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May 17, 2010

# ONLINE ADULT LEARNERS BENEFIT FROM CREATING KNOWLEDGE USING WIKIS

# What is a wiki?

- Web 2.0 technology
  - Fluid not static
  - Editable
  - Collaboration



# History/purpose

- Teaching adult learners
  - Differences from previous assignment
    - More applied/practical
      - Show a current/future employer or graduate school
    - Teamwork/collaboration
    - Reducing alienation/creating engagement
    - Increased critical thinking
  - Similarities to past
    - Writing
- Overall purpose was to align course assignments with real life usage and skills so that the learning was more meaningful and thereby more likely to be retained and used

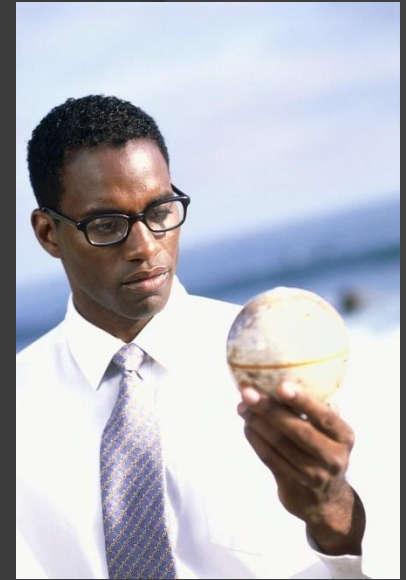
# Literature review

- Achterman (2006)
  - synergy produces a product that is greater than the sum of its parts
  - learn more than on a similar individual assignment
- Evans (2006)
  - active learning with a wiki more likely to learn the material compared to passive learning such as reading course material from textbooks or lesson commentaries
- Matthew, Felvegi, and Callaway (2010)
  - more likely to not only read the content of the wiki, but reread it
  - making connections to other ideas
  - perceive wikis as personally useful, that they had ownership of the wiki
  - saw future use for it as well



# Current study

- ⦿ Exploratory
- ⦿ Two sections over two semesters
- ⦿ Several viewpoints
  - Qualitative Instructional design and faculty notes and observations
  - Quantitative student opinion surveys administered twice during each semester
- ⦿ Focused on successes and roadblocks



# Qualitative Results (Administration)

- ◎ Set purpose early on
  - Who is audience/student?
- ◎ Plan ahead
  - Find tools
  - Think about problems students will have
- ◎ Monitor closely early on
  - Student technical/training issues
- ◎ Provide detailed feedback
- ◎ Adapt



# Quantitative (student) Results

## Initial Survey

- Familiarity with wiki
  - Unfamiliar: **84%**
  - Somewhat: 15%
- Wiki as a resource for future review or study?
  - No: 15%
  - Neutral: 46% → **61% unsure about wiki**
  - Yes: 38%
- Learned more compared to traditional type of project?
  - Less: 13%
  - Same: 33%
  - More: **54%**

# Quantitative (student) Results

## Final Survey

- Familiarity with wiki
  - Unfamiliar: 3%
  - Somewhat: 40%
  - Very: 57% → **97% now familiar with wiki use**
- Wiki as a resource for future review or study?
  - No: 11%
  - Neutral: 49%
  - Yes: 40%
- Learned more compared to traditional type of project?
  - Less: 11%
  - Same: 22%
  - More: **66% -- most frequent response: "A lot more"**



# Qualitative (student) Results

## Comments

- ① “I think the wiki project is an excellent learning tool. It gives another perspective on each subject than just the lesson plan.”
- ② “I thought the time spent on this project and how it was structured truly helped the student learn about the topic at a more in depth level. I found the wiki format forcing me to a deeper level of understanding than the discussion boards.”
- ③ “I thought the wiki projects were excellent way of learning the material. Not only did you have to research to get information, you also had a team with a scale of skills (most of them excellent skills) that resulted in helping see different formats, ideas, and how to pull together an assignment.”
- ④ “It makes you look at your project from a whole different perspective that actually assists in expanding your knowledge base.”

# “How to”: Instructional design

- [Scaffolding](#)
- Grading Rubric
  - Purpose of wiki\*
  - Where points come from\*
- Communication strategies
  - Discussions
  - ANGEL Chat
  - Team Email
  - Instructor: email, sandbox, discussions
    - Detailed feedback\*
- Training
  - [Sandbox](#)
  - Videos
  - Links to help pages



# “How to”: Technology

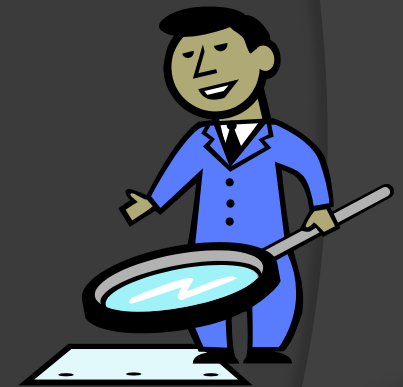
## ● Wikispaces

- Readily available and free to use for PSU
- Supported by our help desk
- Accessed with PSU access account
- Options
  - Private versus public



# Conclusions

- Wiki was designed to aid learning for adult learners
- There were successes and roadblocks to the process
  - Most roadblocks can be overcome with planning ahead
    - Threshold of content?
  - Successes
    - Greater student learning and applicability
    - Easier grading process once up and running



# Contact information

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