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Creating Your Own Space
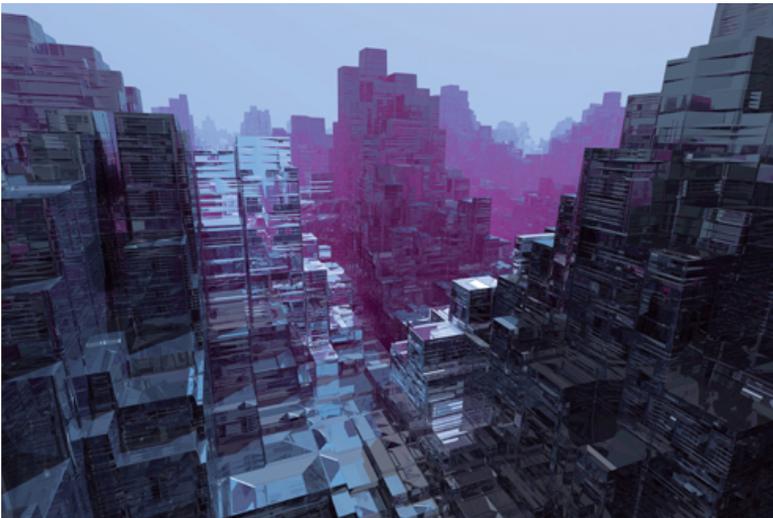
Mindy Broderick **raves about the functionality of Wikispaces for language classes**

What's in a wiki?
* Easy-to-use visual editor
* Unlimited pages
* Student accounts with or without email addresses
* Media and widgets from all over the web
* Easy navigation
* Notification by email or RSS feed
* Tags to organize your pages and files
* Complete history of every edit
* Wiki-, page-, and file-level permissions
* Simultaneous editing
* Projects for group work
* Contextual comments and discussions

While many options for integrating technology into the classroom are becoming available, wikis are simply extraordinary for secondary teachers of French, ESL, and other languages. Access into the virtual language learning community is unlimited with this dynamic educational tool.

A wiki is a website that can be modified and edited by a group of users with relatively simple rich-text editors. Using a wiki is an easy way to promote computer literacy in class as students can create content and comment on each other's ideas. Wikispaces' wikis are ideal for working with children because they are ad-free and, therefore, will not distract young users from their tasks. Wikispaces, decided in 2006 that helping teachers use the collaborative software to further cooperation between students, both in their own schools and with schools in other cities and countries, would be the basis of its business. "It always starts with just a simple way to get work done on the Web," says Wikispaces co-founder Adam Frey, "Having students put their work up on a Web page, and it quickly becomes collaborative."

"When you give teachers attention and respect their needs," Frey said, "they want to talk about their experiences… When you give them something that they're actually excited about, they're more than eager to tell people about it."

Over six million students and teachers have used Wikispaces in their classrooms since 2005 to create student portfolios, assignments, project-based learning, distance learning, as well as curriculum planning and professional development. Wikis allow teachers the means to extend classroom curriculum into a virtual study space available to students anywhere, anytime. Wikispaces provides the flexibility today's "plugged-in" learners collectively prefer. A free resource for K-12 educators, Wikispaces for Educators has several advantages, such as unlimited multiple-user pages that are collaboratively editable where teachers and students may post blogs, discussions, documents, photos, and multi-media to create a collective virtual learning space.

Student-centered blogspaces inspire discussion, making the Wikispace a perfect gathering spot for cultural exchanges with language classrooms around the world. Students can work as "virtual pen-pals" connected in this learning space. This dynamic resource for teachers expands language learners' experience beyond the textbook into authentic cultural instruction. Messages, blogs, photos, and media are all exchangeable among students, while teachers may administer, monitor, and prompt topics for cultural exchange.
Teachers can post classroom calendar pages and easily link them with Google, and other online calendars. Keeping up with the language classroom becomes more attainable, as students may access homework to preview upcoming due dates, or catch up on missed class and homework assignments. Additionally, Microsoft Word documents and Power Point presentations may be uploaded as links, providing easy access. Smart phones are compatible with the wiki, allowing students access to classroom calendars, assignments, and resources from anywhere.

Today's students are decidedly media-driven learners, and multimedia may be interwoven into the Wikispace to create powerful learning resources. For example, YouTube videos may be embedded, offering students instructional resources, and opportunities to learn languages through music. Language clubs can use the wiki to post announcements and meeting schedules. Links to language learning resources, such as bilingual dictionaries, international travel resources, and recipes from the target culture can enrich student experiences through the wiki.

Customized features make this educational tool accessible to all language teachers, even those without advanced technology skills. Colorful templates, easily-navigated webpages, and user-friendly membership accounts make the Wikispace inviting and enjoyable to develop, and simple to manage. Privacy is secured as creators may select audience accessibility, from "public," to "protected," to "private" for a small fee.

Get Started
To create an educational Wikispace, visit www.wikispaces.

com/content/for/teachers. Just assign your own "Wiki Name," which will appear as the website address ("Wiki Name" .wikispaces.com). Then set the "Wiki Permissions," selecting from "public," "protected," to "private" options to accommodate your audience. Click to confirm that the wiki is intended for education in K-12 settings, then click the "Create" button, and a Wikispace awaits. Following the prompts for account creation, user ID and password selections will guide you through the process of establishing a Wikispace account. Newly-created accounts will navigate you to the "Look and Feel" of the website by exploring the template design options, which may be customized by school or classroom logo, as well as color and text selections.

Upon template design, a "Manage Wiki" tab appears, through which the creator may control features such as "Content: Pages, Files, Tags, Templates, Recycle Bin"; "People: Members, Permissions, Invite People, User Creator"; "Settings: Look and Feel, Wiki Info, Subscription, Domain Name, Content Manager"; and "Tools: Notifications, Wiki Statistics, Space Usage, Badges, Web Folders, Import Blog Post, Exports/Backups, Delete Wiki."

Managing webpages is simple by navigating the "Pages and Files" tab, from which pages may be added, edited, renamed, or relocated. "Members" may be invited, organized, and administered by the designated tab, and "Recent Changes" may be monitored for administrative purview. Moreover, projects may be developed by navigating a "Projects" tab, through which dynamic multiple-user projects may be developed, modified, elaborated, and shared collectively. Of course, Wikispaces content is searchable for quick topic navigation, and viewer accessibility.

The Wikispaces for Educators reaches further into the virtual learning community, as Wiki members may request to join not only the World Languages classroom, but other Wikispace learning groups of interest. Members may sign up or make requests to creators of various Wikispaces, and administrators may either allow or deny access, depending upon the privacy permissions and learning objectives of each Wikispace community.

By means of Wikispaces for Educators, language teachers and students create multimedia online learning experiences together. Ideas and resources are shared in virtual learning space, as language instruction becomes collaborative.

Mindy Broderick is a graduate student at the University of Michigan, and teaches at Pioneer High School, in Ann Arbor Michigan. Ms. Broderick teaches French III collaboratively with Monsieur Tyler Vess. Previously, she taught World Languages in secondary private and university settings, and acquired French language formation at the University of Paris IV, Sorbonne.

Online Magazine

Quick Links

California State University, Fresno has received a $200,000 endowment grant from PARSA Community Foundation to establish the PARSA Community Foundation Visiting Scholar in Persian Language and Culture Studies.

Cash Incentives for Good Italian Grades

Google pulls plug on Translate API

The World As We Speak

[Feds Face Foreign Language Crisis](#)
Senate hearing discussed how the lack of adequately trained language specialists compromises national security.

[State Dept Chooses Kindle for Worldwide English](#)
In an effort to promote English literacy around the world, the U.S. Department of State is planning to purchase up to 35,000 Kindle e-readers as well as selected content. The Kindles would be distributed to U.S.-friendly educational centers around the world so as to be available to those looking to study English and learn about America.

Need for Bilingual Preschools
[A new report from the Center for American Progress](#) that urges policymakers to maximize on the investments being made in public preschool programs to serve disadvantaged children. Specifically, the report calls for "more federal, state, and local capacity to meet the increasing demand for culturally and linguistically appropriate services for children who are dual-language learners."

[Tensions in Kyrgyzstan over Exams in Uzbek](#)
Nationalists protest the availability of university entrance exams in the Uzbek language.

[Linguistic Diversity Linked to Biodiversity](#)
Linguistic and cultural preservation may be the key to protecting biodiversity.

[English Proficiency Biggest Hurdle for Brazilian Scholars](#)
At a time when Brazilians have more resources and opportunities to study abroad than ever, lacking language skills a hinderance.

[Cajoling All Teachers to Consider ELLs](#)
New report examines how to prepare teachers for the fastest growing student population in the U.S.

[Language Education Cuts Compromise National Security](#)
New Council on Foreign Relations report calls education a national security issue

[Canada Instates Language Tests for Some Immigrants](#)
Exams on proficiency in either English or French will be stated for certain immigrants in June

[San Jose School Hosts Spanish Spelling Bee](#)
First Spanish spelling bee in northern California held at a dual language academy

[English is Number One Language Test in Georgia](#)
Students in final year of school aim to take English instead of Russian in foreign language exam

[Promotion of French Language is Hot Topic](#)
The separatist opposition party in Quebec rallys for French

[U.S. Demand for Portuguese Increasing](#)
Universities scramble to keep up with influx of learners

[Urdu Gets Official Status Around India](#)
Urdu to become a language of instruction in Muslim communities

[Norwegian Language Camp to be Launched](#)
Camp will focus on Norwegian language and cultural immersion activities

[National Center for Family Literacy Ruminates on Education Policy at Conference](#)
Conference of educators, advocates, and policy makers highlights family literacy

[New Arabic Center Symbolizes Chinese-Emirati Exchange](#)
Beijing's University of Foreign Studies unveils remodeled center for Arabic language and Islamic studies.

[Promoting French in Pakistan](#)
After an exodus of native French teachers, France pushes its language and culture in Pakistan.

[Columbia's Teacher College Addresses International Education with TEDx](#)
Inaugural TEDx conference on international education takes places

[Irish Language on the Rise, but not in Ireland](#)
Could heritage learners abroad save Irish?

[Santorum: Puerto Ricans Should Learn English](#)
While visiting Puerto Rico, Santorum turns off Boricua voters.

[International Summit on Teaching Profession Takes Place in New York](#)
Delegations from 23 countries and regions discuss education issues at the second annual summit

[Journey to Find Indigenous Languages in Trip of the Tongue](#)
New book by Elizabeth Little covers indigenous languages throughout the United States

[International Portuguese educators come together to teach Timorese teachers](#)

[Read Across America Kicks Off March 2](#)
Students all over the U.S. will celebrate literacy on Dr. Seuss's birthday

[Equatorial Guinea Strengthens Connection to Portuguese](#)
Portuguese linguists to document archaic dialect from the Annobón province.

To read from The World As We Speak Archive, [click here.](#)

Find Your University

[USAEducationGuides.com](#) is a fully interactive College Search Tool that provides you with a wealth of information about 5,044 two- and four-year colleges and universities in the United States. The search includes statistics, photos, online applications, and firsthand information written by current students just like you. You can search by region, state, major, and school type to find the college of your choice.

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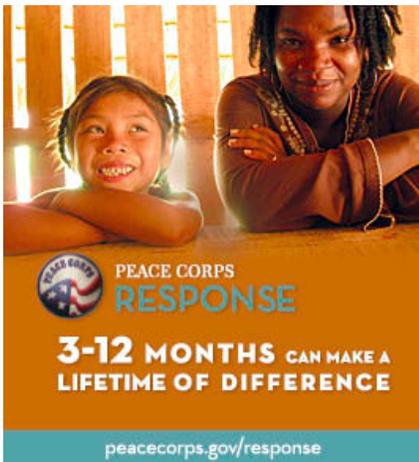
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