

Webquest for Teaching English for Young Learners (A Workshop Paper)

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The use of the Internet and Web is not only able to contribute positively to the academic activities of students but also for teachers of young learners. The Internet and Web can give some possibility to obtain vast information and knowledge for teachers. Through the use of the Internet and Web, teachers will always be prepared to teach English and maybe some current issues to their students. Teachers should always improve the ability to access Website containing materials for language teaching especially English. WebQuest, as one example of a web-based learning program (www.webquest.org) allows teachers to assign tasks to students to explore, analyze, and then present the findings in essay papers or oral demonstrations. A workshop on using WebQuest is aimed at teachers teaching English for young learners to be more creative in providing the course materials to their students.

The workshop will be conducted by guiding teachers of English for young learners in creating a WebQuest by making an account in www.zunal.com. Then, step-by-step, teachers will be guided to complete the whole parts of WebQuest starting from Title, Introduction, Task, Process, Evaluation, and Conclusion. Some advantages in using WebQuest for young learners will be presented so as to give clearer pictures to teachers in using it without any doubt. Moreover, a number of useful links for teaching children will also be given in order that teachers can find the most suitable materials for their students.

Key words: *WebQuest, children, literature*

Introduction

In this era of globalization, advancement in the Internet technology has reached a period where its use spread across the world and carried out by most people in the age range from toddlers to seniors. In searching for information about something, people will use search engines like Google or Yahoo that will deliver them to a particular link, and usually they are named by a Website sponsored by a specific address usually begins with <http://www...>. Website is an internet service that has been used by people around the world. Website contains very large data and information so that it has the potential to do the exploration in order to produce knowledge of information that is useful to society.

For teachers teaching English for young learners, to give children a task by visiting particular website and then design a study allows children to explore the latest topics, news, scientific articles, fictions, as well as a phenomenon that occurs in the society. Involving children in learning through the Web is reflecting a learning theory containing a set of conceptual activities that involve: subject (children), object (task or activities), and media in grateful facts such as the Web having functions to clarify the message delivered by the teacher (Tahang, 2008).

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Webquest

WebQuest was created by Bernie Dodge of San Diego State University, the United States of America in 1995. Since then, WebQuest was continuously developed to be used by teachers around the world. As a learning format using the web as a basis, the use of the Internet is also a requirement in making WebQuest. Although it can be used offline (no Internet connection - in the form of Microsoft Powerpoint Slide), the Internet is still required in the preparation of the WebQuest. WebQuest is actually a lesson plan that requires children to process, apply and present the information they get from the Internet or other additional data sources.

One of WebQuest benefits is that children can develop a deeper understanding of the problems in research through the acquisition and information process collected from the Web. Therefore, deeper understanding can produce high level of thinking abilities such as problem solving and critical analysis. WebQuest also provides access to online resources while scaffolding the learning process to encourage higher order thinking. Moreover, WebQuest combines the most effective learning practices in integrated learning activities (Dodge, 1997). Meanwhile, Chandler (2003) suggests that WebQuest is designed to help students to filter the information through the website and thus focus on the use of information instead of searching for it. While the March (2003) suggests that WebQuest leads learning ideas implemented in everyday practice. Children also have benefitted immensely by WebQuest as according to Peterson et al. (2003), they argue that the WebQuest framework could "develop the academic literacy by engaging students to draw conclusions that are not only reported but also explored."

Barriers To Webquest Use In The Classroom

Although there are some benefits that teachers and students can have from WebQuest, some barriers still exist especially when it is implemented in classroom where some facility is not installed such as computers and Internet access. Teacher's ability in using technology must also be adequate to work with computers and the Internet. Other barriers are teacher's willingness to spend their time in creating WebQuest and classroom management where WebQuest is implemented for teaching. Below are the descriptions of barriers that exist in implementing WebQuest:

- **Access**
Ideally, classrooms would have enough online computers for each group of students to have at least one computer as they work on WebQuests. This ideal situation does not exist for most teachers. The barriers for access include: (1) no computers, (2) one computer with Internet access, (3) one computer no Internet access, and (4) few computers.
- **Technology Skills**
Teachers may feel that they do not have the technology skills to provide a good "comfort level" for using online resources for instructional purposes.
- **Not Enough Time**
WebQuest should not be added to the curriculum. It should take the place of traditional instruction but replace low level, teacher-centered instruction and tired old worksheets/workbooks/drill-and-kill activities.
- **Classroom Management**
In implementing WebQuest for teaching, teachers must pay attention to:
 - how many student(s) will do the task.
 - how many days spend for working with WebQuest
 - how to explain and train students to use time effectively when working in group projects.
 - how the presentation will be conducted.
 - the considerations for students' age and level of ability.

Parts Of Webquest

WebQuest has several parts, which generally consists of:

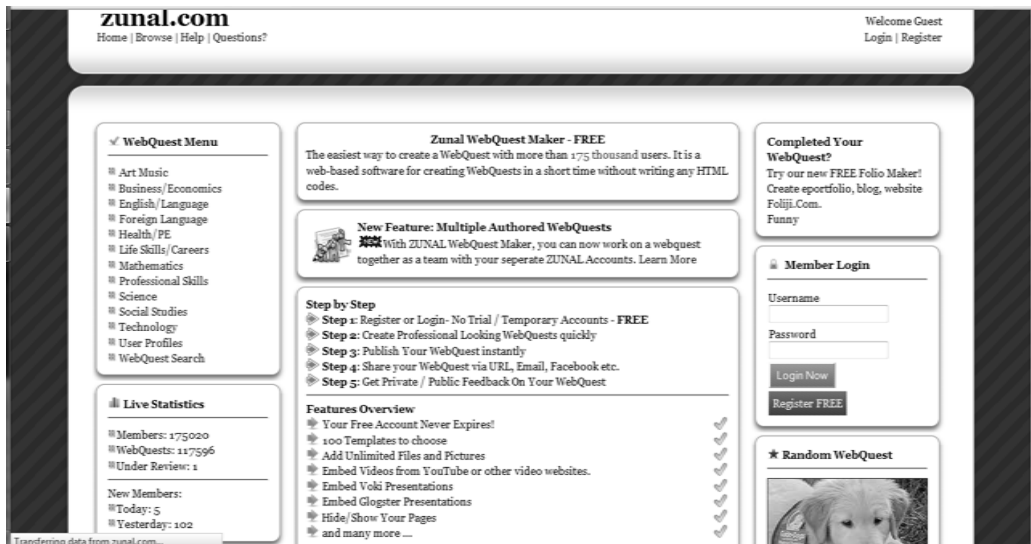
1. An **introductory** set of stages providing some background information.
2. A **task** that can be carried out and interesting to be accomplished.
3. A set of resources needed to complete the task. Many (though not necessarily all) of the sources are embedded in the WebQuest document itself as links to find information on the web.
4. A description of the **processes** learners go through in accomplishing the task. This process should be broken down into steps that are clearly explained.
5. Some guidance on how to manage the obtained information. This may take the form of guiding questions, or directions to complete organizational frameworks.

In a WebQuest, children seek tools to find information. In this activity, children are given a task of making a decision to do something. Children (with the guidance from their teachers) must gather information from the Web, organize information, make some argument and then make a decision. Focusing on how the Web provides the learning is how children can find information on the Web for this activity. Specifically, the focus is on information searching patterns.

Making Webquest

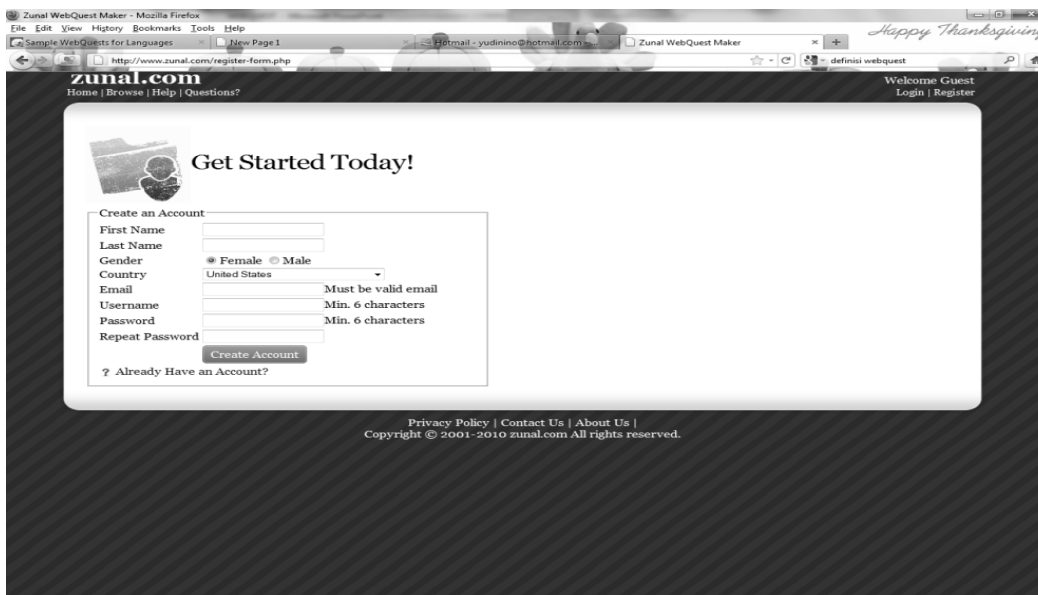
At this time, the workshop participants are required to open the site to create a WebQuest: www.zunal.com to register.

Figure 1. www.zunal.com



Participants must register in advance by entering the first name and the last name (it is allowed to use a nick-name), sex, nationality, e-mail address that is still active, and finally, password (must be memorized for login). Figure 2 shows to register in www.zunal.com to get a free account in making WebQuest.

Figure 2. Registering at www.zunal.com



After getting an account, participants will be invited to make (create) a WebQuest. WebQuest parts in zunal.com is as follows:

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	FUNCTION
TITLE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lays the foundation for the topic of study. -intrigues students and raises some interest in learning about the topic of study
INTRODUCTION	a description of the topic/task will be given to children	
TASK	Containing details of a given task	describes what students will accomplish
PROCESS	the steps to accomplish the given task	gives clearer understanding to children when doing the task
EVALUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can be a rubric or scoring guides for assessing student/group performance. - teachers may use ones already on-line or may develop their own 	Assesses children for the tasks performed
CONCLUSION	summary containing the activities that have been implemented in the WebQuest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - brings closure to the study. - reminds students what they have learned and possible - extends the learning by suggesting future "quests."

Conclusion

Learning using the Internet and the web will further explore the potential of children in developing a deeper understanding of the issues investigated by obtaining and processing the information gathered. Children's deeper understanding can result in higher-order thinking skills such as problem solving and critical analysis. One model of learning using the Internet and the Web is WebQuest created by Bernie Dodge of San Diego State University in the United States in 1995.

WebQuest is beneficial to children as, according to some experts, it helps children sift through the website and thus focus on using information rather than seeking to build information and academic literacy by engaging them to draw conclusions that are not only reported but are explored. WebQuest parts can generally be displayed in the Title, Introduction (background), Task, Process (procedures in doing TASK), Evaluation (evaluation by teacher to children after performing the task), and Conclusion. An additional section in the WebQuest is Teacher Page that can be used by teacher to give feedback to the teacher through the advice or fresh ideas and creativity that can be used to create a WebQuest.

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