

Facilitating Group Work Using Wikis in Blackboard

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HUMAN ORIGINS
ANTHROPOLOGY 120

Daily Questions

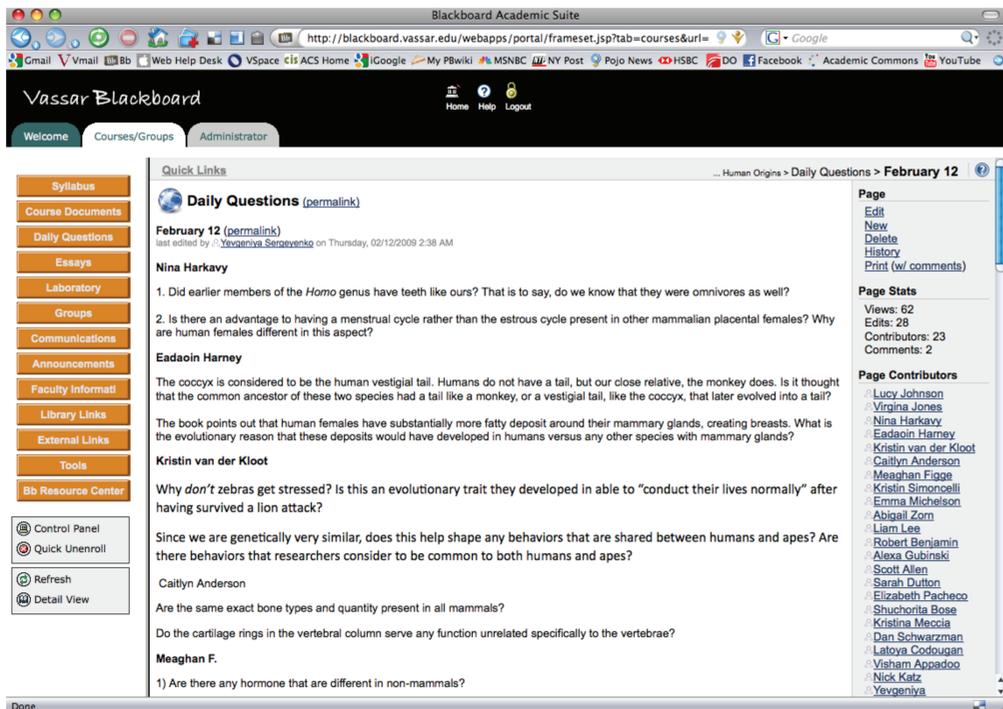
FACILITATING SHARED KNOWLEDGE

For many years I have used daily questions as a way to structure class discussion and discover both what students have not understood about the readings and what they would like to know more about.

I have had students post their questions on the Blackboard Discussion page. This has been awkward in two ways: in order for me to be able to read these and have them handy in class, I needed to open each post, copy it, paste it into a Word document and then print it.

In order for the students to read each others posts, they have had to open each one, which resulted in few of them discovering what other students had said.

I now have each daily question date as a separate wiki page, to which each student posts. Thus, I need only click and print, and each successive student reads, or at least skims while paging down, the posts of the earlier students. All much neater.



Laboratory

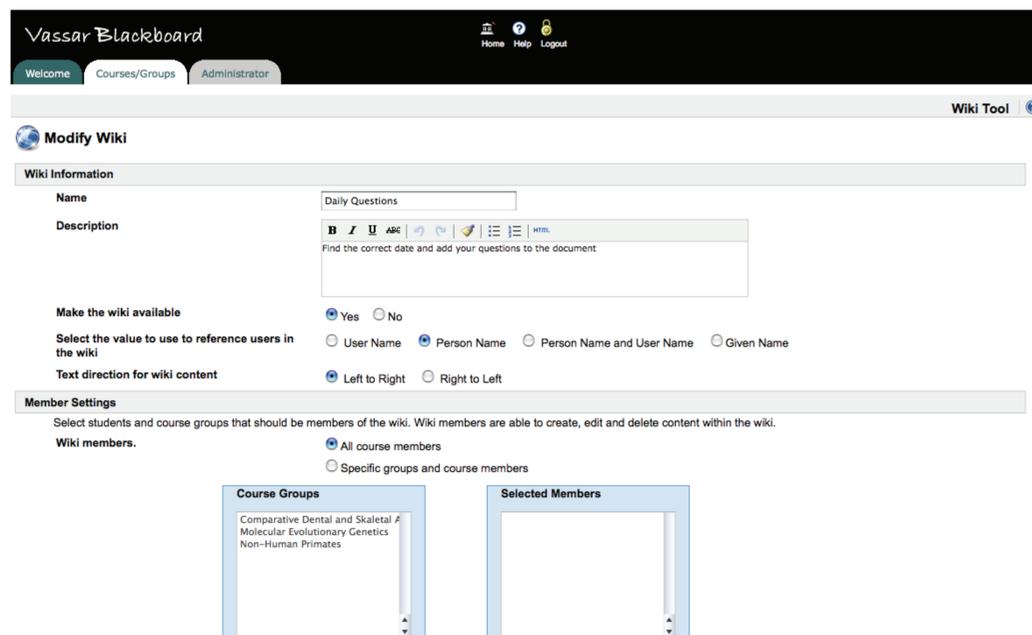
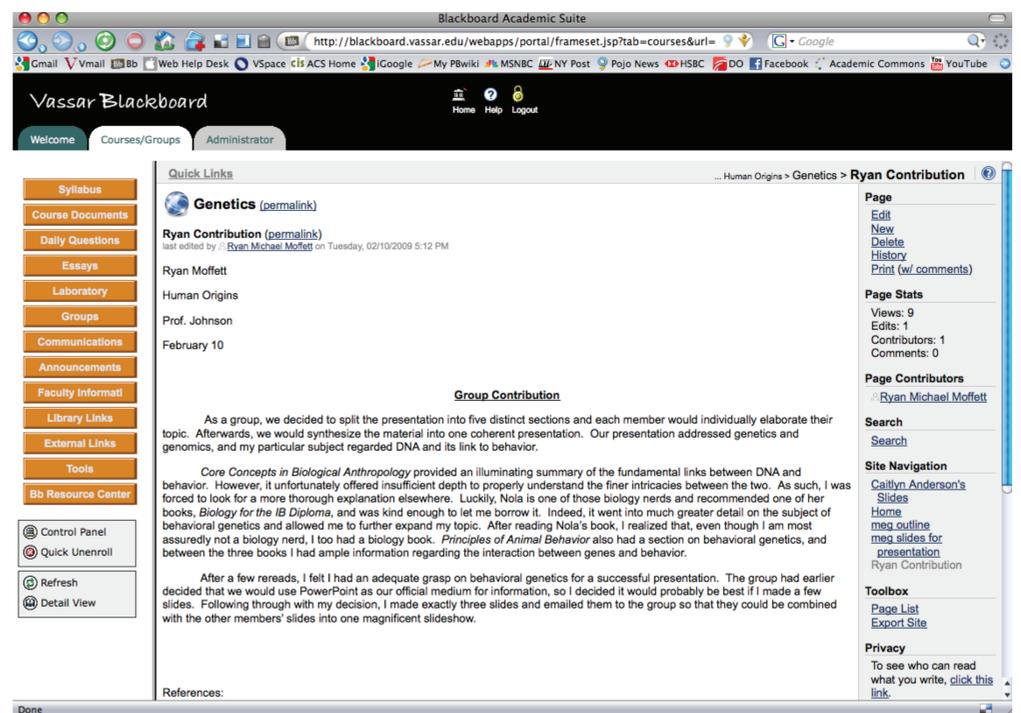
GROUP PROJECT

There are 3 labs during the semester.

Groups of students research a topic and then each prepares a powerpoint on her/his individual section – e.g. one might study *Australopithecus afarensis* while another studies *Homo erectus*.

Posting the individual powerpoints on the Lab Wiki page makes it easy for one of the students to then compile them into a single Wiki. Additionally, if one student is late, her/his post is on the same page and easily grabbable.

For me, I have both the individual powerpoints and the compiled powerpoint to view while grading the exercise.



I have found it valuable to use the Wiki feature in Blackboard this semester, though I have used it in very simplistic ways. Next year I hope to expand my understanding of Wikis so that I can better create conversations among the students as they work on and submit their assignments.