

What are wikis and blogs?

Wikis and blogs are collaborative online tools that allow groups to share resources, edit web pages as well as easily find and categorise information by means of tags. Wikis allow you to add, edit, delete pages, texts and hyperlinks using a web browser without using HTML. Wikis can incorporate text, images, sound and video, therefore enabling an interactive and collaborative learning environment.

What role can wikis play in collaborative summarising and note taking?

You have outlined the final product for your students that will assess their understanding – the public awareness campaign. Students are well informed as to the key criteria used for making judgments about their product. Student teams could use a wiki such as wikispaces: www.wikispaces.com or pb wiki: <http://pbwiki.com> to help them collaborate. For example one student may create the wiki and copy and paste their notes (facts) onto a page they create and name. Other students read and add their own notes to it creating a collaborative page of facts about the issue. Another group member creates new pages such as perspectives, action plan and the campaign. The rubric and the *Guide* documents (*My Notes, My Task*) are uploaded so everyone can stay focused on the task. When students are ready to script their product they can all use this one space. Everyone can see in the history section of each wikipage the changes made throughout the process and who made them.

What role can blogs play?

Individual students can use Blogs www.blogger.com as a reflective journal that incorporates their KWL with comments made by others. Blogs also provide an effective way to implement reciprocal teaching. Such a peer-teaching model consists of summarising, questioning, clarifying and predicting.

For example, after a group of students have explored a section of *Burning Issues* independently one student could summarise the information for the rest of the group. Other members may help. The student asks questions to the group that highlight important information and asks the group to clarify confusing information. The student can then ask for predictions about what they might find in another section of *Burning Issues*.

Blogs can be used for the above strategy providing time for more in depth discussion that could go beyond the normal class time. For example while viewing the *Old Ways, New Directions* (in *Outback Cinema*), the teacher could type on to a class blog the key vocabulary terms (the transcript for this video is also available). A student could then be chosen to lead the class discussion on the blog. This student summarises what they understood from the video and then types in some questions about for example, the different aspects of the carbon cycle for the other students to answer. The students respond with their understanding and come up with several examples to illustrate the different aspects and effects. The next day the first student asks for clarification on carbon trading schemes so the class review the segment from the video. The teacher also makes a posting to help clarify this concept. The discussion moves to predicting where this idea may lead in the future. The discussion is archived in the blog and can be reviewed for assessment purposes.