

Technology as a Teaching Tool: Using WebQuests to Integrate Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom

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Introduction

- Technology in the classroom: Fact and Fiction.
 - Well-known advantages (infinite resources, time-saving, appealing to students...).
 - BUT
 - Danger of overuse/misuse/abuse:
 - “[O]nline learning can contribute to the student’s learning, but much depends on the learning environment, pedagogical materials, and tasks” (Blake and Delforge 131).
 - “If you are going to attempt to use technology, either use it right or don’t use it at all” (qtd. in Nike 163).

WebQuests I

- Origin: Bernie Dodge, 1995.
 - Strong points
 - Teaching method: ideal for a task-based focus.
 - “ ideal of engaging higher-level thinking skills” (Dodge 7).
 - Creativity.
 - “A great WebQuest asks students to do things they might not ordinarily be expected to do” (Dodge 58).
 - Independent learning.
 - Cooperation.
 - Interdisciplinary approach.
 - Holistic process.

WebQuests II

- Drawbacks:
 - Risk of overexposure.
 - Technology-related issues: malfunctioning, bad connections, unexpected problems...
 - Complex to implement at the university level.
- Parts of a WebQuest (based on Dodge's model):
 - Introduction.
 - Task.
 - Process.
 - Resources.
 - Evaluation.
 - Conclusion.

Culture vs. culture

- **Culture (Capital “c”)/surface culture:**
general or formal knowledge.
- **culture (little “c”)/subjective culture:**
less tangible aspects.
 - Challenging.
 - Appealing to students.
 - Real-life situations.

Integration of culture

- Usually neglected:

“Among the three major components of the curriculum (language, literature, and culture), the greatest amount of time is still devoted to the grammar and vocabulary” (Lafayette 47).

- Solution: integration.

An example of integrated culture

- Spanish negative and indefinite expressions with integrated culture.

¿Hay **alguien** en casa?

No, _____

(No, **no** hay **nadie** en casa)



A WebQuest Model

- Mafalda y el mundo (Mafalda and the World).

<http://questgarden.com/62/60/4/080318090609/>

- Comics as a way to convey culture:

“They indirectly convey information reflecting cultural specificity”. (Berwald 100)

- Why Mafalda?



Application I

- Your institution: feasibility, limitations, advantages, disadvantages...
- Your students: topics of interest, dislikes...
- Culture in your class: what, how, when...

Application II

- What cultural ideas/topics are possible to relate to this comic strip?



The floor is open for...

- Questions
- Ideas: for WebQuests, integration of culture, technology use...
- Concerns
- Suggestions

Works Cited

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