2.1   Sections of a WebQuest

A well-designed WebQuest, as most authors agree, should include six elements. First, there is the **introduction** to the WebQuest, where teachers write an engaging statement to get students acquainted with the overall themes that the WebQuest will develop. The introduction can feature a historical background, factual information about the theme, or other ideas that help students learn what they will be doing later. After the introduction, there is a description of the main **task** that students (in teams; WebQuests were not designed for students to complete them either independently or individually) have to work on in order to complete the WebQuest. The most common configuration for the task is for each student to take on a role "that helps a team of learners investigate an issue from more specialized perspectives" [15]. The task must describe what they will do and what the end product will look like. Once the task is set, students will begin to work on the different steps and activities that will ultimately lead them to complete the task. Each of these steps will appear on the **process** page. Each of the steps of the process should combine individual work moments with group meetings to share and discuss their findings. Also, each step must include looking for information in carefully-selected websites. These websites comprise the **resources** for the WebQuests. Although one can have a separate page for them, it is customary to embed all the resources in the process page. However, in the case of English Language Learners [22], where additional language support resources are both necessary and important, it is up to the teacher to place these resources within the process page or have them in a separate page. There should be another page devoted to the **evaluation** of the WebQuest. For this evaluation, students need to create a rubric [23], [24] for the different features they intend to check in their students' production for the task. Finally, there is the **conclusion** page. In this page, the teacher will write some final words to highlight the accomplishments obtained through the completion of the task. The conclusion can also feature follow-up information or further readings and websites student can check to learn more about the subject.

Structure of a WebQuest

A quality WebQuest contains six basic elements (Dodge, 1997). Nevertheless, the actual layout may feature either six (Chatel & Nodell, 2002; Halat, 2008; Polly & Ausband, 2009; Sox & Rubinstein-Ávila, 2009) or five (Schweizer & Kossow, 2007; Vidoni & Maddux, 2002) sections: *Introduction, Task, Process, Resources, Evaluation,* and *Conclusion*. Whether one builds the WebQuest with five or six sections ultimately depends on how one displays the resources, as we will explain below.

Introduction. The introduction features an engaging presentation of the background, scenarios, and other relevant information that leads students into the work that they will do later. Ideas for the introduction may include historical data, facts, and other contextual information. One needs to remember, however, that the goal of the introduction is to capture students' attention and interest. Therefore, the *language* one uses is just as important as the information one presents.

Task. Once students are more aware of the general topics and themes of the WebQuest, they will find out what they are supposed to do to complete it. The proposed task should be "authentic, interesting, and doable" (Manning & Carpenter, 2008, p. 49). One very common way to present the task is to give students a specific role (LoParrino,

2005), since WebQuests are conceived as team activities where each individual will contribute to the successful completion of the task. When creating the task, we suggest following these questions, "Could the answer be copied and pasted?" and "Does the task require students to make something new out of what they have learned?" (March, 2007, p. 15)

      Process. Once the task is set, students will have to complete smaller activities or assignments along the way. When designing the process, keep in mind that every step of the process must help complete the task and the activities should combine individual work with small- or whole-group spaces. However, remember that the activities should not let students divide the assignments at the beginning, meet at the end, and never have to work together (March, 2006).

      Resources. A well-crafted WebQuest might fail if one chooses subpar resources from the Internet. Teachers should rely on their expertise and already developed critical thinking skills to provide good examples of what the best websites look like. Although finding the appropriate resources could be a time-consuming endeavor, it is important to remember March's (2000) assertion that "finding apt links on the Web can excite students to further study, support individual interest, reveal concerned online communities, and connect students to real-world topics" (The Teachable Moment, para. 1). Resources should provide enough information to complete the task. In the context of second language learners, this information, which one would consider a source of scaffolding (Wang & Hannafin, 2008), may include online dictionaries and thesauri, grammar sites, information about writing, and any other learning tool that may help students with their tasks.

      In our experience, embedding the resources within the process page of the WebQuest is the best choice. However, the teacher, based on what might work best for

his/her students, should make the final choice. In some cases, it might be more useful to include the primary resources (i.e. information to complete the tasks) in the Process section and place the language support resources on a separate page.

Evaluation. Students need to know what teachers expect of them as they work on their WebQuests. Here is where the evaluation page becomes handy. In this page, teachers will include a clear rubric (Andrade, 1997, 2000; Whittaker, Salend, & Duhaney, 2001) that features what criteria teachers will use to assess the products of the students' tasks.

Conclusion. This section may include some words of encouragement for completing the task, follow-up information to expand on the different themes from the WebQuest, or any other relevant information that the teacher wishes to share with his/her students.