

WebQuests: Facilitating Inquiry on the Web

A WebQuest is . . ."An inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet." (Bernie Dodge, San Diego State University.)

Types of WebQuests

Short Term:

- Designed to be completed in one to three class periods.
- The instructional goal is knowledge acquisition and integration.
- The learner deals with significant amount of new information and makes sense of it.

Longer Term:

- Designed to take one week to a month.
- The instructional goal is extending and refining knowledge.
- The learner deeply analyzes a body of knowledge, transforms it, and demonstrates understanding by presenting it in some way.

Critical Attributes of a WebQuest

1. Introduction

Should orient the learner as to what is coming Should raise some interest in the learner through a variety of means

2. Task

A description of what the learner will have done at the end of the exercise Could be a product or a verbal presentation

3. Process

Clearly described steps Lets the learners know the process to go through to accomplish the task Can also provide learning advice

4. Information Sources

A list of web pages which the instructor has located that will help the learner accomplish the task. It may include resources not on the web All resources may not be used by all

5. Evaluation

Evaluation rubrics designed by the teacher are the most authentic assessment Need to be able to measure results Evaluation rubrics take different forms

6. Conclusion

Bring closure to the quest Remind the learners about what they have learned Encourage them to extend the experience into other domains

Products and Tasks Resulting from WebQuests

Retelling Tasks	Students can report on what they've learned by way of slideshow presentations, posters, or short reports. These are the most commonly found inquiry tasks, and the least challenging (or interesting), but they can serve a purpose.
Compilation Tasks	Students can take information from a number of sources and put it into a common format. The resulting compilation might be published in digital or print forms. A compilation task familiarizes students with a body of content and provides them with practice in making selection choices and explaining them, as well as organizing, chunking, and paraphrasing information drawn from a variety of sources in a variety of forms.
Mystery Tasks	Students can be engaged in a well-designed mystery task or puzzling scenario that requires synthesis of information from a variety of sources. Then students can create a puzzle or mystery that cannot be solved simply by finding the answer in given resources.
Journalistic Tasks	Students can act like reporters covering an event. The task involves gathering facts and organizing them into an account within the usual genres of news and feature writing.
Design Tasks	Students can create a product or plan of action that accomplishes a pre-determined goal and works within specified constraints (e.g., financial, legal, physical).
Creative Product Tasks	Creative inquiry tasks lead to the production of something within a given format (e.g. painting, play, skit, poster, game, simulated diary or song) but they are much more open-ended and unpredictable than design tasks.
Virtual Fieldtrip Tasks	Students create a guided exploration through the web that organizes a collection of pre-screened, thematically based web pages into a structured online learning experience for others.
Consensus Building Tasks	Students can be given a controversial topic or task and be required to work with others to come to a consensus. Differing viewpoints must be articulated, considered, and accommodated where possible.
Persuasion Tasks	A persuasion task goes beyond a simple retelling by requiring students to develop a convincing case that is based on what they've learned. Persuasion tasks might include presenting at a mock city council hearing or a trial, writing a letter, editorial or press release, or producing a poster or videotaped ad designed to sway opinions.
Self-Knowledge Tasks	Students can engage in inquiry research or other data collection to achieve a greater understanding of oneself, an understanding that can be developed through guided exploration of on- and off-line resources.
Analytical Tasks	Students are asked to look closely at one or more things and to find similarities and differences, to figure out the implications for those similarities and differences. They might look for relationships of cause and effect among variables and be asked to discuss their meaning.
Judgment Tasks	Judgment tasks present a number of items to the learner and ask them to rank or rate them, or to make an informed decision among a limited number of choices.
Scientific Tasks	Students use the scientific method to explore a problem, issue, or other area of inquiry.

Excellent source for examples of many of the tasks---<http://webquest.sdsu.edu/taskonomy.htm>

Useful Websites about WebQuests

Concept to Classroom: WebQuests

<http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/webquests/>

Teacher Web: WebQuests

<http://teacherweb.com/tweb/webquests.aspx>

Thinking Visually with WebQuests

<http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/tv/>

WebQuest.Org

<http://www.webquest.org>

Teacher Tap: Locate and Evaluate WebQuests

<http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic4.htm>