



SYNERGY AND ENVIRONMENT TO  
EMPOWER DECENTRALISED SCHOOLS

# TOOLKIT GREEN S.E.E.D.S.

## MODULE 5 Seeds for Networking

### UNIT 1 Webquest: an active methodology supported on the web



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### PROJECT

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2. Training of the teachers at local level (1.04.2020 – 31.06.2020)

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## UNIT 5.1

# WEBQUEST: AN ACTIVE METHODOLOGY SUPPORTED ON THE WEB

*"Technology is only a tool. In order for children to work together and to be motivated, the teacher is the most important element" (Bill Gates).*

Active learning methodologies are those which facilitate student participation and involvement, making them the protagonist in their own teaching-learning process. Technology and their applications are authentic learning resources which allow for the development of active learning by facilitating information access and the creation of diverse learning networks and environments. In this context, just as stated in unit 2.3, Project-based Learning is an active learning methodology based around a problem, a challenge, which must be solved. This problem or task can be addressed by using a Webquest.

A Webquest is a strategy which favors active and collaborative work by diverse students and allows one to break the barriers and isolation which schools in

the mountains or on small islands may face. For example, the fact that a classroom has children of different ages and levels may stop being perceived as a problem if they work with Webquest since this can be an opportunity for cooperative learning among peers. Another example is that rural schools are frequently the only cultural center around; nonetheless, the use of technological resources such as Webquest allows one to amplify and expand information access.

Hopefully, by the end of this unit you will know what a Webquest is and how to create one. The goal is that you be able to design and develop a Webquest in accordance with project-based teaching and learning principles.



## 1. What is a Webquest?

Webquest is based on the use and integration of the Internet at school. According to its creators (Dodge, 2001; March 2003) it is a learning-strategy application for guided discovery for students working with Internet resources. WebQuest uses links to essential online resources and presents real and authentic tasks to motivate student research. Webquest is a way to develop Project-based Learning. Students are tasked with solving a previously planned problem, with the aim of being able to establish the bases or foundations for the construction of their own knowledge. Thus, this activity has a dual benefit; Webquest is an attractive learning activity for students since the tasks are doable and attractive, while being a guided-research activity using Internet resources which rethinks the role of the students as well. Students do not use the Internet as consumers, but rather as active information generators.

## 2. What is the Webquest's structure?

A Webquest normally consists of, according to Dodge (2001) and March (2003), of the following, Introduction, Task, Process, Resources, Evaluation, and Conclusion. The elements which make

up the structure, or architecture, of the Seedquest are something like the headings or sections which the teacher must design and fill with content, according to the contents and goals they wish to impart. In GreenSeeds, we have kept the original structural (introduction, task, process, resources, evaluation, and conclusion), but we would like to include new elements we believe are missing from the design of the SeedQuests in this project. Specifically, the inclusion of learning objectives and teaching notes.

Lastly, it should be noted that when a teacher designs a Webquest for their students, it is they who provides content for each of its elements in accordance with the proposal presented below.

**INTRODUCTION.** This section provides the starting information about the topic to be worked on. Its main purpose is to make students interested in the Webquest. For this reason, it is recommended that the language be simple, creative, familiar, and concise and that students be involved.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES.** this is a very important Webquest section since it allows one to talk about the objective one wishes to reach; this way, students know how to approach the task at hand and what is expected of them.

**TASK.** It is the description of what is to be done in terms of the Webquest. In this section, the activity or activities the students must complete are explained in detail, along with the curricular aims of them. In order to formulate the tasks, it is recommended that one keep the task-naming system created by Dodge (2001) in mind. A well-designed task should be attractive and activate higher-order abilities, make the achievement of expressed goals possible, promote knowledge construction, be interesting, clear, comprehensible, important, and promote group interaction.

**PROCESS.** They are the steps which students must take to perform the task, so that they know how to do it. It can include sub-tasks, strategies to use, and a description of the roles which students must adopt.

**EVALUATION.** It is the information on what is to be evaluated and how to evaluate it which is provided to the student. In every case and regardless of the evaluation strategy proposed it must be presented so the that it offers the students specific and formative feedback. A very useful resource for this section is rubrics since, among the many advantages they provide, they clarify what the learning objectives are, and they reduce subjectivity when it comes to evaluation.

**CONCLUSION.** In this section some strategy or process is suggested to students for



Task-naming a Webquest, according to Dodge.

#### WEBQUEST TASK-NAMING

Repetition tasks | Mystery task | Journalism tasks | Design task  
Creative tasks | Consensus-building tasks | Persuasion tasks | Self-knowledge tasks | Analytical tasks | Judgment tasks | Scientific tasks | Collection tasks

Source: <http://www.eduteka.org>

summarizing their experiences and to encourage them to reflect on what they have learned. For example, suggesting questions to answer or debate in class. It is also meant to stimulate reflection on the completed learning process with the aim of being able to apply what has been learned to other contexts.

**RESOURCES.** This is a list of websites or other resources provided to students in order to help them complete the



proposed task. This section makes the online and offline resources necessary to complete the task available to students. It is essential that these be selected beforehand so that they can focus on solving the problem.

**TEACHERS NOTES**, this section is also known other names, such as didactic orientation, teaching guide, teaching unit, etc. This section is exclusively aimed at other teachers who wish to use the Webquest for the purposes of justifying it in didactic and curricular terms. It includes a detailed planning of the teaching guide to execute (objectives, competences, contents, resources, timing, methodology, etc.). For this reason, the

style and contents are slightly different from those seen in the previous sections. It can also include the Webquest's authorship (for example, contact information, school involved, etc.) and the rest of the resources used in the particular Webquest (images, sounds, etc.).

The last step, which should not be forgotten, is to test Webquest. This is the only way one can know if it is working correctly; it is necessary if one wishes to detect errors, make corrections, etc. Later, after it has been put into practice, there is still the possibility of reviewing the Webquest in case any improvements are needed.

## **PRACTICAL CASE**

### **Students research 'Healthy poetry' using Webquest**

Carmen, Mauro, Celeste AND Martin are teachers who make up the school-library working group at their school. During this school year, an educational project on 'Healthy Eating' has been implemented; this includes numerous activities, all of them under the umbrella of different innovative methodological strategies of a collaborative nature.

With this as their starting point, the four teachers wish to collaborate on a Webquest on local poetry, aimed at nursery-school and primary-school students. They have decided to opt for the topic 'Healthy poetry', using Webquest to do so. They wish to work with this resource because they think it represents an active methodology and is an ideal tool for preparing, organizing, tracking, presenting, and evaluating what students have learned. Furthermore, Webquest makes constant communication between peers possible, as well as that between teacher and student. They have doubts about it being a stupendous tool for creating cooperative learning and participative research, in which different children can actively participate and have fun.

Based on the characteristics of students of different ages, educational levels, and interests (students between the ages of 6 and 8), the 4 teachers have designed the Webquest with its corresponding parts. In order to be able to work on the Webquest in the school library, they have organized the students into blended and multilevel work groups, with 4-6 members per group.



Firstly, the Webquest was shown to every group in the library via the digital whiteboard, with its 'Introduction' being read and each group discovering what was expected of them together. Everyone examined what they had to do. Each group was assigned a letter, with each letter being associated with a particular task. Each group had to look for poems which dealt with foods beginning with their assigned letter. Each group internally organized what activities to carry out to ensure their group worked well. The first day focused on reading, talking about, and making sure students fully understood the 'Introduction', the 'Process' to follow, and the 'Learning Goals' set out in the WebQuest. Afterwards, there were 6 weekly sessions during which each group went to the library to work on their 'Task', researching the poems associated with their assigned letter, consulting the 'Resources' offered by Webquest. On the last day of working with Webquest, each group should the research they had done to the other groups. This work plan finished by reaching a consensus as to the 'Conclusions'.

In the proposed case, as can be gathered, the Webquest has been a very interesting and highly satisfactory activity. It has allowed them to reach the objectives set out at the beginning. The proposed tasks have been completed without any

problems, as the comments made by the students to the teachers show. From a teaching standpoint, we can say that this resource has meant the development of higher cognitive abilities since students had to search for, analyze, synthesize, comprehend, share information, etc. The fact that work was done in multilevel teams has facilitated student collaboration and support. Furthermore, for the teachers who designed and promoted the Webquest this experience has served to improve and diversify their teaching, allowed them to test out new types of group work, and has encouraged student participation. According to Mauro: *"The WebQuest resulted in us working together with teachers, and with other students. This is why it has been a doubly-satisfying experience."*

### 3. How to put it into practice?

When designing a Webquest we should firstly decide what we wish to design, taking into account its target audience, duration, topics to be covered, etc. To do so, we propose keeping in mind 5 rules proposed by Dodge (2001), known by the acronym **FOCUS**:

## FOCUS

*Find great sites*

*Orchestrate your learners and resources*

*Challenge your learners to think*

*Use the medium*

*Set high expectations*

There are a series of resources which can help you to design a Webquest. These include:

**Webquest generators**, whose design is based on templates or format types. These templates follow the structure formulated by Dodge (2001), and March (2003), and are stored on the web itself. Generators include, for example, Webquest Creator (<http://www.webquestcreator2.com/majwq/>), WebQuest.Org (<http://webquest.org/>), 1,2,3 Tu Webquest (<https://www.aula21.net/Wqfacil/webquest.htm>).

**Website builders**, such as Google Sites (<https://sites.google.com/>), Wix (<https://es.wix.com/>), Weebly

(<https://www.weebly.com/es>); whose design is based on templates which can be personalized according to the Website to be created. In this case, there is greater liberty in terms of design and its storage on the web itself.

**Professional software**, such as Dreamweaver or Publisher, which facilitate the creation of a unique and different Webquest. Each person has total freedom when designing it. Nonetheless, the teacher must obtain a domain so the website can be hosted.



## DO IT IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Choose a topic to work on with your students and design a Webquest following the structure and steps explained above (Introduction, Learning Objectives, Task, Process, Evaluation, Conclusion, Resources and Teacher Notes).

You can use as a resource those seen in Unit 4.2. to communicate to students the purpose of the Webquest you have created. Said Webquest should be the result of small, multilevel work groups.

## REFERENCES

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## TO LEARN MORE

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