

WebQuest Project Report  
IT 5110  
Kiffany Lychock

## **Project Report for the Artists of Spain WebQuest**

### **Problem:**

Each semester, I have my students present cultural projects. Many of the students choose to do art for these projects, which they really enjoy as art is a subject that many of my students are very passionate about. However, the problem I see with the art projects is that the students are mainly doing fact reporting about the artist and their paintings. My hope is that they would dig a little deeper to find out how that artist portrays not only the specific time period they lived in, but that the students could connect the art to political and historical movements as well. They seem to enjoy the art itself, but often times fail to connect that art to the bigger cultural picture.

### **Background:**

I am hoping to solve this problem by asking my students to do a WebQuest in which they learn about a variety of artists from Spain. In the WebQuest, I will have the students divided into groups in which they assume different roles. One student will act as a museum curator. This student will be responsible for researching the art itself; in other words, they will discover what genre/period the artist is from, what contributions that person made to the art world in general, and they will also find examples of their most famous works. This student is doing what my students typically do for their culture reports now.

Student two will be the Historian. This student will be responsible for studying the artist through the historical perspective. They will study the time period that the artist lived in, as well as what major world events were happening during that time. They will then need to find ways to connect different works of the artist to the historical events of that time.

Student three will be the Political Analyst. They will be responsible for understanding the politics of Spain during that time period. They will want to learn about any conflicting political ideas, as well as the influence of the rulers and leaders during that time. Many of my students currently fail to make the connection between art and politics. For example, most of the students who research Picasso fail to mention that he was exiled from Spain for painting “Guernica” which was an anti-Franco/fascist painting. They don’t take it to the next step in which they analyze the power of art as a political statement. The Political Analyst would be the person who would be responsible to do this.

Student four will be the Biographer. This person would be responsible for learning about the artist’s life from birth to death. They would find out who they studied with, which artists influenced their works, where did they study and live, etc... This sort of information is currently included in some of the reports that they currently do for me, but only a minimal amount is present. I would like them to be more in depth. Artist are often fascinating people in their personal lives, and I would like the kids to explore what made the artist paint/sculpt/build the way they did.

The following is the description of the project that my students received through the WebQuest:

The Spanish Government has commissioned your team to decide which of the following artists will be given the title of the “Official Artist of Spain”. Your team must decide which artist deserves this honor. You need to think about what sort of impact that artist has/had on Spanish culture, in other words, who best embodies the Spanish people in their Art? You will be expected to research the following artists: Pablo Picasso, Francisco de Goya, Antonio Gaudí and Salvador Dalí. Each student will be given a role to play throughout the investigation. Once you have compiled your information, you will discuss the different aspects of each artist and make a decision based on your discussion. Your group will write a proposal stating why you feel the artist you have chosen deserves the distinction. We will also have class presentations in which your group will attempt to convince the board of governors of your decision.

### **Analysis of Need:**

Because I feel that my students are very good currently at researching facts and information about artists, I would like to be able to have them use this information and compile it into a more comprehensive look at the way art reflects culture and vice versa. I feel that they are missing a lot of connections simply because they do not take the time to analyze the information. I am hoping that the WebQuest will encourage them to make these higher-level connections.

The classes who will be participating in this WebQuest are Spanish Level I-Regular or Spanish Level IB students. Most of the students have a fairly decent base knowledge of computers and technology. They know how to navigate the Web using a browser. Basic computer skills are a graduation requirement at ThunderRidge so most students either

will take, or have already taken some sort of information processing class. Many of the students have had exposure to technology in other classes such as Photography, Newspaper, or Multi Media. We have many different computer labs at ThunderRidge, although most of the labs are used throughout the day for various classes. We do have one “drop-in” lab that has 30 computers that may be checked out for use ahead of time. Most likely this lab is where we will be doing this WebQuest. The good news is that all of the Macintosh computers in that lab are being upgraded to I-Macs fairly soon. (According to our Technology Advisors) The constraints of using this lab currently are that the computers run on a fairly slow connection in comparison to the other labs. I will also have to make sure to sign the lab out for at least a week to give the students adequate time to do their research on-line.

## **Goals and Learner Objectives:**

Throughout this project, **my goal is to have the students work collaboratively to use compare/contrasting methods to analyze the effects various artists had on Spanish culture.**

**The following are the learner objectives for the lesson:**

- 1. Students will learn how to research using the Internet as a resource.**
- 2. Students will synthesize information about different artists from Spain, including historical, political, biographical and descriptions of various art work, and use that information to compare and contrast the effects each of the artist had/has on Spanish culture.**

- 3. Students will analyze the different artists in order to choose one of the four artists as the one who best represents Spain.**
- 4. Students will prepare a written proposal defending their choice using the historical, political, biographical and artistic lenses as proof. They will use comparisons and contrasts to the other artists as well to defend their position.**
- 5. Students will present their findings to the class using some sort of multimedia as a visual aide.**

### **Rationale for Selection of Media and Activities:**

I believe that a WebQuest is the best media to use for this sort of activity because it allows the students to collaborate on a project. Because it forces the students to work in groups to compile information, then analyze and discuss that information, students are in turn using higher-level thinking to work towards a common goal. I have chosen to have them compare and contrast these specific artists because all four had an impact on Spanish culture in various ways. I included Gaudí because he was known for his architecture and sculpture, where the other three were recognized mainly for their paintings. Picasso and Dalí certainly are both more modern painters, but both had very different methods and views of the world. Goya is an older painter who did many paintings for the Spanish Royal Court, but went through significant changes throughout his life in terms of style and message. Because the Internet provides students with the chance to visit various informational sites and research articles, they have the opportunity

to learn about what factors influenced the different artists. They also have the chance to view Web Museum exhibits, for example the Prado or La Reina Sofia museums in Madrid, to see the works of art first hand.

As a part of the WebQuest, I will have compiled a list of resources that my students may use from the Web. I hope to use sites that have links to other reputable information on the Internet. I plan to have at least four different links per artist for the students to use as a starting point.

### **Evaluation and Impact on Learning:**

I implemented this lesson in the fall of the 2004 school year with my Spanish IB class. After my classes had performed poorly on their end of the year cultural assessments the year before, I was hoping to use the WebQuest to increase their achievement on that test as well.

The most difficult part of the implementation was finding the lab space to get my kids the resources they needed to complete their research. I finally had the chance to get them into the open lab for a week in October. This gave the students approximately three hours and forty-five minutes to work in the lab. I think this amount of time was very reasonable; any less would have made it very difficult to complete the project.

I found that by having the students work cooperatively in groups that two of them who don't really do much in or out of class were forced to complete their parts by their higher achieving classmates. Although there was somewhat of a discrepancy in the quality of their individual papers in comparison to the rest of their group, they at least participated

in the activity. I believe that these two students liked the project so much because they were able to use the Internet to search for information. They also appeared to be very comfortable with the blogging aspect of the project.

The individual papers went fairly well for the most part. In the survey my students completed, many of them said that they liked having a specific focus to write about based on their role. I liked this part of the project since it made individuals responsible for their work; in other words, if a student did not perform well on the individual paper, it didn't affect their group grade. Their group grade came from their final paper and presentation.

The final presentations and papers were very impressive. Many of my kids did a very good job of debating with their classmates and actually used research to back up their opinions. My students were also very creative in their presentations; many of them chose to do PowerPoint slide shows, but my favorite was a video that the group from Barcelona put together. They "interviewed" each of the artists (the introduction of their video explained that they had a time machine that they used to visit each of the artists) and asked them why they should be chosen as the national artist. The students also used iMovie to edit the movie and add titles. It was very creative and well put together.

After the presentations were over, the class decided that Pablo Picasso should be named the National Artist of Spain. Of the five groups, two had chosen Picasso, one had chosen Dalí and two picked Gaudí. I think that the group from Barcelona (the one that did the video) made the difference in the votes.

I was extremely happy with the results of this project. My students met all of their learning objectives that were set forth for them at the beginning of the project. The difference in what they learned was what impressed me the most. They were able to

synthesize and evaluate different aspects of culture and to make an educated choice based on research. In the student survey, my students ranked this culture project an 8.5 out of 10 (ten being very enjoyable) in terms of an enjoyable learning experience. When asked why they ranked it that way, they said that they “liked web-based projects”, “liked working in a group”, “thought that the way we had different roles to break things up was good” and they “liked researching more than one artist to get the bigger picture”. When asked what things were difficult, many of them (64%) said that using the blog on yahoo! groups was difficult at first. They also cited uncooperative group members as being a difficulty. Most of them (86%) said that they were given enough time in class to do the research, but would have liked more time to complete the group work outside of class. Based on their feedback, I would like to use “think.com” instead of yahoo! groups next year, and I will give them three weeks after the research week instead of two to complete their projects. I am also happy to say that the majority of my students (88%) passed their cultural proficiency test as well, which was a 23% increase from the previous year. Having my students complete this WebQuest has shown me the numerous possibilities of implementing WebQuests in a foreign language classroom, especially for culture projects.

## **ILT Competencies Met:**

### **Reflective Practice**

#### **1. Take a Systems View**

I met this competency by understanding the context of my work. The culture projects that I was using before I implemented this WebQuest were not effective in terms of large-scale cultural analysis. I understood that by creating this WebQuest that my students would work collaboratively to reach these higher levels of thinking. I also had to design the site with a specific context and purpose in mind.

## **Planning and Analysis**

### **5. Conduct a needs assessment for learning performance or intervention**

I met this competency by creating a project that was designed to increase my students' performance on their cultural proficiency test at the end of the year. My students had performed poorly the year before partially due to their inability to connect art to the larger cultural picture. They were great at reporting biographical facts of the artist, but learned very little about how the artist influenced the larger culture. My students needed to think more critically about art and how politics, history and biographical lenses affect it.

## **Design and Development**

### **7. Apply various strategies and current research and consider local needs and constraints to design activities and experiences for learning.**

While designing this project, I used constructivist theory to design the WebQuest.

Constructivist theory places the teacher in the role of a facilitator who helps the students but encourages them to build upon their own knowledge. I also included a “What do you already know?” activity within the WebQuest to give my students a base knowledge that helped them to start the project. My other job (according to constructivist theory) was to provide my students with the research resources they needed to meet the objectives.

## **8. Design learning and performance products and resources that reflect an understanding of the diversity of learners and groups of learners.**

I met this competency by designing a WebQuest that allowed students to choose their role based on their interests. This project also required my students to communicate in a variety of ways (written, spoken and on-line). It also required them to write group papers, individual papers and to use some sort of multimedia to present their findings.

## **9. Develop products and resources to support learning and performance**

I met this competency by designing this project to learn about culture through a different media-in this case the Web. While implementing this project, I had to take into consideration what my students were previously not learning from the other culture projects This WebQuest was created to support my students’ acquisition of cultural knowledge in order for them to perform better on their cultural assessments.

## **Management**

**15. Employing effective strategies (e.g. team leadership, collaboration, accountability) manage one of the following endeavors: Instructional-Design project, other development projects, facilities such as lab, library or classroom and students, resources such as software collections, hardware, etc., personnel and/or information resources.**

I met this competency by developing a different sort of cultural project that used the Web as its media of communication. I also had to learn how to manage blogs since my students used yahoo!groups to communicate with each other and to turn in their papers. I was also responsible for managing the lab for a week while my students used it to research in their groups.