Internet Workshop and WebQuests: Two Instructional Models

Donald J. Leu
University of Connecticut

E-mail: djleu@uconn.edu
Home page: [http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~djleu/](http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~djleu/)

The ideas in this session come from:
[http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~djleu/third.html](http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~djleu/third.html)

CUE
Sacramento, CA Nov. 9, 2000
Sharee Mendoza’s computer schedule posted next to her Internet computer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>Michelle/Becky</td>
<td>Chris/Emily</td>
<td>Shannon/Cara</td>
<td>Cynthia/Jennifer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>John/Peter</td>
<td>Jeremy/Dave</td>
<td>Kati</td>
<td>Patti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:00</td>
<td>Class Meeting</td>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Julia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:30</td>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Andy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>Scott</td>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Melissa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:30</td>
<td>Cynthia</td>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-1:00</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Dave</td>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Cara</td>
<td>Emily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-1:30</td>
<td>Becky</td>
<td>Jeremy</td>
<td>Ben/Sara</td>
<td>Mike/Linda</td>
<td>John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30-2:00</td>
<td>Eric/James</td>
<td>Aaron/Melissa</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Paul/Scott</td>
<td>Internet Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-2:30</td>
<td>Kati/Lisa</td>
<td>Faith/Andy</td>
<td>Patti/Julia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Internet Workshop

If you are just beginning your journey with the Internet, you may wish to start by using Internet Workshop in your classroom. Internet Workshop is especially useful to introduce students to sites for an upcoming unit and develop useful background knowledge. It is also useful to develop important understandings as you work through a unit.

Internet Workshop has many variations. Generally, though, it contains these steps:
1. Locate a site, or several sites, on the Internet with content related to a classroom unit of instruction and set a bookmark for the location(s).
2. Develop an activity requiring students to use the site(s).
3. Assign this activity to be completed during the week.
4. Have students share their work, questions, and new insights at the end of the week during a workshop session.

You prepare for Internet Workshop by locating an Internet site containing information related to your classroom unit and setting a bookmark for your students. This limits random “surfing” and exploration of sites unrelated to your unit, an important child safety issue.

Next, develop an activity related to the learning goals of your unit that requires students to use this site on the Internet. Sometimes this will be used to introduce students to a site you will be using in your upcoming instructional unit. Sometimes this will be used to develop central content during your unit. Often, teachers will have children write down interesting information they find at this site in an Internet journal and then bring their journals and share this information during a workshop session each week.

Figure 1 shows an example of an activity page developed by a teacher to introduce a social studies unit on Japan for a 6th grade class. It was designed to allow students to develop wide-ranging background knowledge about Japan and then share what they discovered with the class during a workshop session at the end of the week. The teacher used this session to launch a cross-curricular unit on Japan. A related set of activities could be developed for students at lower levels by using another, more age appropriate, site: Kids Window (http://www.jwindow.net/OLD/KIDS/kids_home.html). At the high school level, one might to choose a more advanced site such as Japan Window (http://www.jwindow.net/).

The third step is to assign the activity to be completed during the week. If you have only a single Internet connection in your classroom, you may wish to have students work in pairs to complete the assignment. If you have access to a computer lab with multiple Internet connections, this could be completed during your weekly computer lab session.

The fourth step is to have students share their work, questions, and new insights at the end of the week during a workshop session. This is a time for the class to get together and share the learning they completed during their Internet activity. It is also a time to ask questions about issues about their work on the Internet. Often, teachers conduct this workshop session similar to a grand conversation (cf. Eeds & Wells, 1989; Peterson & Eeds, 1990; Tompkins & McGee, 1993) where children participate and share information in a collaborative process of meaning construction.
EXPLORING JAPAN

Internet Researcher: __________________________  Date: ____________

News About Japan
Go to the bookmark I have set for Kid’s Web Japan (http://www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb/). Click on the button “Monthly News” (http://www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb/news.html) and read several recent news stories from Japan. Write notes about some of the news you discovered and be ready to share these with us during Internet Workshop.

____________________________________________________________________

Nature and Climate
Click on the button “Nature and Climate” and read a description of what it is like to live in Japan. Be certain to read answers to some of the questions at the bottom of this article. Write down notes about what you learned about the nature and climate of Japan. We will share these during Internet Workshop.

____________________________________________________________________

Your Choice
Let’s discover what’s cool among kids in Japan. Visit “What’s Cool in Japan” (http://www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb/cool.html). Write down notes about what you discovered is most popular among kids in Japan and be ready to share this information during Internet Workshop.

____________________________________________________________________

Evaluation Rubric:
I read and took notes for the first two items = 2 points
I shared each item with my group = 2 points
I did the “Your Choice” activity = 1 point
TOTAL 5 points
OTHER EXAMPLES OF INTERNET WORKSHOP AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET:

**Titanic** (http://web.syr.edu/~djleu/titanic.html)  This Internet Workshop activity was developed to provide 6th grade students with a response, research, and simulation activity after reading several selections about the Titanic disaster. Students gathered information about one of the survivors at locations on the Internet. Then they used this information to prepare themselves for an appearance in front of the US Senate Committee investigating the Titanic disaster. (The Senate Committee consisted of 4 students from the class.) Students had to present an oral report to the committee about their experiences on the Titanic and then be interviewed by several Senators. A wonderful activity!

**Iditarod** (http://web.syr.edu/~djleu/Iditarod.html)  Several students who were having a hard time with reading got to complete this Internet Workshop and bring the results back to the entire class since the only Internet computer was in the principal's office. (Everyone was reading *Dog Team* and *Windsong* by Gary Paulsen.) These students printed out a map of the Iditarod sled dog race, gathered other information about the race, and shared what they found with their classmates, answering questions that everyone had. A great learning experience for all!
WEBQUESTS

A WebQuest is an easy instructional model to use. WebQuests are complete teaching/learning units for students on the Internet. Students simply follow the directions and complete their learning experiences at a WebQuest site. WebQuest pages usually contain the following sections:
1. Introduction
2. Task Definition
3. A Description of the Process
4. Information Resources
5. Guidance in Organizing the Information
6. A Concluding Activity
7.
WebQuests may be developed by anyone but they are often developed by teachers. Because they appear on web pages, they are also available to other teachers. Many different examples may be found at by following the links at this page:
[http://web.syr.edu/~djleu/wg/webquest.html](http://web.syr.edu/~djleu/wg/webquest.html)
You may also do a search for a WebQuest in the area you are studying. Use search key words such as: Geometry WebQuest, Panda Bear WebQuest, Eric Carle WebQuest, etc.

Be Careful! Can a WebQuest meet these standards?
1. Does this WebQuest meet important curriculum goals and learning objectives? How? What would students learn from this experience? What does it teach? Is this important?
2. How much time will this take my students? Is this time well spent or could we accomplish more in less time with another learning experience?
3. Does the WebQuest require students to think critically about information and evaluate the information they encounter? Does higher order thinking take place during the WebQuest or are students only required to develop literal, factual knowledge?
4. Is this WebQuest developed so as to accommodate individual learning needs and interests? Will all of my students be able to benefit from this activity? If not, what must I do to meet individual differences?
5. Is there an opportunity for students to share the results of their WebQuest with the rest of the class for discussion and additional learning? How do students share their learning with the rest of the class, enriching everyone's insights about what took place?
6. Do students know, in advance, how their work on the WebQuest will be evaluated? Will students know what is important to accomplish in the activity based on how it will be evaluated?
6. Are all of the links on the WebQuest active and appropriate for students? Have I completed the WebQuest myself, and checked each of the links to resources that appear?