Three branches of government webquest

Erica Lian Corioso

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THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT WEBQUEST

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Instructional Technology

by
Erica Lian Corioso
March 2007
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Date Mar 6 07
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ABSTRACT

The regard for internet technology in the classroom grows each year. Students and parents alike are increasingly using internet to do everything from retrieving driving directions to downloading books, movies and music. As a medium, the internet is undeniably powerful and growing in its influence. As this occurs, other mediums of communication are losing their popularity with the populace. This study aims to apply the medium of the internet to social studies education in the primary grades. Specifically, this project centers on the research, design, testing and implementation of a WebQuest on the Three Branches of the United States government.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my professors at California State University San Bernardino, especially, Dr. Baek for helping me get through my last few classes and finishing my thesis while I was pregnant and thereafter while raising a newborn.
DEDICATION

This entire thesis could not have been possible without the love of my husband, Ken. He is truly, the smartest man I know and a great writer. He helped me greatly when I had doubts during the writing process. I would also like to thank my “little man” Joseph who was born in the process of completing my thesis. I love you both so much!
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CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND

Introduction

Social studies in the elementary curriculum suffer from two ills. First, social studies, from a curricular perspective, has been viewed as being far less important than math and language arts when examined through the lens of institutional testing. Teachers have been under great pressure to meet curricular standards. When faced with the decision to meet the curricular demands of math and language arts or provide adequate social studies instruction, practitioners are inclined to choose the former. The second challenge social studies faces is that the typical medium of social studies instruction, weighted in favor of textbooks, has been rapidly losing its appeal to younger generations of children that are increasingly bombarded with visual stimulation. This project was designed not to challenge the emphasis on social studies, but instead to provide practitioners the medium in which to make a lasting educational impact on a new generation of elementary students in the social studies curriculum. This chapter serves as a synopsis of the project that will provide this much needed solution.
Statement of the Problem

A problem with primary grade curriculum is that there has been much less emphasis placed on Social Studies than other subjects. Curricula revolve around standardized testing. The areas that schools most heavily test for are math and reading. Children lose valuable information since they are not allotted the same time for learning history as they are other, more "important" subjects such as math and language arts. This has been problematic as many students lack elementary social studies knowledge. Children do not recognize that they are learning history in most cases because teachers do not allot a definite time for the subject matter. History is sometimes thrown in at odd times throughout the day whenever core subjects are completed. Unless teachers prepare activities to go along with the readings, students may not retain the information that they are being provided.

Purpose of the Project

The general purpose of this project was to enhance the retention of social studies curriculum via internet technology. Specifically, this project involved a WebQuest about the Three Branches of Government. In general a WebQuest is designed to use instructional design and
technology to improve the quality and effectiveness in the teaching of specific content. Students learn more by using inquiry-based learning through hands-on activities. Exline (2004) explains "that inquiry implies involvement that leads to understanding. Furthermore, involvement in learning implies possessing skills and attitudes that permit you to seek resolutions to questions and issues while you construct new knowledge" (p. 1). The idea is to improve classroom instruction and retention of knowledge through the use of instructional media. A WebQuest is one way to improve student motivation in the curriculum which in turn improves retention.

Significance of the Project

There has been a great disparity in both the quality and quantity in research weighted far more in the favor of math and science. The significance of this project was to show that social studies not only has applications in internet technology but that the implementation and use could be simple. Also, the significance could only be fully understood in contrast to existent WebQuests that have been created to date. There were numerous WebQuest available. However, few were specifically related to individual units in social studies text. This project was
applicable to specific social studies and most importantly, was rigorously standards based. This project could be shared with teachers all over the globe with the click of a mouse.

WebQuests have intentional and unintentional benefits. A WebQuest fills a kinesthetic need that is growing within the youth. Children respond to the interactive nature of a WebQuest with positivity as opposed to the growing reluctance to learn from textbooks alone. Another intentional benefit has been that a WebQuest provides answers to questions that are readily available and up to date. Moreover, a WebQuest would be available to higher grades for the purpose of reviewing the curriculum and to lower grades for advanced instruction. Some of the ancillary benefits would be equally impressive. Chief among these benefits was the economy of a WebQuest. Once designed, they only need to be updated for a few reasons: to enhance their aesthetic appeal and to link new websites to the pages if current sites have been changed or deleted. Otherwise, the World Wide Web serves as the economical counterpart to printing a new edition of a textbook. Children also learn the responsible use of the internet. Lastly, when students find pleasure in interactive learning they themselves
place pressure on teachers to provide instruction in social studies.

Limitations

During the development of this project, a number of limitations were noted. These limitations are as follows:

1. The main limitation was using adults to test the project instead of using students. The choice to use adults in place of students was made due to limitation number two.

2. Another limitation for this project was time. There was limited testing time because the design and development of the prototype was being completed during the time that teachers were preparing their students for State testing. Teachers were not able to give as much attention to detail to the project as would have been preferred.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they apply to the project.

ADDIE - ADDIE is an acronym for the instructional design stages. A stands for analyze, D stands for design, D
stands for development, I stands for implementation and E stands for evaluate.

**WebQuest** - An inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that students interact with comes from resources found on the internet (Discoveryschool.com, p. 1).

**Inquiry Based Learning** - It is a way for students to learn through involvement and hands on activities.

**Rapid Prototyping** - The creation of a working model of a software module to demonstrate the feasibility of the function. The prototype is later refined for inclusion in a final product (Dictionary.com).

**Summary**

Educational technology is evolving to meet the needs of changing social and cultural demands. A webquest; specifically the one created for this project, could fill a great need in this day and age as it pertains to social studies. It is clear that social studies have been deemphasized in the curriculum. What is more, social studies have typically been presented in a medium considered "old hat" by most students. Therefore, this WebQuest could offer what seems to be a perfect solution to the present generation. Additionally, this WebQuest
could offer unintentional positive benefits: they are economical and provide up to date information. While these benefits seemingly solve a serious problem, there were limitations of the study, namely, the primary use of adults as test subjects and the limited time devoted to beta testing.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There is a vast amount of research on the subject of web-based learning and academic achievement. The literature in this review is divided into three sections, namely, the literature regarding social studies and technology use, the literature on WebQuests and their uses and the last section reviews the literature regarding what constitutes quality design in the instructional design phase and technology integration.

Social Studies and Technology Use

Social Studies in the classroom have historically been taught through rote memorization. "Unfortunately, history is not always taught to elementary students as a problem-solving activity" (Fertig, 2005, p. 1). Social studies has been taught historically almost as archival research. Children are asked to memorize in sequential, chronological order a large quantity of facts and then regurgitate them on command. However, in research, many scholars point out the limitation of traditional teaching methods and suggest new guidelines.
Ediger (1998) provides some great guidelines for teachers in hopes to change students' views on the subject and student learning. There are three guidelines that Ediger (1998) state that teachers need to have in order to develop a quality social studies curriculum. The first guideline is that teachers need to teach their specified curriculum so that it captures learner interest. The second is the need to provide meaningful learning experiences for all pupils. Third, teachers need to guide pupils to perceive reasons for learning. These guidelines seem quite simple to follow, however, not all teachers teach this way. If students "experience meaning in ongoing lessons...they are able to retain for a much longer period of time content achieved in the social studies" (Ediger, 1998, p. 4). To further support his claim, Ediger continues on to list traits of what good social studies teachers do that ineffective teachers do not. The traits are as follows:

1. Strive hard to secure and maintain interests in ongoing lessons and units of study.

2. Use different teaching strategies and materials of instruction to engage learners entirely in the instructional process.
3. Accept all pupils as having worth and value in the curriculum.

4. Care for the achievement and welfare of each learner.

5. Are responsible persons who prepare well for teaching each day and are able to implement quality instruction.

6. Have a good knowledge of social studies curriculum development.

7. Participate actively in diverse kinds of inservice education activities.

8. Learn from other teachers involving a community of learners, such as in the teacher’s lounge, before school, after school, and other suitable times during the day and week.

9. Possess positive attitudes toward inservice education in its many forms.

10. Appraises the self to determine areas of teaching social studies that need strengthening (p. 4).

The use of technology will facilitate teachers to adopt other activities rather than memorization to their daily lesson planning.
There are reasons why technology is not being used as it should be in social studies. Risinger (2002) comments that schools and teachers are still refusing to accept the advantages of using technology like the internet regularly and effectively. Moreover, others, like Braun (2002) argue computers should be used as a means in exploration, not an end. Furthermore, Risinger (2002) points out that we will "gradually see increasing use of the Internet and other technology, in social studies..." (p. 188). However, Risinger believes that there needs to be "changes in the educational structure to push...force...drag...teachers at all stages of their careers into using more technology" (p. 188).

It is important to promote responsible use of technology in classrooms. Bennett (2005) states that "performance indicators for the use of technology in the social studies classroom help teachers put the principles into practice" (p. 38). There are five performance indicators according to Bennett:

Indicator one is to model and teach legal and ethical practices when using technology. For example, teachers can do this by analyzing the benefits or drawbacks of extensive use of technology. The second indicator is to apply technology resources to enable
and empower diverse learners to use technology. Third, teachers should identify and use technology resources that affirm diversity. This means to review hardware, software and Internet sources and choose what is appropriate based on the needs of students, the curriculum, the classroom environment and usability of the technology for lifelong learning. Indicator four is to promote the safe and healthy use of technology resources and indicator five is to facilitate equitable access to technology resources. (p. 39)

Berson (2002) claims that "...new developments are contributing to a dynamic modification of technology integration in which the classroom becomes a site of active learning and thinking, fostered by the technological resources available" (p. 160). Sumrall and Schillinger (2004) agree that it is "logical for teachers to use strategies that allow students to learn in an environment with which they are already familiar" (p. 3). However, Bennett (2005) adds that "the development level of the students, their grade level, and their classroom setting partly determine the guidelines and expectations for student demonstrations of performance" (p. 40).
Bennett (2005) explains that students in social studies classes can now "write letters or e-mails to social, environmental, or political representatives to respond to issues that they found on the online sites of organizations, newspapers or primary source documents" (p. 40). In addition, Berson (2002) states that "students may access data and receive up-to-date information from top researchers in any area of specialty..." (p. 160). Bolick (2002) describes that with technology, the "ability to connect teachers and students in geographically disparate locations is truly an amazing activity for social studies classrooms" (p. 184). Bolick makes comments on the subject:

Teachers and students now have the possibility to be connected via videoconferencing, email or web-conferencing to engage in discussion with experts and scholars, to share multiple perspectives on a variety of issues, to work collaboratively to learn and solve problems, and to share data. (p. 184)

Technology in social studies classrooms now allows students to locate information that might have been hard to find in the past. In addition, "although names and dates of battles are still an important part of the history, the stories of people who lived in the 1800’s
provide more intimate details of what life was like back then" (Lipscomb, n.p.). Street (2005) ends the discussion on technology and social studies by stating, “the volume of information available to students continues to expand at a feverish pace...now they must equip students with the thinking, research, and technological skills necessary to locate and evaluate the myriad online resources that surround them” (p. 42).

Webquests

The most widely used and accepted definition of a WebQuest is “an inquiry-oriented activity in which most or all of the information used by learners is drawn from the Web” (Dodge, 1995, p. 1). Peterson, Caverly, and MacDonald (2003) add that “WebQuests are instructor-created websites that set up a problem or task for students to accomplish and guides their work with specific web-based resources, individually or in teams” (p. 38). WebQuests also use links to the web to “motivate students investigation of an open-ended question, development of individual expertise, and participation in a group process that transforms newly acquired information into a more sophisticated understanding” (Lipscomb, 2003, p. 1). It is important to
research how to ensure well-written WebQuest demands as well.

According to Dodge (1995), a WebQuest should at least contain the following components to be considered effective and successful:

1. The introduction announces the topic and gives the learners some background information.
2. A task that is doable and interesting.
3. The resources are the links to information learners will use to accomplish the task.
4. The process explains how learners are to accomplish the task. It should be broken up into little steps.
5. Some guidance on how to organize the information acquired.
6. A conclusion that brings closure to the quest, reminds the learners about what they’ve learned, and perhaps encourages them to extend the experience into other domains. (p. 1)

Adding to what Dodge said, March (2003), states:

John Keller’s ARCS Model of Motivational Design has provided a reasoned approach to increasing students’ willingness to expend effort in their pursuit of learning. In order to be a “real” WebQuest, it should
pass the ARCS filter. Does the activity get students' attention? Is it relevant to their needs, interests, or motives? Does the task inspire learners' confidence in achieving success? Finally, would completing the activity leave students with a sense of satisfaction in their accomplishment? (p. 43)

The research studied on the subject of WebQuests agrees that these six components are minimally necessary to create an effective WebQuest. Yoder (1999) adds that along with these components "teachers also must consider their students' interests, prior experiences, and reading and skill levels" (p. 6). If a teacher keeps all of these elements in mind when creating a WebQuest, it should be a very well-designed project.

WebQuests can have many uses in the classroom. Peterson, Caverly and MacDonald (2003) comment on how they believe WebQuests should be used and suggests the four ways to best use a WebQuest. The first use of a WebQuest can be to introduce a new unit in the classroom. Next, let children become familiar with vocabulary, pictures and other information before using core material. Peterson, Caverly, and MacDonald (2003) also stress the importance of exploring these applications in order to provide meaning to the unit. Another way they believe WebQuests can be
used is in inquiry. "A WebQuest can help students learn to ask good questions about things, thereby apprenticing them to the intellectual stance of academic literacy" (Peterson, Caverly, & McDonald, p. 38). The third way is to make it problem-based learning. During this type of use, students "investigate a problem in the local or larger community and present their results to inform others or pose solutions (Wiggins & McTighe qtd. in Peterson, Caverly, &d McDonald, 2003, p. 39). The last use that Peterson, Caverly and MacDonald (2003) suggest is to create student-centered WebQuests. Creating a student-centered WebQuest will allow students to "quickly see the power of identifying a meaningful problem, crafting guiding questions, and selecting key websites" (p. 39). Yoder has similar views to Peterson, Caverly, and MacDonald, yet touches on two areas to determine student achievement.

Yoder (1999) states a different and quite simpler use for WebQuests. WebQuests can ask students "to analyze a variety of resources and use their creativity and critical-thinking skills to derive solutions to a problem" (p. 6). This is a good suggestion because students need to become more creative and critical thinkers in school.

MacKay did not comment on the educational aspect of usage
but rather the functional use of it. MacKay (2003) states "WebQuests are designed to use learners' time well by focusing on the use of information rather than the search for it" (p. 32). Nowhere did MacKay comment about the actual educational use of WebQuests.

Benefits that come out of using WebQuests in the classroom are endless. Most researchers listed the benefits but no two articles contained the same benefits. Yoder (1999) includes that "WebQuests can add spice to a lesson and direct a more responsible use of the Internet" (p. 6). Students are also able to "take virtual trips to places like Germany" (p. 7). Virtual trips are extremely beneficial to those students who have never traveled. They are able to witness large amounts of data including what other parts of the world look like, what others speak like and dress like. Yoder also adds that WebQuests can "sparkle the imagination by triggering the imagination through a trip in outer space, a journey back in time and many other unique adventures" (p. 8).

Instructional Design

Over time, there have been many developments that guide the design process. "The history of educational technology illustrates that new tools and approaches are
continuously proposed as solutions for educational problems" (Elen, 2004, p. 68). It is important to understand the historical development of criteria that researchers have generated in an effort to define quality design. Researcher’s views on the topic vary, making it crucial to maintain a comprehensive understanding on the subject. Elen (2004) argues “that in order to be more useful and more influential, instructional design must meet the following four conditions included in the Instructional Design Anchor Points” (p. 67). Instructional Design Anchor Points, hereafter referred to as IDAP, include “a clear description of the IDAP under study, the presence of a clear conceptual framework, a deliberate consideration of complexity and last, a realistic perspective on improvement and implementation” (Elen, 2004, p. 67). Elen indicates that “in order for an IDAP to be studied correctly it must also have been designed, developed and implemented” (p. 68). Elen is one of a few authors that recommended a project be developed and implemented before the final product is released. Hence, Elen proposed Alpha testing before final rollout.

There is another, more popular model that agrees with Elen’s model in many ways. According to Surry and Ensminger (2004), the ADDIE model refers to five important
phases of instructional development. ADDIE stands for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation (p. 503). The ADDIE model includes analysis in the beginning and evaluation in the end, so, it is clear that Surry, Ensminger and Elen had the same idea about what constitutes a quality design.

Wilson (2004) has views that are more open to interpretation. There are no strict guidelines as in Elen, Surry’s and Ensminger’s research, however, Wilson focuses more on the challenges that a designer would face rather than stating absolute steps to follow. Wilson (2004) believes that designers must “deliver products efficiently, usually at some sacrifice to quality and creativity, establish consistent set of self-standing resources and to adhere to best practices, known models and research on learning and instruction” (p. 78). Wilson (2004) also departs from Elen and Surry in that he believes:

Designers need to design and develop many items ahead of time before having them be adapted by participants as they engage in learning activities. Such items could include “the interface, the page and screen design, the interaction and navigation, the learning activities, the assessments. (p. 78)
Another article by Shambaugh (n.d.) maintains similar views as Wilson. Shambaugh argues that there are necessary preparatory steps to take before the design process. Shambaugh comments on how difficult it is to decide on design options before selecting an approach. The advice Shambaugh gives is to perform Rapid Prototyping. Rapid Prototyping is defined as “designing an early version with just enough resources, test it out with users and revise...” (Shambaugh, n.d., p. 26). Shambaugh varies from Wilson and agrees more with Elen, Surry, and Ensminger on the matter of reflection. Shambaugh stresses the importance of instructional design as “an intentional activity in which reflection on design decisions plays an important role” (Rowland, Parra, & Basnet, 1994, ctd. in Shambaugh, n.d., p. 26).

The goal of instructional design is to enhance student learning. The author that most clearly enhances student learning through design is Wilson. Wilson expresses an opinion that many other researchers agree with. Wilson (2004) claims that “instructional design has been about designing stimulus materials to guide learning activities, which in turn leads to attainment of targeted learning outcomes” (p. 77). Designs, then, must properly address the learning outcomes and guide student learning.
Research indicates very positive outcomes of instructional design if done correctly. Learning through web-based environments is an effective way for children to stretch their knowledge base. Wilson (2004) comments that "designers and instructors typically control what students initially see...but the students themselves respond to those resources through collaborative action, individual study, and various meaning-making and inquiry activities" (p. 79). The purpose of a WebQuest is to accomplish these goals. Students have the opportunity to work with other students part of the time, work independently and they can also get much more information from the WebQuest than they can from a single social studies textbook. Moreover, it is much more intriguing for students to learn from WebQuests.
CHAPTER THREE

PROJECT DESIGN PROCESSES

Introduction

Chapter Three documents the steps used in developing the project. Specifically, the ADDIE process was used for this project. ADDIE stands for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation. The first section of the ADDIE process was the analysis section. This section included a needs analysis that described what the overall problem was and how it was to be solved. The second part was the task analysis that covered the content of the project and the students' jobs. Lastly, the instructional analysis covered what was to be learned by using the project in the classroom.

The second section of the ADDIE process was the design section. The objectives were stated and listed on how they would be met. Also described were the steps to design an effective WebQuest. Next, the design process included the goals of the project and steps to get the project done.

The third section of the ADDIE process was the development phase. The development phase explained what academic information was on the WebQuest including
pictures and illustrations. Also, a major part of the development phase included what software was used, what fonts, colors, layout and navigation system were used.

The fourth section of the ADDIE process was the implementation phase. The implementation phase lets the reader know if the project has or has not been correctly implemented yet. In this case, full implementation has not yet taken place.

The last section of the ADDIE process was the evaluation phase. In the evaluation phase, the question of if the problem had been solved was answered. Also, what was the impact of the project and if any changes needed to be made and what was done.

Analysis

The WebQuest created for this project was designed for third grade students. This was a logical choice as the researcher teaches third grade and was motivated to learn to help the people they serve daily. In particular the researcher’s class is in need of more instruction regarding the United States Government. The WebQuest will also be available to the third grade team as well as any other teachers whose class might benefit from the information provided. Prior to forming the content of the
WebQuest a focus group of elementary school teachers was formed to thoroughly review the curriculum and standards regarding social studies.

To better serve third graders a focus group with all of the third grade teachers at the researcher's school was conducted. The group concentrated on two things. First, the group examined their general ideas regarding what they believed students needed to gain out of the project and second, they examined the specific ideas related to the U.S. Government aligned with the California State Standards.

One standard of social studies that third grade students need to know is the branches of government, their functions and responsibilities. The California state standards for this particular unit are as follows:

3.4 Students understand the role of rules and laws in our daily lives and the basic structure of the U.S. government.

4. Students will understand the three branches of government, with an emphasis on local government.

It is important to teach across the curriculum, so the other standards that students will have learned are:
1.0 Writing Strategies: Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

Research

1.3 Understand the structure and organization of various reference materials

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

1.5 Organize ideas chronologically or around major points of information.

1.6 Provide a beginning, middle, and an end, including concrete details that develop a central idea.

The teachers that were recruited for the focus group were also to review the prototype of the Webquest. The teachers that will review the prototype will check on many things. The first thing they check will be to see if the information is correct and aligned strictly to the standards listed. Second, they will check to see if the WebQuest is easy to navigate around. Third, they will check to see how appealing the WebQuest will be for
students to want to work on. Finally, the teachers will check to make sure the rubric I created will work well with what will be asked of the students.

The project was intended to supplement the unit on the three branches of government with researching their functions and responsibilities. In order to know if the objectives have been met, there was a rubric posted under the evaluation section of the WebQuest. There are five sections from which the students were being evaluated from and students were able to look at the rubric from the beginning to determine if they were staying on task with what was asked of them. After determining the objectives and determining how they would be met, it was important to think of the overall design of the WebQuest.

Design

The project was designed specifically to supplement augment? The third grade social studies textbook. In order to design a WebQuest efficiently, there was background research that had to be done first. Research required intense reading of the California Standards for social studies for third grade. Making sure all of the standards were covered was of utmost importance. The project covered
two sections of the third grade social studies standards and also covered standards in writing and research.

After making sure standards were covered, the enjoyable part of designing the WebQuest came. Each task of the project has a specific goal in mind. First, students were put together in groups. Grouping students is important at this early of an age because they need to learn how to work cooperatively with each other and resolve issues on their own. Second, students were required to choose a branch of government that they wanted to research. Again, this comes down to working together to make decisions that would best benefit their group and end project. Third, students were required to research their designated branch to find out as much as possible about it. They were provided with a list of ideas to research along with many links to help them get started. This part of the task was significant because of the research they had to do.

Students needed to first think of topics to research and then follow those ideas up with navigating the web to find that information. This would be the most difficult part for most of the students. After navigating the web and visiting various sites for information, students were required to bring their research back to the group. The
next task for the students was to narrow down their information they received from researching and make it concise for the rest of their group. That part was important because each student had so much research that everything could not be explained without the students becoming overloaded with information. After all the research was completed, the students prepared themselves for an interview.

The way the WebQuest was organized with all of the above information was taken into consideration. First, it was organized into categories. Each category had a specific goal in mind. Examples of each category including first, an introduction, which is a mini abstract telling the learner who they are and what the objectives are. Second, the task tells the students what they will be doing and why. Third, the process explains each step of their task in detail. Fourth, the evaluation explains a rubric that the teacher will follow to grade the work. There are five sections that the students will be graded upon. Lastly, the conclusion explains an extension activity. As an extension activity, each student was required to write an article for the Washington Post to wrap up everything they learned. By the time students completed the WebQuest activity, they will have had plenty
of information from the book, class discussions and the activity to write their paper.

Development

The way in which the WebQuest was developed was a critical factor in ensuring its success. The main components to the development were the overall structure of the WebQuest, the navigation, content and layout. There were many different software programs that could have been used in developing this WebQuest, however, Dreamweaver was chosen for this project because it was available and the developer had prior familiarity with the software.

Navigating on the web can be difficult at times. Since the WebQuest was developed with third graders in mind, the navigation would need to be as simple as possible to ensure its proposed outcome. After looking at the different WebQuests available, it was decided to develop the Webquest with the categories organized on the side instead of the top center (see figure 1). The categories on the side had a cleaner look to the page. The navigation was done as easy as possible since many students at school were not too familiar with computers.
There were three different fonts used for this project. The reason to have three different fonts was to distinguish between the content the students would be looking at. First, the introduction, task, process, evaluation and conclusion were written in Times New Roman, font size 18. It was also done in bold. The reason Times New Roman was chosen was because it was a nice and clean font that students were used to seeing on the computer screen. The second type of font was used on the headings. The headings needed to stand out more than anything else.
on the page, so Arial font was used, size 18 and bold. Arial is a little thicker than Times New Roman so it catches the audiences attention but still looks similar enough to Times New Roman to not contrast too much. Lastly, for the content, Courier New font was used, size 12. Courier New font is similar enough to the other fonts but has a distinguished look to it that makes it look like typewriter font, a font that is rarely seen on the web. Overall, it was preferred that the fonts would not look too different from each other since they would be side by side on the same pages. All three choices, Times New Roman, Arial and Courier New were similar enough but just a bit different for users to notice the contrast.

Another key factor in ensuring the success of the WebQuest was the color scheme. A connection to government was desired. The obvious choice was to use red, white and blue— the colors of our nation’s flag. At first, some experimentation was needed with different colors to best determine readability. Since a template was developed for each page, it was easy to use the three colors. Blue was chosen for the background color since it was the boldest of the three. The writing was put in white because it contrasted nicely with blue and was easier to read than red writing. Red was chosen to act as an accent color for
the borders (see figure 2). There is just enough red to accent but not take control of the page.

Your evaluation will be based upon how well you and your research team took notes on the three branches of government. Also, you will need to make a brief presentation to the class on what you learned with an outline of what your article will include.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginning 1</th>
<th>Developing 2</th>
<th>Accomplished 3</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating a research team</td>
<td>You were able to create a research team but had difficulty choosing which branch to research</td>
<td>You were able to create a research team and comfortably chose a branch</td>
<td>You were able to successfully choose a research team and smoothly chose branches to research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding research on</td>
<td>You found a good deal of</td>
<td>You found so much</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Screenshot of the Use of Colors

In order to save designing time, templates for each of the subtopics (task, process, etc.) were used. This was done to keep the consistency among all of the pages.

Placing graphics relative to the content of the writing enhances students’ enthusiasm for learning the subject matter. Studies show that students become more
engaged in a project that appeals to them right away. This could be done by a variety of factors. Illustrations and pictures were chosen to grab the students' attention with keeping in mind to design without using exact images due to copyright laws. The majority of the pictures came from Microsoft Office Online which is a source of extensive clipart. The WebQuest was filled with pictures associated with the task at hand. For example, the homepage had a unique picture of a tree with three branches representing their project. The introduction had a desk sign that read "President" below the text. The task page had a picture of the executive, legislative and judicial branch in the form of a diagram explaining what each branch is known for. The conclusion page had a picture of a newspaper representing who the students were working for and that they would be writing an article (see figures 3, 4, & 5).

Figure 3. Screenshot of Introduction
Implementation

Simple training of staff to explain the objectives and value of the WebQuest will still be needed in order to implement the project and have it used as intended. If
time is allotted, two teachers will be chosen to run a mock project to confirm the WebQuest will run smoothly for both teachers and students.

Information regarding the use of the WebQuest will be provided. Such information will consist of timelines for each part of the project and an overall timeline for the unit. Teachers will need to prepare themselves for the project as well as the students with the subject matter. A general preparation list will be provided. A large part of the implementation process will be to provide guidelines for the use of computers. All teachers run their classroom differently, so guidelines will be provided for those who wish to learn how to effectively use their classroom computers.

The unit on government has passed for this year, so the project will be designated for future use. The implementation of this project will not be until the 2007-2008 school year.

Evaluation

Alpha testing, beta testing and user feedback were the critical factors in evaluating the project. Alpha testing occurred during a course with colleagues and consisted of many findings. The majority of the findings
were associated with text font and templates used. The text font was said to be "too hard" to read at length. This was quickly changed to be a more kid friendly font. Regarding templates used, the borders were changed to fit the size of the webpages better.

Beta testing was used to determine usability of the prototype. After the beta testing was completed, the project was reposted on the website and user feedback was then used. The type of feedback was given through a short questionnaire after navigating through the WebQuest. The questionnaire included questions that made sure the standards and objectives that were listed were met. Third grade teachers and history teachers were the evaluators of the project.

According to the questionnaires, the standards were met along with the objectives set. All evaluators said the evaluation part of the WebQuest was clear and concise and that the students would be able to know what their grades would be if they followed the rubric. Evaluators also commented on the fact that it was aligned directly to the state standards. Other positive comments included the fact that respondents liked the color scheme immediately. Another evaluation will occur when the project has been fully implemented and results are given.
Summary

Creativity and knowledge of subject matter and technology was a large part of developing each step in the ADDIE process. First there is a needs analysis done to explain why a supplement such as a WebQuest is needed for students in social studies. Second, the design phase, the most time consuming phase, was the most creative part of the process and most rewarding when completed. Knowledge of technology was important during the development phase. General rules about navigation, content and layout were important to know and follow. The implementation and evaluation phases are just as important but included people other than me and feedback from them to complete the sections.
CHAPTER FOUR
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to develop an online supplemental activity for students to use along side the textbook that would help them retain information in an interactive and memorable way. Conclusions were drawn after completing the project and recommendations are made to further enhance the project.

Conclusions

The conclusions extracted from the project are as follows.

1. This project was challenging and engaging to develop. A lot of time was put in to it to make sure that it was standards driven and easy enough for the students to complete on their own yet challenging enough to make it worth completing. Although the project should have been rewarding in of itself, the reward for me was posting it on the website and seeing it being used and tested by my colleagues.

2. During the completion the project, I realized that time was of the essence. There was much
more time involved with the testing of the prototypes than first realized. I thought that I could closely manage when the evaluation of the WebQuest would be done but emergencies and other unpredictable things occur.

Recommendations

The recommendations resulting from the project are as follows.

1. The project will be much better served when both teachers and students are able to use the technology to further improve their retention of social studies content.

2. Training sessions would benefit teachers that are unfamiliar with technology and or WebQuests. The sessions would be held to explain the purpose and objectives along with benefits of implementing this supplemental activity into social studies.

3. Future research should be directed at testing the efficacy of WebQuest as they pertain to positive educational outcomes.
Summary

The project serves as a supplemental online activity that is intended to increase student retention of the subject matter through an interactive activity. It is important to remember when developing a WebQuest that the developer considers the needs and abilities of the target audience. Training sessions will be important in schools that do not integrate internet technology effectively. Although developing such activities as WebQuests can be time consuming and somewhat challenging, the outcomes are great and WebQuests should definitely be implemented.
APPENDIX A

CD OF PROJECT
CD MOVED TO BACK OF BOOK
APPENDIX B

EVALUATION OF THE WEBQUEST
Questions regarding the prototype "Three Branches of Government"

___ Check here if you were able to complete the WebQuest.

___ Were the standards clear for you in the project?

___ Was the information correct and aligned strictly to the standards?

___ Was the navigation easy for you as a teacher to complete the project?

___ Would the navigation be easy enough for your class?

___ Did the WebQuest have an appealing look to it?

If so, what did you like about it? ____________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

___ Was the rubric well designed to fit the task?

Please comment on anything else you liked or disliked about the WebQuest.
REFERENCES


http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/rapid_prototyping


