

Title of Session: WebQuests and Not Quite WebQuests

Moderator: Bernie Dodge

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BjB: If you are new to Tapped In, go to the actions menu in the top right of your chat window and then click on DETACH

BjB: we usually start discussions in Tapped In with brief introductions

BjB: . o O (where you are and what you teach)

BjB: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

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

EddieJM: I am an English teacher with Teacher Licensure student in Maryville, Tennessee

JohnAW: My name is John Wallace. I am a preservice teacher. I am heading into Secondary Mathematics Education at the University of Akron in Ohio.

IanL: I'm a teacher of Ed Tech in Washington

BjB: Hi, Paulette. We're just starting introductions

GailH: I am Gail Hoskins, Outreach Coordinator for the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (www.enc.org).

PatriciaK1: I'm from Houston, preservice, Science, University of Houston

MonicaW: Monica Wiesmann - Curriculum coordinator and ESOL instructor at a 2-year college in Florida

AlisonMF: I'm Alison, a student at George Mason University in VA, and a resident of MD (taking on-line classes)

SaraiM: my name is Sarai Marquez and I am a student at the University of Houston

JasonGst3: My name is Jason Braddock. I'm a preservice teacher at the University of Akron in Ohio studying secondary education and theoretical mathematics.

PauletteO: I teach special education in an elementary school

JaniceF: I work in the eMINTS program in Missouri

BernieD waves to Janice

BernieD: Is that everyone?

RachelR: I am Rachel Redding and I am a student at the University of Houston

BernieD: OK.

BernieD: Thanks, everyone, for joining the discussion. I think this is going to be an interesting debate and I'm hoping it's going to help inform some of the changes I'm about to implement on the WebQuest sites. Just as an overview, here's the official description of what we're about tonight:

BernieD: Since the beginning, higher order thinking has been a critical attribute of WebQuests. There are many fine lessons that call themselves WebQuests that don't quite meet that requirement, and the WebQuest Portal will soon de-list them or at least list them separately as part of a Christmas break major overhaul. But where in Bloom's Taxonomy should the line be drawn? And what name should we call the lessons that fall below the line? Join us as we study examples and engage in an active border dispute.

BernieD: So... as anyone who's heard me here or on the road knows, I'm troubled by the sheer number of "webquests" I'm seeing out there. It's gratifying to see how widely the idea has spread, but also bummersome to see how often the idea is only superficially understood and implemented. I have a paternal interest in seeing the word WebQuest used in the manner I intended, though I'm powerless to prevent its misuse.

BernieD: Why are there so many faux "webquests"? I've been thinking about that and have a list of possible explanations:

BernieD: 1. Many "webquests" are created in a hurry in a required class which didn't allow enough time to explain the idea. Sometimes, too, with a class of novices instructors want to encourage their students by setting the bar at too low a point.

BernieD: 2. There are many old "webquests" that were developed before there were good examples to be inspired by. Because they are still sitting on a web site in their original form, they continue to serve as bad models for new WebQuest authors; then drag down the average and slow down the evolution of good practice.

BernieD: 3. The form of the template (introduction, task, process, etc.) is easy to grab onto and fill in without understanding some of the underlying philosophy.

BernieD: There may be more reasons. Do any of you have other ideas to add to the list?

MonicaW: not having a good grasp on the concept behind webquests...

BernieD nods

JaniceF: It is harder to write WebQuests with a higher level of thinking.

BernieD nods briskly.

RachelR: I think what you said about not understanding the philosophy behind them is the key

IanL: I think it is a combination of 1 and 3. Instructors may not fully understand the underlying philosophy and are unable to convey it in a short time.

AlisonMF: I agree with you Bernie, especially with #2 as that was my experience when I just created one a few weeks ago.

JasonGst3: I think that the misconception that Webquests include just work with computers and the internet may cause a problem. Webquests can enhance a lesson, but doesn't need the whole lesson to be on the computer.

RachelR: I agree Jason

BernieD: All good insights.

BernieD: Some of what I'm seeing among the "webquests" are not bad lessons at all. They would engage kids, they're coherent and tied to standards, But they don't require higher level thinking and thus lack a critical attribute of WebQuests. Lessons like this are worth letting people know about, but I'm thinking that we need to distinguish them from the real McCoy. For that reason, I'm going to start labeling them as something else on the WebQuest site. I'd like your help in figuring out what to call them.

SaraiM: I think that instructors do not have sufficient time to fully explain it

AlisonMF: ok

BernieD: Let's take a look at some lessons that may be near the borderline between real WQ and something else.

JaniceF: Wow... good ideal

MonicaW: web scavenger hunt?

BernieD: Click on the little blue line and explore this one, for example.

BernieD: <http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~BjB03/six.htm>

PauletteO: that's what I wrote first, a scavenger hunt, but tweaked my lesson majorly to become a quest

JasonGst3: I think that a definition of WebQuest would help people creating "good" WebQuests. It should be said explicitly somewhere that a WebQuest should only be created to enhance lessons that could be taught without technology, and should include some high order thinking skills based on the newly revised Bloom's Taxonomy.

MonicaW: I haven't been able to open the link

BernieD: Yes. There are definitions in several places on my site and I need to make them easier to find with exemplars and non-examples.

PauletteO: can't open

BernieD: Anyone else having trouble with the link?

JasonGst3: That would help

MonicaW: got it

AlisonMF: nope, I got it up fine

RachelR: can you put the link again because I got kicked off and it is no longer here

JasonGst3: should this be an example of a bad WebQuest?

BernieD: <http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~BjB03/six.htm>

GailH: Link is fine. Make sure popups are not blocked.

RachelR: thanks, that worked

BernieD: Is it bad? Is it good? What do you think?

IanL: This example looks like a typical "collect info and convince me" type of assignment.

PauletteO: still unable , on university computer

GailH: Try control while you click. And, is it open and hidden under another window??

JaniceF: So many of the webquests that we see in eMINTS are at this level.

JasonGst3: should all lessons be created with high order thinking in mind?

SaraiM: this webquest looks fine...I guess

BernieD thanks Gail for troubleshooting

SteveLM: All of the parts are there but not a very engaging final project

MonicaW: at first glance, this webquest has the major components of a quest...

AlisonMF: I wouldn't say it's bad but it doesn't serve all of Bloom's ideas of taxonomy

JaniceF: It is like they took the old "choose a tribe, research it and report back" and made it a little more creative.

SaraiM: it's missing something. I just don't know what

BernieD: Yup. Grab info and turn sentences into bulleted lists.

BernieD: No transformation of information.

AlisonMF: there not really solving a problem

BernieD: Although, it has promise.

IanL: There isn't much in the way of persuasion, although it seems to suggest there is. It really is research and present a poster of facts.

BernieD: Well... not every WQ has to solve a problem.

AlisonMF: true

BernieD: So... while this isn't a good WebQuest, I'm thinking that some would find it useful.

RuthTr: What is really important to make it a good webquest?

IanL: I'd called it web-based fact compiling.

RachelR: the research is too internet focused...there's a world of great print and physical resources available

BernieD: And I'm thinking of continuing to keep it in my database and make it searchable so that someone looking for a Seminole lesson could find it.... but I don't want to call it a WebQuest.

RachelR: internet research project?

BernieD: Web lessons? Web exercises? Web activities? What should we call things like this?

MonicaW: web-based activity?

GailH: But what about this. Even if you create a new name or names. And, knowing you as Dr.Webquest, there are just so many out there now and so many sites about webquests now, I am not sure that I think it is possible even for you to do what you may set out to do, regardless of how "appropriate" and entitled you are.

BernieD sighs

PauletteO: true Gail

GailH: please don't.

AlisonMF: Web-Expedition or Web-Voyage?

BernieD: Correct, you are.

GailH: I am not trying to be trouble.

BernieD: It's a shame, though, that we're doing the usual educator thing of using a word so sloppily that it begins to lose its meaning.

JaniceF: I think that at least on The official WebQuest list it would be good to make that distinction.

JasonGst3: the name for something like this should be something like TechPlans, since the lesson could be done using books rather than websites. Anything that could be easily converted into using physical resources instead of technological resources should not be considered a WebQuest.

AlisonMF: good point Jason

IanL: I've seen this sort of project from my students when they are trying to come up with something about animals for early elementary. I think it has to do with the sophistication of both my students and their intended students.

BernieD: That's one critical attribute... using the Web.

GailH: Maybe a rubric -- live level one to level four webquests -- where the ones you envision are the level four ones?

JaniceF: People will always call things webquests that are not webquests, but it should be very clear at the source so that if there are questions people know the difference.

JasonGst3: I think that instead of defining what a Webquest is, we should also include what a WebQuest isn't

MonicaW: good question, Gail

BernieD: Hmmm. I do have a rubric already. One of the dimensions is the one we're talking about. That would be a good way to draw the line.

GailH: Then, every time people say they have a webquest, your followers will ask, what level is it?

MonicaW: what changes would you make to this particular WQ?

BernieD mulls idea.

RuthTr: So what would be the difference between good Webquests and lessons using the web that aren't really webquests?

BernieD: The difference is in the task.

GailH often types before she thinks enough. Maybe not a good idea.

RuthTr: What makes a good webquest task?

BernieD: I'd change this one so that it requires more creativity, or has to work within constraints that require problem solving,, or.... etc.

JasonGst3: yes, if it is just research on a topic it should not be a webquest

JaniceF: In Missouri we have a list and we are pretty strict about what is listed. Most webquests sent in don't make it, although I am guessing that we have gotten better about evaluating and some old ones shouldn't be there. <http://emints.org/webquest>

SaraiM: so it should have two components; research and problem solving?

BernieD: If you had to capture it in a verb, I'd say the task shouldn't just require "describe" but rather should be about "predict", "create", "design".

JasonGst3: EXACTLY

RuthTr: more higher level learning

JaniceF: Maybe the criteria in the rubric about the task need to be given more emphasis.

BernieD: Good idea. Time for a new rubric.

BernieD: Let's look at another one.

BernieD: <http://www.coe.missouri.edu/~etp1083/mascot/>

IanL: I suspect most new WebQuest designers focus more on the list of sites than they do the task.

BernieD agrees with Dr. Webinquiry.

IanL -)

BernieD: What do we think about this mascot thing?

JaniceF: I have looked at this before and I sort of like it!

SteveLM: I would be interested to see how many people in this chat have created a webquest?

LoraW: I am in the early stages of creating my first one now.

BernieD: If you have created a WebQuest yourself, signify by typing "I Have". Otherwise, don't type.

JaniceF: It is authentic and requires the students to defend their position.

PauletteO: I created one for my class, up to your standards, probably not

SaraiM: I have

JaniceF: I have

AlisonMF: I Have

IanL: I have

MonicaW: students must consider the facts and come up with a consensus...critical thinking

RachelR: I have

PatriciaK1: I have participated in a webquest as an assignment

SteveLM: me too....just curious

GailH: ENC has <http://www.enc.org/features/focus/archive/webquests/> and I present about them a lot.

MonicaW: I have

IanL: I also like when students work with controversial issues: forming opinions and expressing them.

JaniceF: I love the different points of view that the students are given.

BernieD: So... Janice likes this mascotquest. Is she incredibly wrong-headed? Should she be banished from WebQuestLandia?

JaniceF: Or I mean that the school board has.

JaniceF: NO Pleeeaaassee

MonicaW: I agree with Janice

JasonGst3: Bernie can we look at this webquest to see if it would be a good example?

<http://gozips.uakron.edu/~jdb11/TeleLesson.html>

AlisonMF: Me 2

RachelR: this one looks pretty impressive at least...I agree with the points of view comment.

BernieD: Well... you're all wrong.

BernieD: Just kidding.

AlisonMF: hey!

BernieD: This is one of my new favorites.

AlisonMF: oh, good.

JaniceF: phew!

SaraiM: I thought so

BernieD: And it's easy to see all the ways that distinguish it from the first one.

MonicaW: Janice, we took a stand!

BernieD: Brava!

BernieD: Let's all take a look at the one that Jason posted. This will be new to me, too.

JaniceF: Can you type in the url again.... I somehow lost it.

JasonGst3: <http://gozips.uakron.edu/~jdb11/TeleLesson.html>

IanL: Looking at Jason's WQ, I think it reads more like a lesson plan (at first). The intro and task(?) don't quite cut it for me.

RachelR: I agree

RuthTr: This looks like it is from the Teacher's point of view, not what the student will need to read

BernieD: Strange to see a new lesson in a familiar format for me.

BernieD: This is based on a template from one of my courses. We don't call this a WebQuest, but instead a telecollaborative lesson.

GailH: Which are you referring to Bernie?

JaniceF: That makes sense. That is why it is so teacher oriented.

BernieD: Jason's lesson.

MonicaW: the task is not clearly stated in the beginning; it does look more like a course outline

JasonGst3: okay... could a telecollaborative lesson also be a WebQuest?

SaraiM: what is a telecollaborative lesson?

BernieD: We use this as preparation for creating a WebQuest later in the course.

BernieD: Yes, it could, J.

BernieD: But to make a WebQuest a telecollaborative experience, there needs to be a bit more focus on the task.

BernieD: And more scaffolding.

BernieD: And written to the students (and to the teachers as this one is but in a separate document).

EddieJM: One major problem I have with WebQuests is finding one that is interesting and promotes higher order thinking but has links that don't work

IanL: That's the nature of the web, isn't it?

JasonGst3: so the steps of a WebQuest are more defined then the process of a telecollaborative lesson?

BernieD: Alas, Eddie, that comes with the territory. Some WebQuests out there are getting old.

BernieD: Yes.

JasonGst3: would that be the only difference?

PatriciaK1: Could the Webquest be divided as beginner, intermediate and advanced? With guidelines established for each level.

JasonGst3: as long as it addresses higher level thinking?

BernieD: I would start with the WebQuest template and build in collaboration where it's needed in the Process. Focus on a task that requires synthesis.

JaniceF: Bernie, One thing about Jason's lesson is the question of being teacher centered or student centered. What do you say about that?

BernieD: Could be, P.

JasonGst3: be divided into beginner, inter and adv what? users? lessons? computer experience?

BernieD: Well... if you mean that the teacher is the audience for this web page, that's ok as long as there's a student page, too. In terms of the activities, this one could be construed as somewhat student-centered. Hard to tell.

RuthTr: I would think that you could design beginner and advanced webquests for different age groups/education levels

GailH: In a way, isn't creating a webquest like teaching. In one sense, anyone can do it. Just try and something gets done. But becoming a master teacher is a lot of work and takes a lot of lessons that aren't top quality. And, even a super teacher has off lessons and outcomes that they are less than totally proud of.

JasonGst3: ya, webquests seem more student centered, where telecollaborative lessons seem to have more teacher interpretation and freedom

BernieD agrees with Ruth, but thinks that it's hard enough to squeeze a good one out of people at just one level.

BernieD: Yes Gail. I've always thought that WebQuests were primarily about teaching and only secondarily about the web.

JaniceF: The reason it seemed teacher centered to me in the activities was that there was so much specific direction and not much left to the student to process.

BernieD agrees.

JasonGst3: yes

BernieD: Let's look at one more.

SaraiM: sounds good to me

JasonGst3: ok

MonicaW: ok

AlisonMF: cool

BernieD: <http://www.geocities.com/eimarjke/webquest/index.htm>

JasonGst3: this one seems a lot like the first one we looked at

JasonGst3: the students are researching and reporting mainly

AlisonMF: hmmm, I'm not sold on this webquest

SaraiM: I am not a big fan of this one

JasonGst3: It looks nice, but it seems like rote memory exercises

AlisonMF: not only that but a lot of the links are not functioning... seems out of date

SaraiM: so what is the objective?

JohnAW: Also when you get to the processes...It will not load up that page

RachelR: not so much on this one

MonicaW: it does not have the 'higher thinking' of the previous one; however, students have to make some decisions on their own...

BernieD: And yet... it has an intro, task, process... etc.

GailH: It is easy to let appearance and graphics side track looking at the quest itself. It would be easier to compare if there won't so many things to compare!

BernieD: Halo effect.

JohnAW: Actually from the processes to the last of the links along the left hand side all are not able to be seen

BernieD: Need a larger monitor, John.

JohnAW: No the links are not working

BernieD: Hm. Works here.

JasonGst3: A regular lesson plan has an intro, task, process.... etc. too though, and before the internet and computers they were not considered "WebQuests", so why should this one... they are electronic resources instead of physical resources

GailH: Evaluation worked a minute ago, but not now.

AlisonMF: this is the trouble I had when I was researching web quests for the first time a few weeks ago, so many should be taken off

BernieD: Mysterious.

GailH: No, web-sterious.

BernieD: Well... in terms of taking off....

AlisonMF: ha!

SaraiM: funny

JohnAW laughs

GailH listens to Bernie now.

BernieD: I have a long list of things that I'm asking the entire WebQuest staff to undertake this Christmas break.

IanL: We've pounded the Geocities server!

PatriciaK1: So, if a lesson can be accomplished without using the web it should not be considered a Webquest?

AlisonMF: haha, yup, I think it may be a server issue

RuthTr: So do you think this web lesson doesn't make the students think enough and create?

BernieD: Yes.

GailH: I don't think I agree with Patricia.

BernieD: Me too neither.

JasonGst3: using the web, doesn't guarantee higher thinking and creative skills, but they can... and those lessons that do should be considered WebQuests

GailH: What about "can be accomplished just as well" or some such qualifier.

PatriciaK1: I'm just asking

SteveLM: When I have my student use geocities, they do not have this problem.

BernieD: Strictly speaking it has to use the Web to be a WebQuest, but I'd rather focus on the level of the task and the support in the Process.

RuthTr: I am starting work on a Webquest involving planning a trip so I want to be sure our group makes it a Real Webquest rather than a lesson on the web

IanL: I'm probably guilty of letting this sort of project slide by. The thinking may be implicit in choosing what to present, but there's no guarantee that this is anything more than reporting of facts.

PatriciaK1: I understand

BernieD: To ensure that a travel plan WebQuest gooses the higher lobes of the brain...

GailH: I understand, but I think there is still the question Bernie started with. Naming and ordering or whatever these things.

MonicaW: agreed, Ian

IanL: Do we want to bring up the idea of an essential question?

BernieD: Force them to design the trip within some constraints. Require that the trip or brochure be aimed at people with certain needs or interests or that it has to fit within a 3 day trip... scootch it towards problem solving.

BernieD: I'm always a little leery about Essential Questions.

BernieD: Because....

SteveLM: I have developed a trip type brochure/presentation webquest. Hopefully I have addressed the issues we have talked about.

BernieD: Questions are just words. And it encourages the production of just more words in response.

JasonGst3: kind of like you give a group \$1 and land them in Brazil... telling them to solve the problem of getting home without using checks, credit cards, other cash....

JaniceF: Bernie explain more about essential questions...

IanL: OK, if this project required students to design a three-day trip for under \$1000 for people that love art museums, would it be a WQ?

IanL: or would it just be more specific fact finding?

RachelR: rather than saying "name and research the places you want to go to in London" you could say "where would you go if you needed to see the Greek marbles?" then investigate the problem of the Greeks wanting the marbles back from the museum etc....have them investigate a problem that is existing in London as they learn what London has to offer

JasonGst3: that in general is a high order lesson, just involve the web somehow and it could be

BernieD: There's already plenty of wordage in schools. I like WebQuests that are wrapped around tasks that embody those words but also accomplish something.

JasonGst3: wouldn't it?

MonicaW: Actually, \$1 US dollars comes to #.5 Brazilian Reais...could buy coffee

JasonGst3: and you could trade the coffee?

BernieD: That's one way to do it, but you'd probably lose sight of the content you wanted them to learn.

RachelR: yeah, that would be less of an "explore London" thing.

GailH: Could there be a webquest about making a webquest. Where the task is to create a grade A webquest???

BernieD: That's the way I teach it, actually.

JasonGst3: I like that idea

SaraiM: that would be nice

RachelR: ah-ha!

AlisonMF: clever

JohnAW agrees with Gail

RuthTr: I'd like to see that final webquest about creating a webquest

SteveLM: I may be mistaken but I think there is a webquest webquest.

BernieD: That's for evaluating WQ, though, not making them.

BernieD: Well lads and lasses, it's that time again.

AlisonMF frowns

SteveLM: OK

JohnAW frowns

SaraiM: aw!

BjB . o O (fastest hour on the net!)

GailH: This has been very thought-provoking. Thanks Bernie.

AlisonMF: This was really great, I learned a lot from all of you

SaraiM: thanks!

PatriciaK1: thanks for sharing

RachelR: thanks!

BernieD: Thank you all for coming. Hope to see you again at a future chat.

RuthTr: cool, good chat

EddieJM: Thanks

JaniceF: That hour did go by fast. Thanks Bernie!

JohnAW: Thanks very much for allowing me to hear in on this topic. I really did not know much about WebQuest...This has made more of a clearer definition of one.

GailH: Good night all.

AlisonMF: Thanks Bernie, take care.

BernieD waves grandly over the crowd.