

Webquests – a world of learning!

Julie Dubyna, Teacher, College Heights Christian School, Lacombe, AB

“I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.”

Albert Einstein

I love webquests! One definition of a webquest is “an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources found on the world wide web.” Since I learned about the existence of webquests five years ago, I have used them frequently in my classroom, always with great success..

The basic components of a webquest are: introduction, task, process, resources, conclusion, and evaluation. All the information a student needs to be successful is found on the webquest, and there are very clear processes and expectations outlined. I just love how organized and easy to develop they are. I don't always feel organized enough, so it is refreshing to find a well-planned activity that I can use for several class periods.

Students also enjoy webquests for many reasons. The introduction grabs their attention, and gives them a fictional “story” to complete. An example from a space webquest I made is: “You have recently been assigned an out of this world job. You are the supervisor of a team of brilliant people that will develop a plan to successfully colonize the moon. The government has decided to fork out the \$4.3 billion dollars for this project, and it is up to you and your team to make the first lunar town, “Laluna”, a reality.”

I'd like to outline some other benefits of webquests:

- There are hundreds of free webquests on the internet that you can use in the classroom. This is a valuable resource that is easy to find!
- Students are able to work at their own pace – either individually or in teams.
- Students are assigned roles and become experts in their area. They can then share their knowledge with others.
- Web sites can take students beyond their school environment in a safe manner. The webquests have a hotlist of links that the teacher has provided for the students to research. . This prevents random surfing of the web, during which students often waste time.

One word of warning – make sure you check the links if you are using a webquest posted on the internet. I have found that in older webquests, several of their links do not work. I tend to rely on webquests that have indicated that they are “NEW”

Here are some links to webquests to get you started:

1. <http://www.techtrekers.com/webquests> - webquests from a variety of subjects.

2. <http://www.cesa8.k12.wi.us/teares/webquestmatrix.htm>
3. <http://questgarden.com/author/examplestop.php> - probably the best list!