

Lesson 1b - About WikiEducator

The Wikieducator community

Wikis are about communities -- not the technology that enables them. Social communities develop around projects and ideas. For instance, the Wikipedia community is working together to build a free online encyclopedia. These communities are drawn together by a common set of values.



WikiEducator was launched by the Commonwealth of Learning in 2006. It provides free eLearning content that anyone can edit and use. After being introduced at the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) course developers meeting in Mauritius in August 2006, WikiEducator is now being used extensively for the development of educational resources.

Many wiki communities believe that content should be free. The slogan of the Mediawiki software, which runs WikiEducator and all the projects of the Wikimedia foundation, encapsulates this spirit rather well: Ideas want to be free. This is why Wiki software is often cited as an example of social software because of the ease with which users can work together on content. This combined with the communication features of wikis enables people to connect with each other and to build a real sense of community.

The values of WikiEducator's community

It is important to recognize and respect the core values of the different wiki communities. The Wikieducator community believes in the following values:

- The social inclusion and participation of all people in our networked society (Access to ICTs is a fundamental right of knowledge citizens - not an excuse for using old technologies).
- The freedoms of all educators to teach with the technologies and contents of their choice, hence our committment to Free/Libre and Open Source technology tools and free content.
- That educational content is unique - and by working together we can improve the technologies we use as well as the reusability of digital learning resources.
- In a forward-looking disposition working together to find appropriate and sustainable solutions for e-learning futures.

WikiEducator's learning content

The WikiEducator community is working together to develop free educational content that incorporates the educational features associated with well designed distance education materials. Therefore, you will find that content in WikiEducator typically includes educational elements like learning objectives, activities and case studies. In the tutorials which follow, you will learn how to include these elements into the content you author.

Types of content on WikiEducator

There are four distinctive types of content you will find on Wikieducator:

1. Pages which are used for collaborative planning of initiatives or projects, for example:
2. Workshops, for instance South Asia eLearning Workshop for Teacher Educator's, New Dehli 2007;
3. Planning and managing international developments, for instance the Commonwealth Computer Navigator's Certificate
4. Development of free content on Wikieducator. Consider the following examples from the the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth:
5. Applying effective communication skills which is part of the VUSSC course on Tourism;
6. The unit on Starting up a business which is part of the entrepreneurship course being developed.
7. Resources on how to create open education resources (OERs), for example
8. WikiEducator's Newbie Tutorials or
9. The OER information service developed by OLCOS -- a project funded by the European Union.
10. Funding proposals relating to free content or free software initiatives that are developed collaboratively as free content, for example projects and ideas listed on the Metawikieducator page.