

Overview of WebQuests

So named because of their resemblance to a treasure or scavenger hunt, a "WebQuest" is a type of lesson model using the Internet which encourages learners to use a variety of provided resource links to perform a given task. The term was coined by Bernie Dodge and Tom March of San Diego University in 1995. Dodge and March define a WebQuest as "an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet".

Instructionally speaking, the goal of a WebQuest is to help the learner sort, digest, and better understand a given resource or group of resources. By "sifting" through the given resources in pursuit of a particular goal, learners assimilate information and then apply it toward specific goals. A WebQuest is also an excellent way to familiarize learners with the usage and breadth of Web-based and other Internet resources in a goal-oriented manner.

Web Quest Levels

In his essay "Some Thoughts About Web Quests," Dodge indicates that there are two levels of WebQuest: **short term** and **long term** (full article at: http://webquest.sdsu.edu/about_webquests.html).

Short term WebQuests are, as their name implies, designed to be completed in a brief amount of time. They serve best as an introduction to new material or a shallow overview of a large body of resources.

Use short term WebQuests for:

- Introducing a new concept or focus of study to learners
- Familiarizing learners with Internet resources
- Review of material covered in a previous course or pre-requisite
- A few external links and a brief reflection
- Exam review
- Exploratory activities

Tip: A short term WebQuest could easily be administered in the D2L quiz tool. Links, photos, and videos can be placed in the quiz tool and students can answer reflective questions about these resources.

Long term WebQuests are not as much activities but larger projects. After a long-term WebQuest, a learner should have digested and compared the information in a wide variety of resources, going more in-depth than the 'summary' most short-term WebQuests ask for. At the end of a long-term

quest, learners typically create an artifact of some form, be it an essay, project, multiple essay questions, or other assignment that the instructor can use to gauge their assimilation of the material.

Use long-term WebQuests for:

- Specific topics within a broader context
- Final projects
- In-depth examination of a particular concept or focus of study.
- Summative assessment for a significant grade

Building a WebQuest

According to Dodge, there are six critical elements of building a WebQuest; however, modifications can be made based on your learning objectives.

- **Introduction:** This provides background and other introductory information.
- **Task:** What the learner is expected to accomplish. Since the concept of a web quest is a goal-oriented activity, the task should not be too difficult, and have some sort of "hook" to connect it to the overall learning goals.
- **Resources:** What the learner will use to accomplish the task. Setting students on a WebQuest blind is a sure recipe for disaster; good starting points for resources include online banks of links and other resources that branch out further into links to more specific resources, allowing learners to follow whatever path they wish from a central starting point.
- **Process:** The steps the learner is expected to take to accomplish the task. Dodge recommends these be a clear step-by-step flowchart, but be wary not to make the quest too restrictive.
- **Guidance:** Tips on accomplishing the task. While the "process" delineates the steps toward the goal, the "guidance" portion provides support and direction. Possible inclusions here are study questions, observations about particular resources, or other supplementary information which the resources themselves might not provide.
- **Conclusion:** A wrap-up or follow-up which covers the goal of the WebQuest.

More Resources

Wikipedia provides more information and resource links at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WebQuest#How_to_develop_a_WebQuest