WebQuest about WebQuests in Foreign Language Education

WebQuest Description: This WebQuest is designed for pre-service and in-service foreign language teachers as a means to investigate the principles of WebQuests as a teaching and learning tool and evaluate their usefulness for foreign language teaching.

Grade Level: College / Adult
Curriculum: Foreign Language
Keywords: teacher education, foreign language teaching
Published On: 2009-01-18 23:05:38
Last Modified: 2009-01-18 19:07:08
WebQuest URL: http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=21401

Introduction

Since 1995, the WebQuest model has been used to create inquiry-oriented and collaborative lessons in a variety of educational contexts, including the foreign language classroom. But what exactly is a WebQuest? How do you use them? What does it feel like to do one? How do you know a good one when you see it? In the span of 90 minutes, you’re going to analyze these questions by doing a WebQuest yourself.

Tasks

Situation: Your high school currently does not have a multimedia computer lab. Your school principal has decided to write a grant to the district to attempt to obtain funding for the lab. In her grant, the principal needs to make a strong case for how the computer lab would contribute positively to teaching and learning in your school by providing examples of how the lab would be used. Your principal has asked you and a colleague to do research on the WebQuest model to make recommendations about whether or not the potential for students to participate in WebQuests for FL learning could form part of the rationale to obtain funding for the computer lab. In this WebQuest, you will investigate the theoretical underpinnings of WebQuests and their use for teaching in the foreign language classroom. In addition, you will have the opportunity to discover what it feels like to do a WebQuest, allowing you to take the perspective of both a teacher and a student. More specifically, your group will address the following questions:

1. What are the underlying learning and teaching principles of WebQuests? How are WebQuests used in the FL classroom?
2. What benefits do WebQuests have for FL learning and teaching?
3. What makes a good WebQuest?

Final recommendation: Can we justify, in part, funding a computer lab so that students and teachers can use WebQuests?

Process

Overview You will be working in pairs at one computer to complete the online parts of the WebQuest. Two pairs will form a group of four students at certain times during the WebQuest to complete offline activities, which involve sharing, discussing, and synthesizing your findings from the web. Finally, we will come together as a full class at the end of the WebQuest.

Step I: Discovering WebQuests

Using the links provided below, write answers on your worksheet to the following questions. Use your own words. Each pair in the group of four will work with the links for either Pair 1 or Pair 2. The links for each pair are different and provide different information. Each pair should answer as many of the questions below as you can in the time limit you are given. When time is up, you will have a chance to get together with the other pair in your group to fill in any of the missing gaps and compare your answers.

What is a WebQuest? How would you define it to someone who was unfamiliar with this model? What two types of WebQuests are generally referred to and how are they different? What different WebQuest designs are there? What are the important design features of a WebQuest and what is the rationale for including these features? What is meant by “scaffolding” in a WebQuest? Give a concrete example. What are the benefits of inquiry-based learning, collaborative learning, and developing learners’ higher-order thinking skills? How would you know a good WebQuest if you saw one? In what ways are WebQuests similar and different from traditional textbook-based activities? Why were they thought up in the first place? What is meant by the “constructivist approach”? Think back to the article you read for today: what is the socio-constructivist approach? What is the usefulness of WebQuests for FL teaching/learning? Why would you use WebQuests in class? Group 1 Links WebQuests (video) Why WebQuests? The Three R’s of a WebQuest What topics lend themselves to WebQuests? Types of WebQuests

Group 2 Links WebQuests Group 2 Links What is a WebQuest? The Building Blocks of a WebQuest What is Inquiry-based Learning? Benefits of Collaborative Learning Scaffolding WebQuests 2.

Step II: Evaluating WebQuests

When time is up, meet with the other pair in your group of four to discuss and compare your answers and fill in any gaps. Step II: Evaluating WebQuests 1.

Now that you have considered what WebQuests are, in this step you are going to examine some existing WebQuests for foreign/second language learning. Creating WebQuests from scratch can be time consuming, so it benefits you to search for existing WebQuests in your TL to see what's already been done and is available. For this activity, since your group members may represent different target languages, we'll be looking at WebQuests for learners of English as a foreign/second language. Your goal in this step is to answer the following questions: Which one of the three example WebQuests listed below is the best one? Why? Which one is the worst? Why? What do best and worst mean to you?

WebQuests 1. What are the benefits of inquiry-based learning, collaborative learning, and developing learners’ higher-order thinking skills? How would you know a good WebQuest if you saw one? In what ways are WebQuests similar and different from traditional textbook-based activities? Why were they thought up in the first place? What is meant by the “constructivist approach”? Think back to the article you read for today: what is the socio-constructivist approach? What is the usefulness of WebQuests for FL teaching/learning? Why would you use WebQuests in class? Group 1 Links WebQuests (video) Why WebQuests? The Three R’s of a WebQuest What topics lend themselves to WebQuests? Types of WebQuests Group 2 Links What is a WebQuest? The Building Blocks of a WebQuest What is Inquiry-based Learning? Benefits of Collaborative Learning Scaffolding WebQuests 2.

When time is up, meet with the other pair in your group of four to discuss and compare your answers and fill in any gaps. Step II: Evaluating WebQuests 1.

Now that you have considered what WebQuests are, in this step you are going to examine some existing WebQuests for foreign/second language learning. Creating WebQuests from scratch can be time consuming, so it benefits you to search for existing WebQuests in your TL to see what's already been done and is available. For this activity, since your group members may represent different target languages, we'll be looking at WebQuests for learners of English as a foreign/second language. Your goal in this step is to answer the following questions: Which one of the three example WebQuests listed below is the best one? Why? Which one is the worst? Why? What do best and worst mean to you?

WebQuests 1. What are the benefits of inquiry-based learning, collaborative learning, and developing learners’ higher-order thinking skills? How would you know a good WebQuest if you saw one? In what ways are WebQuests similar and different from traditional textbook-based activities? Why were they thought up in the first place? What is meant by the “constructivist approach”? Think back to the article you read for today: what is the socio-constructivist approach? What is the usefulness of WebQuests for FL teaching/learning? Why would you use WebQuests in class? Group 1 Links WebQuests (video) Why WebQuests? The Three R’s of a WebQuest What topics lend themselves to WebQuests? Types of WebQuests Group 2 Links What is a WebQuest? The Building Blocks of a WebQuest What is Inquiry-based Learning? Benefits of Collaborative Learning Scaffolding WebQuests 2.

When time is up, meet with the other pair in your group of four to discuss and compare your answers and fill in any gaps. Step II: Evaluating WebQuests 1.

Now that you have considered what WebQuests are, in this step you are going to examine some existing WebQuests for foreign/second language learning. Creating WebQuests from scratch can be time consuming, so it benefits you to search for existing WebQuests in your TL to see what's already been done and is available. For this activity, since your group members may represent different target languages, we'll be looking at WebQuests for learners of English as a foreign/second language. Your goal in this step is to answer the following questions: Which one of the three example WebQuests listed below is the best one? Why? Which one is the worst? Why? What do best and worst mean to you?

WebQuests 1. What are the benefits of inquiry-based learning, collaborative learning, and developing learners’ higher-order thinking skills? How would you know a good WebQuest if you saw one? In what ways are WebQuests similar and different from traditional textbook-based activities? Why were they thought up in the first place? What is meant by the “constructivist approach”? Think back to the article you read for today: what is the socio-constructivist approach? What is the usefulness of WebQuests for FL teaching/learning? Why would you use WebQuests in class? Group 1 Links WebQuests (video) Why WebQuests? The Three R’s of a WebQuest What topics lend themselves to WebQuests? Types of WebQuests Group 2 Links What is a WebQuest? The Building Blocks of a WebQuest What is Inquiry-based Learning? Benefits of Collaborative Learning Scaffolding WebQuests 2.
learn to work together. WebQuests that force collaboration and create a need for discussion and consensus are the best in your view. If a WebQuest could be done by a student working alone, it leaves you cold. The Altitudinist: Higher level thinking is everything to you. There's too much emphasis on factual recall in schools today. The only justification for bringing technology into schools is if it opens up the possibility that students will have to analyze information, synthesize multiple perspectives, and take a stance on the merits of something. You also value sites that allow for some creative expression on the part of the learner. The Technophile: You love the internet! To you, the best WebQuest is one that makes the best use of the technology of the Web. If a WebQuest has attractive colors and lots of links to interesting sites, you love it. If it makes minimal use of the Web, you'd rather use a worksheet. 3. You'll examine three of the four sites below and individually use the table on the WebQuest worksheet to jot down some notes of your opinions from the perspective of your role. Two WebQuests focus on English as a Second Language and the other two on Spanish and French as a Foreign Language. You'll need to examine the three site fairly quickly. Don't spend more than 5 minutes on any one site. The Perfect TripRoute 66 And choose one: Spanish: Respondiendo a las emergencias OR French: Votre déchet et vous 4. When everyone in the group has seen all the sites, it's time to get together to answer the questions. One way to proceed is to go around and ask each team member for the best and worst from their assigned perspective. Pay close attention to all of the perspectives, even if you think you might disagree with them. 5. There will probably not be complete consensus, so the next step is to work out a consensus through discussion and compromise. Try to combine your perspectives and see if you can agree on what's best for the learner and for learning a foreign language. DO NOT JUST VOTE AND DECLARE A WINNER. Instead, begin to put aside your individual perspective and come to an agreement that takes into account all four perspectives. 6. One person in each group should record the group's thoughts. 7. When time is over, be prepared to report your results to the whole class. Step III: Final Recommendations Now comes the moment of truth, the final step. Can you, could you, would you, justify, at least in part, the expense of your school's new computer lab knowing what you know now about WebQuests and their potential as a learning tool for foreign language learners? Discuss the answer to this question with the four members of your group and briefly outline some of the talking points that you can use with your principal to demonstrate the usefulness (or lack of usefulness) of WebQuests for FL teaching and learning. Be ready to report your talking points to the rest of the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Score</th>
<th>Beginning 1</th>
<th>Developing 2</th>
<th>Very Good 3</th>
<th>Exemplary 4</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stated Objective or Performance</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting a beginning level of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting development and movement toward mastery of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting mastery of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting the highest level of performance.</td>
<td>%25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stated Objective or Performance</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting a beginning level of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting development and movement toward mastery of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting mastery of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting the highest level of performance.</td>
<td>%25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stated Objective or Performance</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting a beginning level of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting development and movement toward mastery of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting mastery of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting the highest level of performance.</td>
<td>%25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stated Objective or Performance</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting a beginning level of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting development and movement toward mastery of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting mastery of performance.</td>
<td>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting the highest level of performance.</td>
<td>%25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

Having completed this WebQuest on WebQuests, you should now have a better idea of the make-up and theoretical underpinnings of a well-designed WebQuest. You now have sufficient knowledge to have formed an initial opinion as to their usefulness as a learning/teaching tool and have had an opportunity to analyze some example WebQuests. You now have a concrete way to incorporate web-based authentic texts, videos, and other online media into your FL lessons! Now it's time to actually apply this knowledge specifically to your own teaching. In the WebQuest assignment, you'll have a chance to put this knowledge into practice by creating your own WebQuest. For that assignment, you may work on your WebQuest individually or with a partner. I encourage you to collaborate with a classmate in order both to pool resources and ideas as well as to save time. To get started on the assignment, refer to the assignment instruction sheet.
The target learners for this WebQuest are pre-service or in-service foreign language teachers, specifically in the context of the United States. The online part of the WebQuest is intended to be completed through teacher-students working in pairs at a single computer and then coming together into a group of four with another pair to do the offline discussion activities included in the WebQuest. This WebQuest about WebQuests is a hands-on way for foreign language teachers to learn about WebQuests through actually doing a WebQuest themselves. It gives them the opportunity to discover the teaching and learning principles behind WebQuests, evaluate a few existing WebQuests, and think about WebQuests for their own practice. Credits: The activities included in this WebQuest were inspired by two existing WebQuests about WebQuests for teachers: Bernie Dodge's WebQuest about WebQuests and Scott Shelton's WebQuest about WebQuests for EFL teachers.

Standards

Credits

Other