in an unfamiliar way, on a wiki.

Much of the achievements of this wiki involved learning in situation in regards to collaboratively developing a wiki. It is during this critical appraisal that I have been able to reflect on the wiki itself, identifying the strengths and areas that improvement could have been made. This is beneficial for the future development of wiki’s as resources to students and the educational community.

**Strengths of the Wiki**

***Design***

One of the goals our group identified at the beginning of this project was to ensure that this wiki was something that teachers could use. Joanna Gibson ([2011, August, 22](#_ENREF_3)) found that she “could definitely use this wiki for teaching ICT - some excellent material here.” We were able to identify particular resources to be used at primary, middle and secondary levels upon reading the suggestions from Joanna that “some indication of levels (primary/secondary) or application towards assessments (NCEA) would make your wiki super useable for lazy teachers. We identified these by colour on the wiki.

***Content***

We used Bailey and Ribble’s *Nine Elements of Digital Citizenship* ([Ribble & Bailey, 2007](#_ENREF_7)) which provided a focus and direction for our research. We narrowed our focus to three of the elements (literacy, citizenship, and etiquette) so that we could explore the issues both within and across the groups we defined. I learned that Digital Literacy is considered an essential life skill and a right of New Zealand citizens ([Bunker, 2010](#_ENREF_1)). Further research highlighted that teachers and schools have not grasped the fact that literacy has moved beyond just reading and writing printed (or just digital text) by is now multimedia (text, sound, images, video) and interactive. In fact digital literacy is about reading, interpreting, mixing, evaluating and applying this media and knowledge in new ways. ([Jones-Kavaller & Flannigan, 2006](#_ENREF_5))

By working collaboratively I was able to learn about our topic through the research that others did. I was unaware that actual documents have been developed by groups such as NetSafe ([2011](#_ENREF_6)) in association with teachers, to assist and guide safety around digital citizenship. Our group learned about NetSafe from feedback on our wiki proposal ([Gibson, 2011, June 25](#_ENREF_4)). In my research on digital etiquette I became aware of the diversity in views from a global perspective. People with different cultural backgrounds have very different views on some crucial Internet-related matters, such as the regulation of the Internet, the responsibility of an individual in the Internet, copyright issues, issues of anonymity, and so forth ([Tedre, Kamppuri, & Kommers, 2006](#_ENREF_9)). This will be a challenge for schools and education providers to confront.

**Lessons Learned and Improvements Identified**

***Design***

The way that content information is displayed is important. As our wiki developed it was apparent that we had collected useful information but that the content of this information was not user friendly in it’s access. Ardis Cochrane ([2011, August, 21](#_ENREF_2)) commented that “There was a lot of content 'below the fold'. This makes it hard for me to get an overview of what is available on the page without a lot of scrolling.” Shaun Wood ([2011, August, 21](#_ENREF_10)) considered how to improve this by “adding content tables to the pages to aid this.” We were unaware of how to add content labels but found assistance online through the group forums and were able to add content labels to our pages. I have now found a way to add forward and backward buttons, as well as, link pages to other pages in the wiki. I have done this on another wiki project that I am working on at the moment and it has improved the ease and usefulness in navigating in the wiki.

***Content***

The amount of content on the wiki was something that we struggled with as a group. Isla Taufalele ([2011, August 24](#_ENREF_8)) found that she “got a good summary but (was) left wondering what the issues (were) in your topic?” In my opinion, we never resolved this issue and the final wiki ended up being a repository of resources rather than an in-depth discussion of the issues associated with digital citizenship and what research is going on at present. As the group leader I found it frustrating that there was lack of dialogue amongst the group members and repeated prompts to stay on target had to be made. As well, one group member was absent for almost two weeks just prior to project completion due to a personal issue. This cannot be helped but impacted on possible improvements we could have made as a group.

One of our main weaknesses in this wiki is that we did not specify the type of research that is going on at the moment in regards to digital literacy, citizenship and etiquette. Furthermore, we did not synthesise the main issues forcing the reader of the wiki to read and evaluate the resources for themselves. As a group we were working asynchronously and did not have set times to discuss the issues collectively. In my opinion, this impacted on how we, as a group, were able to uniformly analyse and display the information and resources we had gathered.

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