Md7060 Language Learning and Technology   **Unit 2: task 1**

Student cohort = 21
Total postings in thread = 47

Task : **Creating a Web task**

Message no. 15
Agent post = T; target post = GS
Posted by **Diane Slaouti (md7060)** on Monday, September 26, 2005 2:36pm
Subject: Creating a Web task
For this discussion forum thread we'd like you to reflect on how the Web tasks you
have explored in Unit 2 may apply to your own learning context and learners and
create a task accordingly. You can choose any one of the three task types.

In relation to your task design, think about some of the issues raised in this unit.
We have looked at issues regarding autonomy and strategy use. To what extent would
your learners respond to a task that requires them to control their own access to the
Web? Might your role as a teacher consist in giving initial guidance in strategy use?
Diane, in her description in the PDF overview (page 8) of using the WWW and CD ROMs
with EAL children in schools in the Manchester area, describes a scaffolding process
where the learners worked in the contained CD ROM environment, before moving out to
the Web. You may feel that your learners would need that sort of scaffolding of task.
Discuss these issues in relation to your Web task.

Obviously, we would like you to share any Web tasks you create with other students
via the discussion forum. You may however, simply wish to discuss some of the issues
raised in this unit and, if so, we would be equally please to read those.

Elements	Categories	catCode	Instances
Cognitive presence in posting	Triggering event	**cte**	
	Exploration	**ce**	
	Integration	**ci**	
	Resolution	**cr**	
Social presence in posting	Emotional expression	**see**	
	Open communication	**soc**	
	Group cohesion	**sgc**	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	**tim**	
	Building understanding	**tbu**	
	Direct instruction	**tdi**	

Message no. 135
Agent post = T; target post = GS
Posted by **Diane Slaouti (md7060)** on Thursday, October 27, 2005 4:18pm
Subject: Moving on ...
What a wonderful set of accounts of technology in context under topic 1! I'm trying
to digest all the situations but there is an excellent range and already some common
denominators.

If you haven't already moved on to this topic, I'd encourage you to do so. It already
links to various points raised in your reviews of technology in context. various have
mentioned web use and reading development work. Here we really want to explore what
this means in an increasingly digital world. I hope you find the readings stimulating
and also the tasks you explore. Don't forget that these are exemplars. Try to stand

back from the content and see what implications there are for your own learners. Some might be useable as they stand; others will need various additional elements no doubt to make them fit younger learners, self access contexts, ESP or adult learning, a different language level. But if you do have ideas or try any out or have already designed anything similar, I hope you'll be able to share observations.

There is a thread for this exchange but also we'd welcome thoughts on notions and challenges of digital literacy.

Looking forward to reading you all
Diane

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Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	**tim**	
	Building understanding	**tbu**	
	Direct instruction	**tdi**	

Message no. 142[Branch from no. 15]
Agent post = S; target post = GS
Posted by **xxx** on Tuesday, November 1, 2005 1:33pm
Subject: Re: Creating a Web task
Hi everyone

We were invited to reflect upon our own teaching context and create a web task subsequent to the reading and reflections we've been asked to make in unit 2.

Please find attached a web task I made, which relates to a topic (entertainment) and particular language area (more advanced comparative structures) in a book I'm currently teaching from. The task involves learners reading album reviews of a recent album from 3 different sources. Then writing their own customer review of an album of their own choice on the Barnes & Noble shopping website. It's meant for an upper intermediate class.

I chose this kind of task because I felt the internet here might provide an opportunity for real, authentic language use and purpose; in terms of an actual, authentic context for using this language, but also as something I could imagine learners actually wanting to do in their everyday lives (ie reading reviews of an album before buying it and perhaps writing their own customer review).

I've actually never written a web task before, so I tried to to follow the structure described by Dodge ie. introduction, task, process and evaluation stages. It's meant as a short term web quest, perhaps one lesson followed by written homework, and in the terms described by Brandl errs on the side a 'teacher-determined' approach - pre-selected readings, tasks and prompt questions meant to guide learners through the on-line material, as well as specific language suggestions for how to write a review. I chose to scaffold the task in this way for a couple of reasons; the learners in my class are unused to this kind of activity and perhaps need to be trained to the subset of web reading skills and critical strategies described in unit 2. I felt

otherwise, particularly when considering the type of websites learners would be visiting, there was a definite risk of cognitive overload and aimless wandering. Also, the readings are quite tough (it was actually hard to get round this problem).

Still I tried to frame the task and process stages in such a way as to encourage certain learner reflections on what they were reading, following the seven 'habits of mind' outlined by Brunner and Tally and included in the article by Coiro, that is a more critical engagement with the text.   Furthermore, I tried to integrate a stage of information exchange during the reading part in order to encourage a collaborative element to the learners endeavour which Chambers mentions as perhaps an important source of negotiation and reflection on the text.   I tried to take note of the point made by Dudeney and Hockly in their description of webtasks, that learners are not simply regurgitating information but transforming it in order to accomplish a given task - in this case whether the album sounds good enough to buy or whether they need to find out more and how they would decide. Comparison of texts may, as Brandl notes, encourage more critical reading skills, and I felt this may be accentuated by using three texts that came from relatively different perspectives. The fact that the customer review is, perhaps against stereotype, is a little more balanced than that of the music journalists (which are usually regarded as more credible) might be interesting in this regard.

The evaluation, I tried to frame in the tips on writing a review in the final part of the process, but also in terms of the 'rules' and 'notes for writing a review' page of the website in question itself.   This would give the task a less arbitrary evaluation and realistic sense of purpose completion.

I haven't used this lesson yet, we haven't reached that unit, so if anyone has any suggestions to improve it I'd be really happy to hear from you.

📎See Attached

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Social presence in posting	Emotional expression	**see**	
	Open communication	**soc**	
	Group cohesion	**sgc**	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	**tim**	
	Building understanding	**tbu**	
	Direct instruction	**tdi**	

Message no. 149[Branch from no. 142]
Agent post = T; **target post = SS**
Posted by **Diane Slaouti (md7060)** on Friday, November 4, 2005 1:18pm
Subject: Re: Creating a Web task
Thank you for posting this **xxx** - a really interesting 'working through' of the webquest idea.

Some things came to mind as I browsed through and these may be accounted for better knowledge about the learners themselves.

Are they likely to know Coldplay well? I felt I might give them a bit of a taster and activate schema a little by getting them to link to the clips first - you could

direct them and get them to formulate their own opinions about the music, even thinking about how they might describe it first before reading someone else's review?

One concern I sometimes have with webquests is that the 'schema raising' stage that will help access the authentic texts may need a little more attention - this isn't a criticism of your webquest at all - just my musing as I had a look at the sites they would be going to.

There is also some really challenging vocab in places too - but also very motivating no doubt to a teenage group perhaps who might ant to learn how to review modern music.

You're right to think about the scaffolding for the writing task and the look at the 'rules for review' is a great way to get them thinking about the genre. Maybe a little more analysis of an example would also help this stage. You've nicely integrated the webquest and writing output and again sometimes I feel that we need to insert a little more preparation for that output into the overall model. I'll no doubt come back to this when we think about writing and technology:-)

I take on board your comments about evaluation - that stage of the webquest framework can be either a bit 'vague' or a bit deflating but the self evaluation aspect does pick up on the metacognitive level of being aware of challenges and emerging strategies.
Anyway thanks so much for this - I'll see what others might like to add and hopefully look forward to other examples too:-)
best wishes
Diane

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Message no. 158[Branch from no. 149]
Agent post = S; target post = GS
Posted by**bbb** on Friday, November 4, 2005 6:47pm
Subject: Re: Creating a Web task
Thanks for posting this up **xxx** - I've felt quite inspired by the idea of webquests and have been thinking about them all week, which probably makes me sound a bit sad, but I see huge potential for them with our EAP students in what we call 'project class' – this is basically research and extended writing skills. They usually write their projects individually, but I think it would be great for them to do their first one as a collaborative 'webquest' project, especially as the students do loads of reading online now anyway. I'm impressed by all the helpful resources (ideas, guidelines, templates) created by Dodge and other keen advocates. It's just too bad that loads of it requires web-based software, even to use the templates, and also much of it is designed for primary school kids! Still, lots of ideas.

Anyway, I really liked your idea - great for teenagers.

One of the aspects of Webquests I like is the creation of specific roles within the group - less potential for the dominant one to take over and the quiet one to have a snooze. But it's also got the element of a role play but a bit more real – they're not just pretending, because they really do have to take on the role assigned to them in order to fulfil their task within their group, and then it's similar to a jigsaw reading activity the way it all has to come together.

So, rather than each one just reading a website each, I was trying to think about whether your group members could have a specific role, in addition to the reading task. So I thought that after they had finished the Coldplay part, they could then scan some other reviews to help them build their own language bank before writing their own review? For example, one of them could be the 'phrase detective' – or you could have a 'positive adjective detective' and 'negative adjective detective', noting down useful language that could be used or adapted when they write their own review. But I remember that you didn't want them to get too overloaded… and I realise that this would have to be scaffolded in itself… with support from you, or with dictionary work, etc.
bbb
(I have started writing a webquest, but I'll probably take ages, I'm not speedy).

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Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	**tim**	
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Message no. 192[Branch from no. 142]
Agent post = S; target post = GST
Posted by**ccc** on Monday, November 21, 2005 9:25pm
Subject: Re: Creating a Web task
Hi

I'm a bit late with this, but seeing that I'm not the last (or am I?!!!) has given me a push to get things moving. Since **xxx** beat me to the music angle, I decided upon the topic of cinema, which also appeals to me. The webquest would be done in probably 2 lessons, with an introduction to cinema vocabulary done at the beginning of the first. To introduce the whole topic, I'd show one or two trailers of movies (contrasting a really well known film with a lesser known) and have the students guess the genre, etc.
At the Intermediate/ Upper-Intermediate level I don't really see what language should be focused on as it's more of a lexical focus. Perhaps I could show some structures useful for presentations. I also skimped a bit on the Evaluation part, but I'd be a bit more in depth if I actually used the webquest.
I hope it's a start!
ccc

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	Open communication	**soc**	
	Group cohesion	**sgc**	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	**tim**	
	Building understanding	**tbu**	
	Direct instruction	**tdi**	

Message no. 194[Branch from no. 193]
Agent post = S; target post = SS
Posted by **bbb** on Monday, November 21, 2005 11:53pm
Subject: Re: Creating a Web task
ccc

I like your WebQuest. You're not the last, by the way, I started one about 2 weeks
ago and haven't had time to get back to it since.
I like your use of tables, I think they can be a very helpful way to
organise/simplify a complex task for Ss. What I really liked about your example was
the opportunity for discussion and negotiation in deciding on the films (I think to
agree on 10 is quite ambitious!). Lots of potential for agreeing and disagreeing
along with the need to reach a consensus - it might be nice to include a link to a
language sheet for Ss to revise some useful phrases for this, as well as a reminder
that they must always justify/give reasons for their choices.
bbb

Elements	Categories	catCode	Instances
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Social presence in posting	Emotional expression	**see**	
	Open communication	**soc**	
	Group cohesion	**sgc**	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	**tim**	
	Building understanding	**tbu**	
	Direct instruction	**tdi**	

Message no. 212[Branch from no. 193]
Agent post = S; target post = SS
Posted **aaa** on Thursday, November 24, 2005 9:22pm
Subject: Re: I upload the wrong file! Sorry!
ccc

you did a very good job presenting a webquest dealing with such an interesting
subject! I also liked the idea of using tables. I hope I'll have the chance to have a

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better look at it very soon. Now that I'm aware of what a webquest is I think I'll
start making a collection with all the webquests have seen here:-)
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aaa

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	Exploration	**ce**	
	Integration	**ci**	
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Social presence in posting	Emotional expression	**see**	
	Open communication	**soc**	
	Group cohesion	sgc	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	**tim**	
	Building understanding	**tbu**	
	Direct instruction	**tdi**	

Message no. 161[Branch from no. 15]
Agent post = S; target post = SS/T
Posted by **xxx** on Tuesday, November 8, 2005 3:37pm
Subject: Re: Creating a Web task
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Hi bbb and Diane

Thank you for your really good input.
I liked your idea for role playing in terms of analysing the review examples, Clare.
I was thinking about the necessity of using the examples more as a direct resource
for writing, or to find another example, but without getting bogged down in material
that can often be quite lexically and linguistically complex, and sometimes quite
culturally opaque in its references.   Breaking the task down as you suggested is
a very good idea.
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xxx

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	Group cohesion	**sgc**	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	**tim**	
	Building understanding	**tbu**	
	Direct instruction	**tdi**	

Message no. 163[Branch from no. 161]
Agent post = S; target post = SS/GST
Posted by **ddd** on Monday, November 14, 2005 1:37pm
Subject: Re: Creating a Web task
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Hi there,
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well first of all, I give you credit **xxx** for being the first to initiate this
Webquest task. By the way, and I do not want to sound 'sad' either, but I wish I
could use Webquests and the internet in my classrooms.

At any rate, at this point I can only offer **xxx** minor suggestions to his assignment.
To be honest, I did not give it a whole lot of thought, so I might be 'off-base'
here. Well, first it occurred to me that you might want to start the whole task by
having them review a song of your choice right from the start. This will adhere to
the test-teach method of throwing them in the 'deep end', having them really work
with the target language and internalize the lesson. If they are advanced level
students, then they will be able to come up with a coherent review without prior
help. Besides, from a CLT standpoint we should not be concerned about mistakes at
this point; just about communicating and the students working with the language.
This can be done individually at first and then in groups.

My next suggestion is to present the grammar points you outlined after the students
write their first draft of the review. Again, this is keeping with CLT and the test-
teach method, whereby the students are somewhat 'left in the dark', and your role as
a teacher is to facilitate and teach based on your students' abilities. For example,
maybe the students do not need to refer to your grammar points, because they know
this material already. Maybe they need help in other areas. Many times teachers do
not properly gauge their students' levels before jumping into a lesson, and teachers
end up wasting time as result.

My final two suggestions are to have the students peer review their album critique
and to prepare a power point presentation. Students can practice the target language
more and in an autonomous way if they peer review before handing in their individual
assignments. With a presentation, students can also practice their technological
skills, which teachers are responsible for teaching as well. Then again, individual
presentations cause learners stress, which teachers should also try to avoid. So,
maybe that is not really a suggestion.

Take it easy,
ddd

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	Direct instruction	**tdi**	

Message no. 170[Branch from no. 15]
Agent post = T; target post = GST
Posted by **Susan** on Thursday, November 17, 2005 4:47pm
Subject: Web tasks (Susan's message)
Hi Everybody,

I've just been reading your postings on webquests and I thought I'd put my student

hat back on and pitch in as there's lot's of food for thought here.

I was interested in **bbb**'s point about allocating specific roles as a means of prompting more equal participation. Thinking about the dynamics around web tasks seems an important consideration. The webquest 'Eat at ccc's' (Unit 2, section 3) does allocate specific roles to learners. **xxx**'s webquest has each person in a group of three reading a different review. For both webquests the learners go off and work separately before coming back and pooling information. I'm just wondering how the dynamic of the task might change if learners were working in pairs round a computer during this stage? It may not make much sense with longer reading texts (as is the case with **xxx**'s quest). For 'Eat at ccc's' I can't really see why the specific role tasks couldn't be done in pairs. Particularly with higher level learners or learners of different nationalities might this provide learners with an opportunity to use English to negotiate the task?

I've also been thinking about your comment **ddd** about wishing you could do webquests in the classroom. I know you have little access to technology in the classroom. From your description of your context, it would seem that most of your learners have access to the Internet outside of the classroom. So I was wondering why learners could not do part of the webquest task in their own time? You could set the task up in a lesson, have learners go away and search for the relevant information and complete the task in a subsequent lesson. The Internet does seem to provide significant scope for activities which allows classroom activities and activities conducted outside the classroom to be better integrated.

There are other points I'd love to address but this is already a long posting so I'll leave it there. I'm enjoying reading all your postings.

Best to you all.
Susan

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	Direct instruction	**tdi**	

Message no. 171[Branch from no. 15]
Agent post = S; target post = SSGST
Posted by **aaa** on Friday, November 18, 2005 12:36am
Subject: Re: Creating a Web task
Hi All.

xxx your webquest was a really interesting one and a very good example for many
of your colleagues here to follow in our classrooms too:-)

Although my students don't have the luxury of working on a webquest inside the
classroom still I decided to build one myself having as a goal my students to work on
this project using their PCs at home.

I 'd like to apologise for two things though:
i) firstly because I know that the topic I chose to deal with is a rather 'common'
one but my thought was that since we're studying a unit like this with my students at
the moment in our textbooks ('English Aloud 2',Unit 9,p.64) -why not?
ii) secondly because I feel that my webquest probably won't be a real 'masterpiece'
please I need your understanding:-)

At least I tried!

aaa

P.S. Sorry for this really laaate post but I'm trying to keep a balance between the
course units, my job for the school and my presence at home. Such a difficult thing:-
((((
See Attached

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Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	**tim**	
	Building understanding	**tbu**	
	Direct instruction	**tdi**	

Message no. 175[Branch from no. 171]
Agent post = S; target post = SS
Posted by**xxx** on Friday, November 18, 2005 11:58am
Subject: Re: Creating a Web task
Hi **aaa**

What a fantastic web quest. It looks great, by the way, and put my rather spartan
effort to shame I think. I'd like to read it more carefully when I get the chance, I
just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed doing it.

xxx

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	Group cohesion	**sgc**	
Teaching presence in posting	Instructional management	**tim**	
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	Direct instruction	**tdi**	

Message no. 176[Branch from no. 171]
Agent post = S; target post = SS
Posted by **bbb** on Friday, November 18, 2005 12:18pm
Subject: Re: Creating a Web task
aaa
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This topic is such a great idea for a WebQuest - at the same time as being fun the
students are learning important messages for life about food.  It's a very hot topic
here in the UK at the moment, following lots of media coverage and exposure about the
terrible quality of school meals.  I really like your visuals too! Sorry I've only
had a quick look at it cos I have to get started on Unit 3.
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bbb

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