

# WIKI-WORK



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## **Introduction**

The completion of homework at a consistently high level is something almost all teachers struggle with. In my school the fifth grade students who do not come in with their homework completed must have recess detention where they are not allowed to participate in recess. While this does increase the consistency with which homework is handed in, many students complete the bare minimum and do not put forth their best effort. This can be most easily seen in the area of language arts where the students are required to create poetry, short stories and persuasive essays. As a result I want to change the way in which homework is completed in my classroom. The overriding question I will ask is, “What happens when students use a wiki as the medium where homework must be done?”

The students in my class have varying ranges of support at home. While I realize the students in my class have parents who care about their education, they do not all have the same amount of time to spend with their students. Some families have a mother who is home that can constantly help them with their homework and prepare for tests. While at the same time other students have a single mother with three younger brothers and sisters and are treated more like an adult who helps around the house. While most of the students complete their homework very few of them seem to spend the time needed in language arts to make their writing the best it can be. Other students spend a great deal of time on their homework and want to share it with the class, but we rarely have time to allow all the students to share all their work. I began to think about how could I provide students with the positive reinforcement they are seeking from their peers in a timely

manner while at the same time increasing the motivation of other students to put forth greater effort.

Every teacher has a student in their class who, for whatever reason, rarely completes homework assignments to the best of his or her ability. This year his name is Roger. His writing assignments appear to be done on the bus, or while watching television. The work he submits is illegible most of the time and rarely has a strong focus. It is because of students like Roger that I am considering the use of wikis as a medium to complete homework. Roger does have access to a computer and the Internet, as do all the other students in my class this year. Many of the students in my class who hand in low quality language arts homework do not have parents who motivate them or give them assistance with their homework. By having the students post their homework to a wiki page I am interested to see if their motivation changes. Are they excited to post their work on the Internet? Will they read what another student has created and be inspired to write something they hadn't thought of before?

It is not just for the Rogers of the world that I am interested in performing this research. Often times I will read someone's homework and it is clear they have spent an enormous amount of time creating a fabulous story. I will always try to have them share their story in class if we have the time, but it would be impossible to share every story some of my gifted students create. I also do not want to give them the label of a teacher's pet because I am always asking the same people to share their work. Instead I would like the students who create great pieces of writing to receive positive feedback from their peers, so that their work has a positive connotation, not just educationally, but also socially. If they are viewed as experts in the field of writing, I would also be curious to

see if they offer help to students who have an idea about what they would like to write, but lack the skills to create it.

By researching this topic I am hoping to find a way to create a learning community that takes place outside the walls of my classroom. I am hoping the students will be able to combine their social and educational environments and will no longer see homework as something that has to be checked off of a list, but instead a time to interact with other classmates in order to improve their writing. As a teacher I am always hoping that what the students learn in my classroom they can take and apply it to their own lives. I believe this could be a positive step in that direction.

### **Literature Review**

In John Dailey's article, "Blogging for Learning: Now Everyone has Something to Say" (2005) Dailey explains how he tried and failed to increase student participation in class discussions for fifteen years, until he discovered blogging. In his article he identified reasons why normal class discussions did not give him the desired results he sought, as well as the advantages of using blogs as a form of classroom discussion. In his research, he discovered that 81% of students felt that reading other students posts and comments on the class blog helped to motivate them to post their own comments. This supported his idea that blogging helps support class discussions.

Dailey identified three reasons why students do not participate in his classroom discussions. First, students are unprepared, they did not read what they were instructed to and therefore cannot participate intelligently in the discussion. Second, students are reticent and prefer to allow other people to talk while they sit back and listen to the discussion. Third, many students, especially students who do not speak English as their

native language, are embarrassed or afraid to take part in the class discussion. Based on these ideas Dailey tried to use blogging to alleviate some of these problems.

Dailey quickly found he needed to have clear rules and guidelines with blogging because some of the students' responses were still too short or incomplete. Once he provided the class with these guidelines they performed much better.

This article clearly shows how students felt they were more motivated to blog than have a class discussion. However, Dailey's research was gathered through only one survey given at the end of a semester. It seems to me that giving the students an opportunity to blog also allows them more time to contemplate certain questions and arrive at a more intelligent answer.

In Zimmerman and Miligan's article, "Perspectives on Communicating with the Net Generation" (2006) they were trying to solve the problem of using the Internet as a tool for 'Digital Natives,' while keeping the conversations on the Internet intelligent and focused to the topic decided upon. Zimmerman noted that she receives emails from students with information she would normally not be privileged to if the conversation had occurred face to face. Through discussions with her students she discovered that a large number of her students would rather have a discussion face to face as opposed to a conversation through email. Zimmerman's students said they preferred to have face-to-face conversations because it eliminated miscommunication. The person who you are talking with can use your tone of voice, body language, and facial expressions to deliver a message.

Miligan discussed how 'Digital Natives' have now developed their own language called netspeak, where phrases like "be right back" are written as 'brb'. She noted how it

is the educator's responsibility to bridge the gap for the students, and to teach them when it is appropriate to use netspeak and when it is not. Many students feel because they are involved in a discussion online they can use the informal language they are accustomed to. Students are not accustomed to having a formal digital discussion and this is a skill that needs to be taught according to Miligan. The authors do an excellent job of addressing the issue of communicating appropriately by sharing real life situations that have occurred in their classes. They do not, however, describe to the reader what steps must be taken in order to avoid these problems in the future.

In the next article I reviewed, "Whole Class Inquiry: Language Arts" written by Sarah Kadjer in 2005 she examined how student work in language arts changed when the students completed it on the Internet, in a learning community. She realized that the website seemed to provide the students with a window into how other students develop their writing. Students could now see how a classmate improved their own writing or took compositional risks and begin to apply that to their own writing.

She also recognized that providing students with an audience was a motivator for a portion of her class. There were several students who offered praise for the work other students were able to complete. In return, these students offered suggestions to their classmates about how they could improve their work. Not only did the students have an audience, but they also developed their own sense of community where everyone could communicate with each other and offer comments that had positive effects on everyone involved.

In the article, "Blogging in Language Arts," Beverly Crane found blogging provided students who were more reserved with an opportunity to have their voices

heard. In a classroom setting they might be intimidated to speak up with all eyes on them, but when typing on a computer the students were able to express themselves much more freely. Another discovery she reported was that students who would not normally forge a relationship in school seemed to make connections through a blog. Stereotypes and cliques seemed to disappear and the ideas seemed to take control when the blog was functioning properly.

Crane also found that another positive aspect of blogging was that it was seen by many as more of a social activity than a homework activity. She argued that this provided motivation for students to discuss what they are learning in school without it feeling like such a chore. The down side of this, which is not discussed in the article, is that sometimes students blur the line between what is appropriate to be discussed in a class blog and what is not.

Perhaps the most insightful article I read was entitled, “Innovative Technologies, Small Groups, and a Wiki” by Wetzel (2008). In this article, Wetzel noted that allowing students to use a wiki in order to complete assignments provides them with a sense of freedom and responsibility they didn’t have while completing traditional homework assignments. All of the assignments discussed in the article were assignments that were to be completed in small groups. The students could now complete their section of the project and post it on a wiki without having to have everyone in a group find a date they could all meet and discuss what they have done. The wiki allowed for this unique freedom.

The article did raise a concern about using wikis, which was that if students are at different ability levels in terms of their technological skills, it could cause friction within

a group. He noted one group in particular had difficulty when half of the group had no problem using the wiki technology and the other half really struggled to use the technology. This group had to be broken up and reassigned.

After reading these articles I still had some questions that I felt needed to be answered. How does using a wiki to do homework effect the way fifth grade students do homework? Does it increase the amount of time spent, how well they do it, how engaged they are? How does it influence their relationship with the teacher and the class? How does it influence their attitudes towards homework, the subject area, and school? I hoped to gain insight to these questions by doing this research throughout the school year.

Homework is often an issue for many fifth grade students, but for many different reasons. For some, they lack the motivation to give their best effort. While it is completed, the teacher realizes the student is capable of much more. There are others who give their absolute best and want to share what they have created with other students in the class. Unfortunately, there is not enough time in the day to have students share every piece of homework with the class. As a result of these realizations, I want to explore a different avenue for students to complete their homework. If a different avenue is found, perhaps it will lead to different results.

Homework is an important piece of school. For the unmotivated students, when they do not put their best efforts into their homework, they are often falling behind other students because they are not using the latest skills learned in class. They will revert back to writing techniques they have learned years earlier and not challenge themselves. As a result, the gap between themselves and other students widens.



For the gifted students I am concerned they may begin to develop a sense of apathy in regards to their homework. They see other students receiving praise from their peers for activities that take place outside of school, and may begin to question if they are putting their time into the correct endeavors. It is for these reasons I will try to discover the following question, “What happens when students use a wiki web page as the medium where homework must be done?” I feel as though this is an important question because many teachers are turning to the Internet as a way to improve education, and I am curious to see what the results of a new medium for homework would be.

### **Research Plan**

At Chester Stephens Elementary school there are over 700 students from kindergarten to fifth grade with a very diverse population when it comes to race and socio-economic status. This year in my class we have three Hispanic students, five African American students, two Indian students, and one Asian student, while the other twelve students are Caucasian. There are four students who receive resource room special education services in math or language arts, and one student who is autistic who is present in my classroom for about half of the day. There are three students who qualify for Basic Skills Instruction and two students who receive counseling therapy from our guidance councilor on a weekly basis.

The first type of data collection I completed was student surveys. I planned to ask students what their attitudes towards homework were, how much time they spent on homework, was there one subject they dislike to complete homework in? Did they have a favorite subject to complete homework in? After I had the students fill out the surveys I planned to give them to the parents also. Based on the results of the surveys I planned to

interview some of the parents to see if they could explain their answers to help me gain further insight into how they completed their surveys.

The next type of data I collected was student work samples to see how the students are improving, or not improving. When they have an assignment that is posted on the wiki-page, how does that compare to an assignment that is presented in written form? After about six weeks I conferenced with students in groups of three or four to get their feedback on their attitudes towards using a wiki. I hoped this would provide me with a unique insight into the feelings and emotions about this new medium for homework.

After I have completed the conferences with the students, I sent out another round of surveys to both the parents and the students, in order to see if their attitudes towards homework have changed due to the wiki.

By researching this topic, I hoped to find a way to create a learning community that takes place outside the walls of my classroom. I wondered if the students will be able to combine their social and educational environments and will no longer see homework as something that has to be checked off of a list, but instead a time to interact with other classmates in order to improve their writing. As a teacher, I am always hoping that what the students learn in my classroom they can take and apply to their own lives.

# November

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Begin Parent Surveys and Parent Interviews	<b>4</b> Gain permission from parents to conduct surveys	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Conduct Surveys among students in my class	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Complete Parent Surveys and Parent Interviews	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>						

**2008**

# December

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			

**2008**

# January

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Begin conducting student conferences	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Complete student conferences	<b>31</b>

**2009**

# February

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Begin second round of surveys for parents and students	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Complete second round of surveys for parents and students	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Analyze results	<b>17</b> Analyze results	<b>18</b> Analyze results	<b>19</b> Analyze results	<b>20</b> Analyze results	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Analyze results	<b>24</b> Analyze results	<b>25</b> Analyze results	<b>26</b> Analyze results	<b>27</b> Analyze results	<b>28</b>

**2009**

# March

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Begin writing results	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> Complete writing results	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Begin creating presentation
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				

**2009**

## **Findings**

Using a wiki affected the way in students and parents felt about homework. Before using the wiki most of the students in my class only proofread homework they knew would be shared with the whole class. Because of time limitations I was not able to have the students share every homework assignment, and as a result most students did not proofread the work they handed in. This in turn had a two pronged effect. First, students were not reinforcing editing skills they have learned in class while completing their homework, which was one of the intended purposes of the assignment. Secondly, we actually spent time editing work that should have been edited at home, in school. Thereby losing more instruction time. The homework assignments that were to be posted on the wiki site students spent more time proofreading their work carefully. A typical homework assignment on the wiki was of a much higher quality, with much fewer mistakes. When I asked Drew, a special education student in my class, why his homework on the website was so much better than the work he was handing in he said, “I spend more time proofreading to make sure the class thinks that I know what I’m doing.” The students felt as though their peers are now holding them accountable, not just their teacher. For some students it is much more important to impress their peers than it is their teacher.

For many families homework is a time where parents have to coax a student to complete their homework. During my parent interviews one parent told me, “Homework time is not only my son’s least favorite time of the day, it is our whole families. We all know there is going to be a fight about completing it.” While not all families feel this way I did have a group of parents who informed me of the great lengths they have to go



in order to make sure their son or daughter is completing the homework. After using the wiki site many parents noticed a change in their child's attitude. Parents informed me they did not have to ask their student to do homework on the website, and they were spending several hours a week on the wiki site independently completing homework assignments.

For the gifted and talented students in my class, they usually give their best efforts on a homework assignment every night and are disappointed when they are unable to share it with the class. Jennifer told me, "Because I worked so hard on my homework I want other people to see it." With the wiki site students were not only able to post their homework assignments so people could see it, but students also left positive feedback for their classmates. So not only did this allow students, like Jennifer, to share their work, but also it allowed a forum for them to receive the praise they were desperately seeking after working so hard on an assignment.

Not only does this feedback help the gifted students feel proud of what they have accomplished, it also provides them with an opportunity to help other students by giving students constructive criticism about their homework assignments. As we began this experiment this was the portion that terrified me the most because I wondered if fifth graders could give and receive criticism in a mature fashion. For the most part they did an amazing job. A student in my class, George, has wonderful ideas but struggles with his writing assignments. He benefited greatly from this medium of homework and used the help of his fellow classmates to complete amazing work. When asked if he would rather share his homework with the people at his table or on the website he responded, "If you just share your work with the people at your table that is only 2 or 3 people giving

you ideas, but if you share it with the whole class you will have a lot more good ideas.” For George, and others they didn’t see the comments by other students as insults that brought their spirits down. Instead they saw them as pieces of advice that would help to lift up the quality of their work. Many students already knew the areas they were weak in and when they posted an assignment they would leave messages like, “If anyone can come up with more descriptive word choices please let me know, I want to make this poem great.” As a result of seeing the constructive criticism of classmates as a positive the quality of the homework students submitted rose.

While George was in the majority, a few number of students, like Ashley, had a difficult time adjusting to the criticism. Ashley is an above average student who has a high opinion of the work she completes. In the past she has always been the person other students go to for help with things like spelling. However, now that everyone has an opportunity to make suggestions on what students are writing Ashley had a difficult time getting use to constructive criticism from people like Drew, who is a special education student. She said, “Sometimes the feedback hurts a little because I thought I did a really good job on something and when other people tell me to do it differently it makes me hurt inside.” Students like Ashley had to become accustomed to the idea that everyone in class can have really good ideas on how to make your homework assignment even better than it was, even special education students.

In addition to the quality of the homework changing, the dynamics in my classroom shifted as well. Many of the more introverted students in my class were reluctant to share their homework assignments, or when they did would speak so softly almost no one would hear them. Their work was completed on a high level, but because

their peers did not hear them very often or when they did, couldn't understand them they were thought of as inferior students. Dipal is a student who never volunteered to share her work. I found out it was because she thought, "If you make a mistake in front of the whole class it makes you feel stupid and I want to them to think I'm smart." Once Dipal starting posting her homework assignments on the wiki site I would read student comments on her homework and they all loved her creativity when it came to her writing assignments. Students would come up to her and tell her how great something was in the hallway. As a result she became more confident and would help more people both in class and on the website with their work. Not only did the other students in the class stop seeing her as inferior, they came to see her as an intelligent person and sought out her opinion to help improve their work. This medium helped to improve Dipal's self-confidence and her relationship with other students in our classroom.

When the students were asked if was easier to write their homework or type it on the wiki sight there was a large split in our class. Some students preferred to write their work because they felt it took too long to type what they had written. One student informed me that it took him an hour to type his homework after he had already spent an hour writing it. Other students felt it was easier to type because they could type faster than they could write, so it took them less time to do their first draft. Yet other students said they preferred to type on the wiki site because they could, "Make it look pretty with all the different colors and fonts." It became clear that all the students in my class arrived there with different skill sets when it comes to their keyboarding and computer skills. Clearly the bells and whistled hooked some of them.

## **Implications**

When it comes to my question: “What happens when students use a wiki as the medium where homework must be done?” there were three key results. First, most students spent more time completing their homework when it was posted on the Internet than when they just handed it to the teacher. The major reason for that was positive peer pressure. They want the other students in the class to see them at their best. They do not want to make mistakes and want to write to impress their peers.

Second, it allowed the students to come together as a learning community in a way that would be difficult to accomplish without the website. Students acted as teachers, helping one another on the website. They also sought out the advice of other students in the class to help improve their work. The students did not see themselves as competitors with each other, but rather members of the same community trying to reach a common goal of creating wonderful work for everyone to see.

Third, it allows students who are normally introverted a chance to share what they can do with the class in a manner that is non-threatening to them. Many students are nervous to stand in front of a class and read. One student Dylan said, “I like to write stories, and I like for people to hear what I wrote, but I don’t like reading it to the whole class.” Dylan now has a way to share his work with the whole class without risking embarrassment. These introverted students were thought by many of their classmates as people who didn’t have any good ideas, or people who could write well because they would hardly ever share their ideas. Now these students have more self-confidence than before and help students who are struggling as writers.

My last finding was the most surprising. As a class we spent less time editing homework that was handed in, because it was completed at a much higher level. We spent less time sharing homework in class because the students were able to share on the wiki site. This enabled my class to push forward at an accelerated pace. When I examined the month of February I realized the class had completed five weeks of lessons in a span of only four weeks of class time. All that extra time added up to about one extra lesson a week that I now had time to teach.

### **Limitations**

Everyone in my class had access to a computer this year, however it would be a serious draw back if even one student did not have a access to a computer because they would feel left out from a community that existed outside of the walls of the school. I do not know if I would be able to implement this if even one student did not have access to a computer. The only way around it would be to provide those students with computer time during the school day that other students did not have and assign them different homework.

Even though every student did have a computer it did not always mean they could use it. Some families have one computer and three or four students who need to use the computer, so their time is limited. While other students were not able to use the computer at all because their mom or dad needed it for work. Perhaps the most difficult situation arose when a student forgot to complete a homework assignment and he blamed it on the computer by saying, "I did it all but the computer erased it." This problem was could not be solved because the parents said he was on his computer all night but they didn't know what he was working on. There was no way to determine if the student

actually did the work and lost it electronically or did not complete the assignment and made up a story.

When I presented the wiki site to the students I presented it as an opportunity to be treated like young adults and with that opportunity came great responsibility to use the website in an appropriate manner. I was very fortunate the students in class did not abuse the website. They treated each other with respect and it became a place where they could go to seek help from each other. However, one student does have the ability to cause serious damage to a learning community such as this. If he or she posted something in appropriate there could be backlash from parents who do not want their son or daughter to participate. This could have a domino effect on the class as a whole creating a sense of apathy. To avoid this it was important for me to check the web sight a few times during the night and before I went to sleep to make sure everything was appropriate. I also assigned some students as inspectors, and gave them the right to erase anything that was inappropriate for school. I did not have any problems with things posted on the website. However depending on the class dynamic and the age of the students I could see a problem arising.

The ability of students to create their own wiki site was not one that I considered before I began my research. It did not occur to me that fifth graders would be knowledgeable enough or have the desire to create their own. However, one of my students towards the end of my research discovered how to create her own wiki site and wanted the email addresses of all the students in class in order to invite them to her site. I informed her the purpose of this website was not to start a social networking site and she seemed to understand this. However it does raise the question, what if a student creates

his or her own site and doesn't ask the teacher's permission? It could lead to online bullying and inappropriate discussions that take place on a website without the teacher's knowledge.

### **Emerging Questions**

One of the questions I had after completing this research was: Is this just a novelty, or is it something that will last throughout an entire school year? Most of the students enjoyed completing homework assignments and posting them on the website for a few months. Will they be willing to spend this much time on homework in the spring time, when they want to go outside and play is still something I have to see.

Another question I am still pondering is should I be dedicating more class time to skills like keyboarding if I am asking students to complete homework on a computer? Some students have begun developing keyboarding skills by the time they arrive in fifth grade and other students are using the hunt and peck method and become frustrated when other students are finishing way ahead of them. Students are given time in class to develop skills like cursive handwriting and I feel like I need to find time to allow those skills to develop.

Could two or more teachers, in order to allow students to collaborate, use a wiki site like this one? It would be difficult to make sure every teacher is teaching the exact same lesson at the exact same time so that students could all work simultaneously, but perhaps it could just be different classes working on different assignments and the students could still benefit from feedback from their peers.

## **Conclusion**

My findings have shown me that having students complete homework assignments on a wiki site lead to a higher quality of homework that is submitted by the students. It leads to a positive feeling when it comes to the self-confidence of the students. Because they are able to share their work with their classmates they feel a sense of pride. Students like Cody put it best when they said, "I want to share with the class because I want to really show people what I can do." As a result of sharing homework online and reducing the time spent sharing in class my class was able to move at an accelerated pace because less time was spent editing and sharing homework.

I was pleased to see that my class felt like more of a family after spending a few months doing homework online. New friendships had developed and it had allowed students to get to know one another in a way previously unknown. Students came out of their shells, and they were able to show they really do have good ideas to offer.

If teachers have a students wanting share their work with the class but no time to do it, or students who are shy and reluctant to share their work, or frustrated by students who are handing in work that hastily completed a wiki site as a new medium for homework could be very helpful. However, a teacher needs to make sure they have an accurate pulse of the students in the classroom, because there is the potential for the website to turn into something other than what the teacher had in mind.

## **Implementation Plan**

I plan on using a wiki site from now on with my fifth grade class, but next year I will start in the second marking period. I want to establish the classroom rules and have the students into a routine before we learn about etiquette on the Internet and with the



wiki site. I plan to use it mostly for language arts, but it has proven to be useful in all subject areas, especially ones that require writing.

When it comes to language arts I plan on having at least one homework assignment a week to be posted on the wiki site. For example, I will give an assignment on Monday and by Friday it needs to be posted on the wiki site. This will teach the students time management skills, and the students who are able to post the poems early will receive the most feedback from other students, therefore raising the quality of their assignment.

As we move throughout the year I will give the students guidelines as to what they should look for when offering tips to the writers on the websites. One week it could be action verbs, another it could be personification, and another it could be using quotations the correct way. This will reinforce skills we are already using in class and will provide the students with the felt need to use those skills. I will also send home with the student a slip that the parents need to sign. On this slip it will inform the parents what the homework assignment is and the parents have to sign and return it. This will keep parents in the loop so students are not making up stories about a computer virus that ate their homework.

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