

Title of Session: Political WebQuests

Moderator: Bernie Dodge

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Room: ASO

BernieD joined the room.

BJ: The WebQuest topic is Political WebQuests

PhilB: Bonsoir, Bernie. Welcome to Tapped In.

BJ . o O (and here's the master himself!)

LisaGst2 joined the room.

BernieD: Hiya kids, hiya hiya

BJ: Hi, Bernie.

BJ: Welcome, Lisa

BernieD: Philip! Long time!

LisaGst2: Hello!

BJ: if you are new to Tapped In discussions, please read the 10 steps above this chat window before we begin

ChristiAH left the room (signed off).

PhilB: Good to see you Bernie. WebQuests are alive and well here in France, though few have really grasped how they are different from treasure hunts yet.

BJ: oops.

BernieD: Ah well.

ChristiAH joined the room.

PhilB: A note for new participants: if you find the discussion going too fast for you, you can use the "actions" field just above and to the right of the text display area to "detach" the discussion and enlarge it for easier viewing.

BJ: wecome back, Christi

ChristiAH: Thanks for the tips....

ValentinaA left the room (signed off).

BernieD: Shall we start with introductions?

BJ: Since I know Bernie always has lots to cover, let's start with introductions

BJ chuckles

BJ: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

BernieD: I'm Bernie Dodge, professor of Ed Tech at San Diego State University.

PhilB teaches English and does teacher training in EdTech integration in southern France.

CandaceC joined the room.

ChristiAH: I am a student teacher in Ventura California

LisaGst2: I'm finishing my MA in curriculum and instruction at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis.

PhilB . o O (Hmmm... Webquests and... Politics?)

CandaceC: I teach learning technology courses at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis.

BernieD: Hi to Candace and Lisa. I hope you didn't attend the disastrous

videoconference I did for faculty there a few years ago!

LisaGst2: Candace is the one who is enlightning me to your work...

CandaceC: No, I did watch your NECC presentation from the web.

BernieD gives a sigh of relief

BernieD: OK... let's start.

BernieD: Tonight we're going to look at several ways in which elections can serve as the content for WebQuests, or as the motivator to teach other content.

BernieD: Do any of you have particular interest in or experience with politics?

BernieD: I'll take that as a no.

BernieD: We did a session like this several years ago, and I've gone back to look at the lessons we showed back then. Not surprisingly, many are no longer online. Those that we'll look at will serve as an inspiration for future WebQuests, even if some of the things they link to are no longer valid.

ChristiAH: Not I....not outside of being an activist for the environment, human rights etc.

CandaceC: I thought the current campaign in California is quite interesting.

BernieD: Bravo, Christi. That's more than most of us do.

BernieD: Interesting is one way to put it.

PhilB . o O (Hasta la vista, Gray Davis! <lol>)

BernieD: I have a student who's going to do a lesson about our upcoming weird election.

BernieD: No, Monsieur Phil... I'm betting on Cruz.

BernieD: Let's begin with a fairly typical example of an electoral WebQuest.

BernieD: Take a look at this oldie but goodie:

<http://www.nspencer.k12.in.us/gehlhausen/wqelection.htm>

PhilB: Students everywhere are keen on seeing what Schwartzy's up to. It can be a motivator to get some serious work done.

CandaceC . o O (right on)

BernieD: Give this a quick lookover and tell us what you like/dislike

JimGst1: it looks as if it is meant to be interdisciplinary

PhilB: As you said, many if not all of the external links are dead - I was hoping to find election vocabulary (always a sticking point for my students) but it's gone.

BernieD: Good thing: it has separate roles for campaign mgr, etc.

BernieD: Bad thing: the links and data for each role are pretty much the same.

PhilB: I notice that there is almost *zero* in the way of scaffolding to get students into the activity. Either they are old hands at WebQuests, or else the teach is providing a lot of behind-the-scenes scaffolding... or this activity has an overly-optimistic view of what students can handle.

BernieD agrees (as usual) with Phil.

BernieD: So... let's take this as a starting point and see how else it could be done.

PhilB: This looks like a good *outline* of a WebQuest, but needs far more depth to make it workable.

BernieD: D'accord.

BernieD: Many of the Election 2000 WebQuests were written before the election. Here's one that came afterwards that used it as an opportunity to practice persuasive writing.

BernieD: <http://www.kcusd.org/%7Eslorenzo/webquests/election/election.html>

BernieD: What do we think?

PhilB: Nice production scaffolding - students have a better idea what they are supposed to produce.

BernieD: Short but good, yes.

BernieD: Well... let's look at one more that's got a bit more heft to it.

BernieD: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Technology/index3.html>

PhilB: Am I mistaken or were the web resources exclusively "pre-cooked" by the teacher? Doesn't look like students were consulting actual websites at all (previous example)

BernieD: You're not mistaken.

BernieD: This one could largely be done from a floppy without access to the web. However I like the amount of detail.

CandaceC: The examples are clear and the process is well-written.

BernieD nods

PhilB: This latest example is *extremely* involved. I'm always envious of teachers who obviously see their students far more than the 2 hours per week I'm limited to.

BernieD: With a updated links, this one could be used again quite well.

BernieD: Sometimes teachers have used the electoral process as a way to teach about something else. They're using it as a way to make the familiar strange, and the strange familiar. It's a good motivational strategy.

BernieD: Here's an example:

BernieD: <http://www.nevada.edu/%7Ekristalm/elect.html>

PhilB hands Bernie his fast-serve merit badge.

BernieD: This one's sorta cute, no?

PhilB: I like this one but...

PhilB: I would like more detail for each student role

BernieD: That would improve it, I agree.

BernieD: Maybe point to some sample speeches and press releases.

PhilB: For example, if I am a campaign manager or advertising manager, I might need a little more guidance in how to proceed.

BernieD: yup

PhilB: For my students at least, each of those roles would amply fill an extended webquest.

BernieD: But in an election year, don't you think this would be a good way to drum up interest in these monarchs?

PhilB: Absolutely! I could see them designing campaign platforms to elect a new King of France. They would have a ball!

PhilB . o O (There is actually a royalist party here, though they are paid little attention.)

BernieD: Moving on...here's another one that uses elections to study something else:

BernieD: <http://www.coollessons.org/Dickens.htm>

PhilB: I notice with this webquest, the resource sites proposed are all about past monarchs, none help the students figure out what a "Speech Writer" or "Campaign manager" is supposed to do.

PhilB: (last WebQuest.)

BernieD: Ok.... I'm not going to let anyone in the room go for a bathroom break until someone other than Phil participates.

BernieD: Chime in, shy people!

PhilB: The Scrooge for Mayor Webquest is exemplary in that it asks students to reformulate received information from a new angle. Really creative and thought-provoking.

CandaceC: Sorry Bernie, I am still busy reading the web site.

BernieD checks Candace off in his gradebook.

PhilB: . o O (perhaps we are going a bit fast for this group, I can barely keep up myself.)

JimGst1: I went before I logged on, you will have to threaten better.

LisaGst2: ha ha -I'm too much a novice to comment much....thinking about it though

BernieD checks Jim off for good citizenship.

BernieD hands Lisa a hall pass.

BernieD: Do we like this Scrooge thing?

PhilB: I like it, but IMHO there are far too many resource sites. Unless these students have a dozen hours to do their online reading.

BernieD: Sometimes less is more. (That's from Le Corbusier. Wasn't he French?)

JenniferRo joined the room.

BernieD: Welcome Jennifer

PhilB: IMHO teachers need to narrow their selection somewhat in order to channel student creativity. Exactly, Le Corbusier.

JenniferRo: hi Bernie

LisaGst2: Too many layers of info. for a topic not particularly grabbing in this format

JimGst1: I thought there wouldn't be enough time to do the work. Presentation seems a little dull.

CandaceC: I like it because the tasks are more specific and the issues are more relevant. It seems that this can run for the whole semester.

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CandaceC: that this can run for the whole semester.

BernieD approves of this sudden burst of opinionation.

PhilB: Yes, if you have two months of 5 hours a week with students, they could work their way through the resources little by little - but they'd need more intermediate checkpoints along the way.

BernieD: In general, I think this is a good strategy that could be applied to some other content, though I don't have any other great examples of this to point to.

CandaceC: I like it because the tasks are more specific and the issues are more relevant. It seems

CandaceC: The navigation can be further improved.

BernieD: Let's return to the electoral process as the actual content.

BernieD: Here's one that was new to me. I like the way it focuses on a statewide election and puts the students in the role of different kinds of voters. I think this helps shows what a challenge it is to get elected to anything.

[http://www.lexington1.net/lv/wkms/hp.nsf/Files/wkmwebquest/\\$FILE/elec2.html](http://www.lexington1.net/lv/wkms/hp.nsf/Files/wkmwebquest/$FILE/elec2.html)

ChristiAH: What a great resource!

PhilB: One problem with investing efforts in designing a WebQuest about real life elections is that it is so dependent on the specific election that you can't really re-use it in any way.

BernieD: Yes, but updating it is just a matter of changing links. Easier than starting from

scratch.

PhilB: That's why things like the "elect a king" WQ might be more attractive to teachers wanting to make their investment pan out over time.

BernieD: In fact, I think I'll generalize this into a design pattern.

CandaceC: However some issues repeat every year such as abortion, environment, tax, etc.

PhilB: The problem with this WQ is that it has no real role or task. Students are asked to "find out" information, but don't have a clever way of re-using it.

BernieD agrees. At least here in the US.

BernieD: The task goes beyond just finding out, P. They have to cast a vote as their character and justify it.

SusanR left the room.

PhilB: WebQuests that are limited to "find out about X and then tell what you've learnt" are missing the WQ boat, I think.

BernieD: If they beef up the "why I voted this way" part, would you be happier with it?

PhilB: Perhaps, Bernie, but IMHO that role and task should be made more clear in the overview and introduction stages. Students need to be able to answer questions like "who am I in this activity" and "what am I supposed to do"

JenniferRo: excuse me....

JenniferRo: I'm just tuning in. What is IMHO?

BernieD: In my humble opinion.

PhilB: Sorry, IMHO = in my humble opinion.

JenniferRo: OH! sorry to interrupt.

BernieD: Rarely said with actual humility.

PhilB: lol!

JenniferRo smiles

CandaceC: This web site is way to long for students and the tasks are way too many. Again, I think a better design might make it easier to read.

BernieD agrees, but is still intrigued by the idea of coming up with a template based on this lesson.

PhilB: Yes, Candace, boil down the essential, chuck the rest, and tell students from the start "you are a voter and need to select the best candidate for this position"

PhilB: Bernie, I haven't kept touch since you started talking about "WebQuest templates". Have you got a collection of such templates online these days?

BernieD: Oh yes. Let's take a look. (hunting for URL)

BernieD: Take a look at <http://webquest.sdsu.edu/designpatterns/all.htm>

BernieD: There are 23 different templates there, each for a different sort of WebQuest.

CandaceC: Bernie, is there a template with a table (similar to the ones with frame). I find it hard to teach students the ones with frame and I personally don't like the one with long running text.

BernieD: This is the page to which I would add an election design pattern.

PhilB: Super! Noted for future reference. Thanks so much Bernie, Candace and everyone. Must dash off to bed so I can get up in 5 hours. These are a great resource!

BernieD: Glad you could make it, Phil. I know it's very late for you and appreciate it.

PhilB left the room (signed off).

BernieD: Candace... I'll think about that.

BernieD: Time for one last example:

BernieD: <http://incolor.inebraska.com/gnelson/WQmapMM.html> isn't quite finished, but it shows how one could use elections as the impetus for some serious analysis.

BernieD: I'd love to see some WebQuests that use GIS software the way this one starts to do.

CandaceC: That will be neat.

BJ: Before you all leave...the next WebQuest is on October 29. The topic will be Scaffolding your WebQuest

BernieD: To wrap things up, here's a page with all these links and some analysis of what makes them tick. <http://webquest.sdsu.edu/electoralWQ.htm>

BJ: Thanks, Bernie.

BernieD: And thank you for the plug, BJ.

BernieD: Thanks for coming, all.

LisaGst2: Thanks for sharing...this was good learning/resources

JimGst1: thank you very much for your time

BernieD: Good night all.