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

- "I think the wiki project is an excellent learning tool. It gives another perspective on each subject than just the lesson plan."
- "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."
- "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."
- "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
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