# CASE STUDY 3 – Bluecoat Academy, Nottingham

# Using a wiki to share ideas and summarise information in a KS3 English literacy lesson

Rachael Smith

## BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF SCHOOL AND CLASS:

**Subject:** English

**Year:** Year 7

**Topic:** Using wiki’s to share ideas and summarise information

**Class:** After School Literacy Intervention Class. This was a targeted lesson consisting of girls who had been identified as having low literacy levels at the beginning of Year 7.

**Pupil’s ability:** All the girls had reading ages of below 11 years old.

**Software chosen:** PBworks to develop a free collaborative wiki ([www.pbworks.com](http://www.pbworks.com))

**Brief information on the school:** The Bluecoat Academy is a Nottingham inner-city Church of England Academy for students between the ages of 11-18. It has caters for a wider range of cultural diversity and ability. It’s mission is to create a distinctive educational community for all based upon Christian faith and values. The Bluecoat Academy encourage students to develop belief in themselves in order to be the best they can be. Our students are resilient, can work independently and have a good understanding of where they have come from and who they are.

The school was deemed by Ofsted in 2011 as a good school with outstanding features. The results in August 2011 were the best ever for Bluecoat with almost 90% of students in Year 11 gaining 5 A\*s - C and 100% of students at A level gaining a pass grade. The leadership and staff at The Bluecoat Academy fully expect that Bluecoat will continue to thrive and improve in future years.

**Brief information on the group:** This class was a Literacy Intervention class. The group was a small group which consisted of around 12 – 15 girls who had been identified as having low literacy levels at the beginning of Year 7. Reading ages data suggested that a large percentage of those under the chronological expectation were girls (56%) resulting in the targeted class.

## INFORMATION ON WHAT HAPPENED

**Prior to the lesson:**

* A wiki was set up with a page for each group to access
* The wiki also contained information on what makes a bad wiki so that students could understand the purpose of a wiki and what it should look like.

**The lesson consisted of:**

* Pupil’s entering the room and completing the starter task. This task was to summarise their day on index cards. This allowed them to recall and demonstrate existing knowledge of how to summarise information. Feedback on the starter was obtained from the students.
* Students were then introduced to the concept of a wiki and sharing information as a group. The teacher demonstrated this by getting each students index card and attaching it to the next by a treasury tag. The teacher did some Q&A to illustrate the importance and benefits of collaborating in one place online.
* Students were then show an example of a bad wiki page and asked to identify what was wrong with that wiki page
* Students were then put into pairs and asked to summarise an article on a famous person. Each pair had to highlight the key information in the article and then summarise the important information on the wiki.
* As part of their homework, students had to monitor the wiki, read others comments and respond.

## BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT:

***The Classroom Teacher:***

The class teacher felt the use of ICT in the lesson played a key role in the lesson as it raised the profile of what they were doing. He felt the students put a lot of value and emphasis on their work when using ICT. He felt that the student engaged with this technology because it was an online internet technology and that other people could see their work allowing them to interact with the wider world. He felt that the students viewed this use of this technology as a more collaborative and socialable experience compared to just working as a pair inside a classroom. The students seemed to view using this particular technology as it being related to the wider world and that they felt that their learning was being taken outside of the classroom which excited them.

***The Teacher Trainee:***

The trainee found the experience very interesting. He especially found it interesting that the students liked being able to see what the other students had summarised, along with the motivation students felt when they could see other groups had finished their work. He felt this this technology helped improve the pace of the lesson as students wanted to be able to showcase their own work so that other peers could read it.

### IMPACT IN THE CLASSROOM

***Impact on pupils engagement:***

During the pupil interviews after the lesson, they felt that it had been beneficial to learn about what a wiki was, and how to use it effectively to share information on it. The lesson also seemed to address the student misconceptions around the technology as one student comments that she thought a wiki “was just Wikipedia”. The students commented that they enjoyed the lesson but did find it frustrating that they had to write their summery first on a piece of paper before adding it to the wiki. They would have preferred to compose their summary on the wiki and edit it on screen. A number of student also commented that they enjoyed the lesson because they were “working collaboratively, discussing their work and sharing the information online”. One student also comments that they engaged with the lesson more because they were using technology, which they do not normally use. Interestingly, the students commented during the lesson that they felt they had more freedom to experiment with their ideas as if they wrote something wrong, they could just delete it as opposed to it being more concrete hand written in a text book.

***Impact on pupil’s literacy:***

One student commented that they felt it helped them practice their literacy skills as they could “read what others had written” and then could add their own comments to the paragraphs of writing. They also felt the wiki was useful too as when reading other pupil’s work, they could identify words spelt incorrectly and correct them by editing the page. It is important to note that students were reminded at the beginning of the wiki tasks to use correct English.

## FINAL COMMENTS

***Recommendations:*** as made by the trainee teacher and/or pupils:

* The pupils felt that this was a suitable technology to use in their timetables English lessons with the group
* Make sure you have planned how the wiki will be used in the lesson and do not use the wiki as a “copying up” tool
* Plan for pupils to use the wiki collaboratively
* Embedding the use of web 2.0 and other online collaborative into units of learning across all key stages
* Training to be provided to teachers of all subjects on current availability of Web 2.0 technologies along with possible uses within their subject area to enhance teaching and learning

## RESOURCES:

Session plan Appendix A

## APPENDIX A



