

Title of Session: A Tour of the Renovated WebQuest Site

Moderator: Bernie Dodge

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Room: After School Online Room

BJ: We usually start discussions with introductions. ...where you are and what brings you to the WebQuest discussion.

BernieD: I'm Bernie Dodge and I'm sick in bed.

BJ: oh, no!

SarahWal: I am in MD and I am interested in collaborative learning, and in webquests. I'm taking a graduate course in collaborative and project-based learning and I am trying to learn more here!

Jennifer12: I'm Jennifer, a 5th grade teacher in VA getting my masters, and taking a tech class right now

MelissaIM: I am in Milwaukee, WI, and we have used many of Bernie's webquest ideas and guidelines both in our high school and at Cardinal Strich University (My second job)...

GailH: I am Gail Hoskins, with Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (ENC). I am a former high school math teacher and K-12 math coordinator. I do presentations about <http://www.enc.org> to K-12 math and science audiences. I demo and talk about webquests, but I want to learn more about them and Bernie's changes.

AnitaMB: I'm in Patterson, LA. I was interested in finding out more about webquests.

JanY joined the room.

BJ: hi, Jan. We're just doing introductions

BJ . o O (where you are located and what brings you to the WebQuest discussion)

JamesAG: I am in snowy Fairport Harbor, OH, I teach 11th grade American history and am interested in using webquests in the classroom.

DavidWe offers Bernie some of Mom's chicken soup. Mom (Dr. Weksler) is a doctor

BernieD: That would be nice.

BJ fluffs the pillows behind Bernie and gets him a cup of tea

ArthurM: I am on the east coast of Canada, high school teacher, interested in what is new in webquests for technology and science.

DavidWe: I'm David Weksler. I work with math and science teachers and tell them to look up Bernie Dodge on the Internet

BernieD: I feel better already.

DavidWe knew it would work

JanY: I am a in a technology class and we are to do an hour course in tapped in. My background is as a high school math teacher.

GailH suggests we all be very cooperative and quiet and listen closely to Bernie so he doesn't have to talk too loudly.

DavidWe: Ooh, Gail. A math teacher!!!

BernieD: OK... let's begin!

JanY: One of my classmates (former SS teacher) talks about WebQuests often and I am interested to learn more.

BernieD: It's nice to see you all here. For some reason, the script that I so carefully prepared isn't pasting in...

BJ . o O (if you are new to Tapped In go to the actions menu in the top right of this chat window and click on DETACH)

BernieD: Just one more mini-pain in a long day of them. Bear with me as I type in from scratch.

DavidWe hangs in

BJ waits quietly

BernieD: This week is the 10th anniversary of the first WebQuest.

DavidWe congratulates Bernie

BernieD: To commemorate that, I've been working behind the scenes to make some major improvements.

SusanR wonders what the first webquest was like

SusanR . o O (in comparison to the latest)

BernieD: I'll have a link to answer that in a few minutes, Susan.

SusanR: How have they evolved over ten years?

BernieD: You may or may not know that the entire WebQuest staff is typing this sentence right now, so changes only happen when there's a break from other things.

GailH: I am impressed!

BernieD: I had no idea when this all started in my classroom how this would all play out.

BernieD: This afternoon I did a Google search for the word WebQuest and was bowled over by the answer:

CarolynB: Bernie, You have surely made your mark in the education world!

BernieD: There are now 1,030,000 pages with that word on them.

BJ wonders if any educator knows where their dreams will take them

MelissaIM: WOW!

CarolynB: And more a-com'n

SusanR: GOOD GRIEF!

BernieD: So.... with that as preamble

BernieD: I put up the present site at <http://webquest.sdsu.edu> in 1995, pretty much in its present form.

BernieD: I've added things gradually, mostly under the Training Materials section, and I've groomed the database of examples, but mostly it's been like this for 10 years.

CarolynB: Bernie,

BernieD: Go ahead, CB?

CarolynB: All of my projects have migrated to a new address

JanY: So what made you create WebQuests initially? How did it come about?

BernieD: Yes... the entire staff will be moving them, but if you could send me an email with all the new URLs, that would help.

CarolynB: I do have a redirect when people click on them from your site

BernieD: Let's get the real addresses in there.

CarolynB: OK, I will do that

BernieD: I'll give a link in a bit, Jan that will answer that.

BernieD: In June 2003 I added a new portal at <http://webquest.org> that has been well received, but now there's some confusion over where to find what.

BernieD: So... first improved, not yet done, will be a unified interface.

BernieD: When you go to either site, you'll see an identical page that will lead you to everything else.

BernieD: I'm going to make it a lot easier to find all the goodies that are here.

BernieD: Let me show you something that's almost ready to roll out.

DavidWe . o O (does it have chocolate?)

CarolynB: anxiously waiting

SusanR . o O (waits with baited/bated breath)

DavidWe worries that Bernie rolled out of bed

GailH . o O (he said it was ALMOST ready. He is finishing it!)

DavidWe: Wow. Watching the artist at work!

CarolynB: Talk about hot off the press!

LisaHS: Um....natives.....

DavidWe smiles

BernieD left the room (signed off).

DavidWe checks the patient for vital signs

LisaHS: That did it

BJ fans Bernie's fevered brow

DavidWe: See!

DavidWe laughs

MelissaIM: uh-oh we lost Bernie...

BernieD joined the room.

GailH: Maybe we should do something!

BJ . o O (oops...blew him right off line)

BernieD: Grrrr

SarahWal: He's back!

BJ straightens the covers and arranges the pillows again

CarolynB: HEEE's BACK!!

GailH: We waited nicely.

MelissaIM: ARE YOU OK?

LisaHS: He aint deaf!

DavidWe thanks the health care system for providing the visiting nurse

BernieD: Thanks for your patience. (In addition to being sick, my laptop screen blew up yesterday so I'm sitting here with an external screen and keyboard trying to get this done. Gah!

DavidWe offers Bernie MORE soup and an Apple laptop

BernieD: One of the most heavily hit pages on my SDSU site is labeled Overview & FAQ. It seems that most people make that their first stop, and given that I haven't done much with it since 1998, it's a wonder they keep looking after that.

BJ: we sure appreciate your dedication, Bernie!

GailH . o O (A tenth anniversary of WQ to remember!)

DavidWe smiles at Gail

BernieD: Take a look at the existing FAQ:

BernieD: <http://webquest.sdsu.edu/overview.htm>

BernieD: Isn't that pathetic?

DavidWe: No, not pathetic

CarolynB: Well, the stats certainly are not

SarahWal: I think the graph is interesting. I'd be curious to see one that continues on through 2005 as well.

BernieD: It's not much of an overview and there's not a frequently asked question anywhere in sight.

BJ: not really...I think many people still don't really know what a good WebQuest is

DavidWe agrees with BJ

BernieD: Me too.

GailH: Me too.

JanY: I would be one of those people as I just heard about a WebQuest last year.

BernieD: So... being the fetal-stage PHP geek that I am, I began to look for a better way to handle this page.

CarolynB: The more we get involved with WebQuest the more they evolve.

BernieD: And I found an open-source system that lets me load in the questions and answers and opens it up for others to add to the list.

BernieD: I've generated a list of about 25 questions based on what people ask me at workshops and via email, and I've got some of them entered in already.

BernieD: Here's (and you're the first in the universe to see this other than my wife) is the new page:

BernieD: <http://webquest.org/faq/index.php?action=show>

BJ wonders how many of the 1,000,000+ pages Bernie found in his search were actually true webquests

BernieD: I'm guessing that the answer to the question about the first WebQuest will be found under definitions and history.

BernieD: In the thousands, no more.

SarahWal: Wow! It's great to have all of those questions compiled together in one place. We can get answers right from the source!

BernieD: The answers I've put in there are just first drafts, but I'm optimistic that this is going to clear up a lot of questions.

Jennifer12: definitely

BJ: I like the page, Bernie...very informative. Peer review and interaction is a nice addition.

BernieD: It's all about the peer thing. That's what makes the concept grow.

BernieD: Any more reactions?

CarolynB: Hey! That's pretty nifty!

SarahWal: So at some point others will be able to add questions and later get responses?

GailH: I think that is there now.

BernieD: Yes... anyone can post a question, but it doesn't become visible until I release it.

CarolynB: I like the rating system

BernieD: So... on to another weakness in the present site.

GailH: I like how we can tell there are 12 of us on that page now. It makes for community.

CarolynB: Do you have to answer all of the questions?

MelissaIM: I like the fact that you're addressing a variety of teaching situations and technology access...

BernieD: Well... I can hand them off to my experienced staff of 0.

CarolynB: Wow! That's going to generate quite a bit of work for you.

GailH: The one about how to go about introducing webquests -- written today. Talk about currency!

SarahWal: I suppose eventually though there will be repetition of questions, so you will have already answered some.

JanY: One piece I would like to see on the site (may already be there and I just have not seen it) would be sample lesson plans or WebQuests that are subject specific. For example, a history WebQuest around the Civil War or a science WebQuest around tsunamis.

Jennifer12: hopefully people won't ask questions that have already been answered, but they probably will

BernieD: I end up answering the questions anyway, Carolyn... so maybe now I can just answer them once.

MelissaIM: When introducing WebQuests, to a group of teachers, there's never enough time to answer everything. This is great, kinda like ongoing online support...

BernieD: Jan leads the segue to the next new thing,

CarolynB: "Teachers should teach using an existing WebQuest at least once before attempting to make their own." Very good advice

BernieD: When I added the portal in 2003, I made the database of WebQuests searchable in real time for the first time. Here's the search tool as it exists.

BernieD: <http://webquest.org/search/webquestquery2.php>

BernieD: Go ahead and look, for example, for "tales"

SarahWal: a variety of grade levels

JanY: Ah-ha! Great.

BernieD: I discovered by looking in the log files, that many people make the mistake of searching for the plural of a word (which in some search tools means they won't find it in the singular)

LisaHS: That is awesome tool to have available

BernieD: Welllllllll, if you think THAT's awesome, here's the new tool:

BernieD: <http://webquest.org/search/>

LisaHS: Let's see it

LisaHS: Cute graphic!

GailH: 17 instead of 9 were returned.

BernieD: Yes! It finds tale and tales.

GailH: sorted by high rating.

SarahWal: ooohhhh! very nice!

LisaHS: Author "ME" is you, Mr Dodge?

BernieD: Where?

LisaHS: I put in PIONEER and one of them says under author, "ME"

BernieD: Not me. Bad record.

LisaHS: Its called Who wants to be a pioneer (LOL)

JulieME: Bernie, I'm giving an inservice to teachers (E2T2) on using webquests...any helpful sites you could suggest?

BernieD: On the present site, I categorized WebQuests as Top, Middling or New (not yet rated) and I was doing all the rating.

BernieD: I just don't have time for that, so I let people rate them since June 2003, and they've obligingly done that, even though their ratings went nowhere visible.

JanY: Are there any WebQuests being used at the college level?

BernieD: Now I'm eliminating the categories and sorting these by ratings by people like you.

BernieD: Yes, Jan, look at the second tool where you can find things by topic and grade level. College/Adult is one category.

GailH: I really like the curriculum x grade level search.

BernieD: I'll be adding another button that let's you see any newly added WebQuests as well (last week, last month)

JeffMi: I have used the curriculum grade level search also, and I feel that it is a great place to start

BernieD: When I'm done, you'll be able to click on the ratings and see the comments that people have written. Some are very astute.

JulieME left the room.

BernieD: Let me share with you The Dark Side of community, though.

LisaHS humming the theme from JAWS

BernieD: There are teachers out there, for unknown reasons, assign their kids that task of evaluating WebQuests. They then apparently walk away and don't look at the results.

CarolynB: So, if there are no ***s that means that no one has rated them, correct?

BernieD: The results are piling up in my database. Badly spelled versions of the many ways to say This WebQuest sucks.

LisaHS: That's hilarious

BernieD: So, before I can make the ratings visible, I have to finish the job of going through all 3500 of them and eliminating the kid ones.

GailH: No, it is bad.

SarahWal: That's very disappointing. I guess that's one of the disadvantages of having a rating system like that. Is there a solution to that problem I wonder.

BernieD: No real solution, I'm afraid. I have to be the filter.

GailH: I don't think so. There has to be a moderator -- or else have limited (register and have password) access only.

LisaHS: How about registered users only to rate quests

CarolynB: Perhaps in the introduction, you should say for teachers only.

LisaHS: Good thinking Gail

GailH: He does.

BernieD: We've got boneheads who took the trouble to register on the forum and post trash there, too.

LisaHS: Dang

CarolynB: What a bummer

BernieD: I do say, now, on the rating form that this is for teachers only. But the kid ratings keep coming in. On my list to do is a separate kid rating form with different questions that a teacher could assign and actually see what the kids type.

CarolynB: That's a good idea.

SarahWal: That should help channel the kids comments appropriately. Some kids, especially older ones, may have good insights about the webquests from a kids' perspective too.

JanY: I think it is a good idea to have both ratings from teachers and from students so you have two perspectives on the particular WebQuest.

BernieD: For teacher educators and staff developers, I'm also putting together a module in which people would learn how to evaluate WebQuests and then would contribute their (now better informed ratings) to the system.

DavidWe likes that idea

LisaHS: Boneheads won't bother with that

LisaHS: (we hope)

DavidWe smiles

BJ: do all raters have to identify themselves? Sometimes a name and email are a deterring factor

BernieD: I'm looking for a win-win in which we teach WebQuest evaluation and the ratings get to be more reliable.

BernieD: I'm thinking about that, BJ.

BernieD: We have only a few minutes left, but I just wanted to dangle a little teaser out there.

MelissaIM: It would be interesting to allow students to have a separate rating area, to see which one's they felt were worthwhile

GailH: In addition to teaching webquest evaluation, I think that evaluating webquests independently and then talking about them helps in a constructivist way for folks to learn about characteristics of a good webquest.

BernieD: In the new unified front page for both sites, starting in June, there will appear a new tab that leads to yet another WebQuest site.

CarolynB: What will that be?

GailH: Cloning webquests?

DavidWe . o O (It's amazing what science can do these days)

BernieD: The new site will provide guidance and hosting so that people will be able to create an excellent WebQuest without learning web editing, FTP or having their own server.

CarolynB: I have seen this already online

BernieD: I tested it in Austin last week and so far so good.

SarahWal: Wow! What a great feature!

DavidWe looks at the clock on the wall

BJ: We truly appreciate you leading this discussion, Bernie...especially when you aren't feeling well.

BernieD: It will be distinct from the wave of sites we've been hearing about this week like instantwebquest.com (or something like that).

GailH: Being some of the first to see this is exciting.

SarahWal: I agree!

SusanR looks forward to the new features

BernieD: Thanks for the opportunity to type. It has revived me.

MelissaIM: Thanx for all your work and refinement

BernieD: I'm hardly refined.

BJ smirks

GailH: We all appreciate you doing this when you don't feel at the top of your webquest game.

LisaHS: We want to stay posted please

CarolynB: Someone just recently sent me a site called InstantProjects one of the projects is a WebQuest

DavidWe: He IS in San Diego. I mean how bad can it be?

BJ: will you be doing a webquest session in March, Bernie?

GailH: When will you do this again.

DavidWe hopes Bernie feels better soon

BernieD: Yes, that's the one. Yet another way to instantly make a bad WebQuest.

MelissaIM: How soon are the transcripts posted? I'd like to share the discussion with colleagues?

DavidWe: You'll get the transcripts a few minutes after you logout, Melissa

BJ: Melissa, you should get your transcript about 10 minutes after you log out

DavidWe . o O (transcript)

BernieD: Yes... I'll be back for march with a WebQuest we'll actually do in realtime.

BernieD: It's about higher level thinking.

ArthurM: Maybe link to it, How Not to do a WebQuest.

DavidWe chuckles

BJ: very exciting!. Thanks again, Bernie

BJ waves goodnight and heads for bed.

GailH: Thanks a lot Bernie. Great job.

BernieD: Actually a good idea, Arthur. We all learn from non-examples.

DavidWe agrees BIG time with that one

CarolynB: Feel better, Bernie!

JanY: Thanks, Bernie. My first chat on Tapped In was enjoyable.

DavidWe: Welcome to Tapped In, Jan

BernieD: OK.... BJ's going to bed. Break out the beer!

DavidWe: Yippee!

ArthurM: Yay!

LisaHS: Will we get an email? Or should we just check March's calendar for the next meeting with Bernie?

DavidWe: Check the calendar, Lisa, that's often the best

BJ: check the calendar, Lisa

BJ . o O (you'll get an emailed calendar a few days before the end of Feb)

MelissaIM: Thanx again!

BernieD: Good night all.

SarahWal: Thank you for the tour. It was interesting!

DavidWe: FedEx is bringing the soup to you

LisaHS: Goodnight! Bless you!

CarolynB: Good Night!

GailH: Hope you laptop recovers too.

DavidWe smiles at Gail