CALL and Task Based Language Teaching through WebQuest: Challenges and Opportunities[†]

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Teaching English language through the Internet is gaining popularity and momentum as part of Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL). In the present article, a relatively recent English language teaching (ELT) pedagogy using WebQuest will be introduced. Some of the highlights of WebQuest are the adoption of the cutting-edge Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT), nurturing the learners' critical thinking skills, and stretching their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is based on the principles and practices of constructivism. The author developed his original WebQuest website and have been using it to teach English in the present institution, and will critically evaluate its strength and weakness, as well as challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Key words : Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL), WebQuest, Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Critical thinking, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Constructivism

1 Introduction

The use of information technology (IT) is constantly changing the way we relate to others and the world. In English language teaching (ELT), the term CALL (Computer-assisted Language Learning) is an established word and research shows that the first computers used for language learning dates back to the 1950s when mainframes were dominant[1].

Ever since the Internet became available to end users in mass population, it began to take over media of content delivery and communication. In this paper, I would like to focus on how Internet services contributed to ELT. Most significantly, I would like to propose using WebQuests predominantly for Japanese learners of English.

I will introduce what a WebQuest is, how it is used, and its feasibility in this context. A WebQuest named "Off to London!" which was created by the author will be introduced.

Finally there will be a critical evaluation of both the internet services and WebQuests which accounts for the rationale of proposing the Internet as a delivery medium, and the rationale for proposing the use of WebQuests with reference to constructivism. Both strengths and weaknesses of WebQuests will be demonstrated to give a balanced point of view.

2 Assessing WebQuests

2・1 What is a WebQuest?

The concept of WebQuest was developed by Bernie Dodge at San Diego State University in February, 1995. He obtained support from Tom March, the Educational Technology staff at San Diego Unified School District at that time. In addition, he received input from participants at the Teach the Teachers Consortium held each summer who also contributed to further development of WebQuests[2].

The two developers of WebQuest define them broadly and narrowly. Here is the broad definition of a WebQuest:

> A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web[2].

March realised the importance of distinguishing real WebQuests and inadequate ones, and therefore proposed a narrow definition:

> A real WebQuest is a scaffolded learning structure that uses links to essential resources on the World Wide Web and an authentic task 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. The best WebQuests inspire students to see richer thematic relationships, to contribute to the real world of learning, and to reflect on their own metacognitive processes[3].

As can be observed from the definition made by

March[3], WebQuests are gateways which link learners to information on the Internet, and serves as a material to develop their critical thinking skills. An example of a WebQuest which was developed to teach ELT is shown below.

Fig. 1 An example of a WebQuest, "Movie Presentation"[4].

Dodge provides a template for WebQuests, and this example was developed using it[5]. As it can be observed from the example above, a WebQuest is composed of six parts for learners: introduction; task; process; evaluation; conclusion; credits and references page. In addition, there may also be a teacher page which gives instruction to teachers on how to use a WebQuest. I will now cover the six parts in detail.

1. Introduction: This is the eye-catcher where learners find a big question that needs to be solved. Dodge states that, "the purpose of this section is to both prepare and hook the reader[5]."
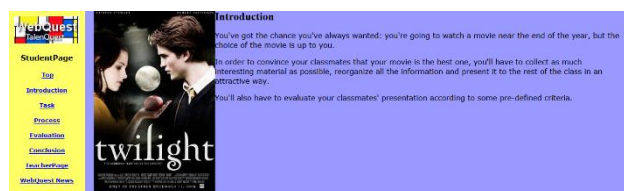

Fig. 2 An example of an introduction page in "Movie Presentation"[4].

2. Task: Dodge points out that this is the single most important part of a WebQuest because learners find out what the goal of the task is, and what the curricular intentions are[6]. Learners should also discover what kinds of output are expected, such as slides, reports, or web pages.
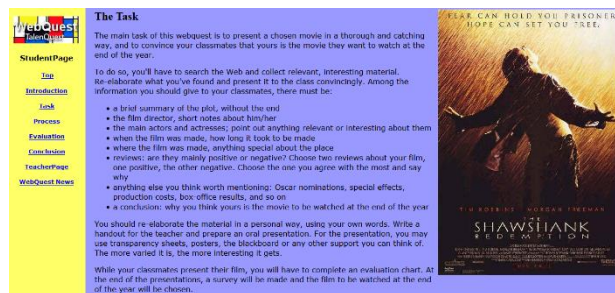

Fig. 3 An example of a task page in "Movie Presentation"[4].

3. Process: The actual steps in order to achieve certain goals are indicated here. Learners are provided with instructions and resources that they are to use, which are predominantly other websites, and in some exceptional cases, analogue materials such as books. Dodge states that "WebQuests are most likely to be group activities.[2]" WebQuests realise collaboration amongst team members and therefore, it is important to specify roles within a team as learners may be motivated by given roles and tasks[2,3]. Smith and Baber point out that it is vital to include scaffolding in this part in order to equip learners for tasks that should be slightly above the learners' second language (L2) proficiency[7]. The concept of scaffolding and its significance will be discussed later in Section 3.2.1.
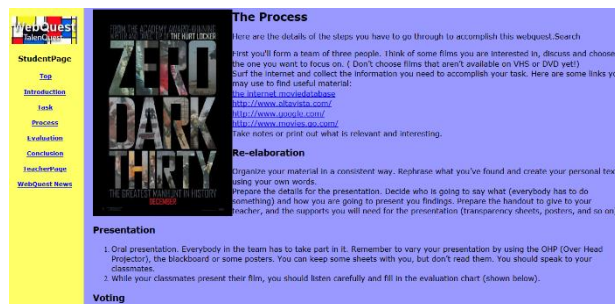

Fig. 4 An example of a process page in "Movie Presentation"[4].

4. Evaluation: Criteria for evaluation will typically be specified in a matrix. It should clarify whether the evaluation is for the individual, the team, or both. Smith and Baber note that evaluating both will often produce the best results[7]. In addition, Dudeney and Hockly point out that the evaluation part fosters learners' self-evaluation which prevents them from losing sense of purpose and significance[8].

Evaluation

Your performance will be assessed according to the following chart.

You will be given a common grade as a team. The teacher will also

take into account the handout as part of the content area of assessment.

Level of performance	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary	Score
Area of assessment	1 - 3 points	2 - 4 points	3 - 5 points	4 - 6 points	Total
Content	Difficult to understand and unclear logical development. Uninteresting and irrelevant information. Weak conclusion	At times not very clear, but on the whole understandable. Presentation doesn't always follow a clear development. Choice of the information quite good. Conclusion is to-the-point but not convincing	Easy to follow, always clear. The presentation flows easily, with logical connection. Relevant, interesting and thorough information. Convincing conclusion.	The presentation is very clear, easy to understand at all times. Text is logically well-tied. Information is complete, relevant and particularly interesting. Inspiring conclusion.	50 %
Presentation	Monotonous presentation, little variety. Rhythm too slow or too fast, imprecise pronunciation, difficult to understand.	Some variety in the presentation. At times pace too slow or too fast, on the whole good speed. Good pronunciation, but some bad mistakes. In general easy to follow.	Varied presentation. Natural pace and intonation. Good pronunciation, few mistakes. Easy to understand and pleasant to listen to	Creative and varied presentation. Excellent speed and intonation, as well as accurate pronunciation. Always very clear an enjoyable.	25 %
	Imprecise or incorrect vocabulary, not	Correct choice of words and grammar, but some avoidable	Accurate choice of words and grammar, despite a few	Accurate and correct choice of words, no grammar	

Fig. 5 An example of an evaluation page in "Movie Presentation"[4].

5. Conclusion: Learners will reflect back on what they have learned, and summarise it by reading this part.

Conclusion

At the end of this webquest, you'll have practised the following skills in English:

- Use the internet to collect information about films.
- Use that information to write your own consistent text.
- Collaborate with other people to prepare a text and an oral presentation
- Make an oral presentation in front of a group of people.
- Evaluate somebody else's work according to given criteria.

Fig. 6 An example of a conclusion page in "Movie Presentation"[4].

6. Credits and references: The developer of a WebQuest page should list sources of images, music, text, books and analogue media that were used, and thank individuals or groups who contributed to the development of the website.

We have examined the definition and basic components of a WebQuest so far. Our discussion should shift to how it is used, especially in ELT classrooms.

2・2 How is a WebQuest used?

A WebQuest is used in a wide range of school subjects such as art, business, English, foreign language, maths, science, social studies and technology[2], but here I would like to limit my focus to ELT. Smith and Baber point out that a WebQuest is useful for ELT when topics cover controversial issues, and also when it is directed towards Business English [7]. Stinson argues that using a WebQuest fostered reading skills in fourth- and fifth-grade classes in the United States[10]. More notably, Godwin-Jones argues that a WebQuest is a useful tool for Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) due to its nature as an inquiry-oriented activity[11].

There are various tasks that can be created using a WebQuest, such as: retelling, compilation, mystery, journalistic, design, creative product, consensus building, persuasion, self-knowledge, analytical, judgement and scientific tasks[6]. For instance, to raise awareness of cultural differences, a teacher can use a judgement task in a WebQuest by asking the learners, "find similarities and differences between British gardening and that of your own culture using resources available on the Internet."

As has been exemplified in the judgement task above, a WebQuest does not allow learners to simply reproduce answers, but instead encourages critical thinking skills[3], [6], [8], [12], [13]. It requires learners to intake inputs and transform them[3], [7], [12].
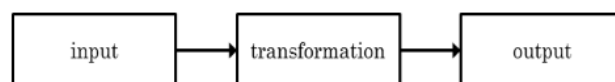

Fig. 7 The three-part WebQuest model[7].

March maintains that if this transformation process is skipped and information is merely replicated, it fails as being a real WebQuest[3]. This is attributable to the fact that a WebQuest is based on constructivism [2], [7], [12], [13]. The relationship between WebQuests and constructivism will be evaluated in depth later in Section 3.2.1.

A short term WebQuest in which learners are expected to intake a significant amount of new information is designed to be used in one to three class periods, whereas a long term one in which learners are expected to intake, transform and demonstrate an understanding of new information is to be used in a week to a month[2]. Thus, I would like to maintain that to maximise the full potentiality of a WebQuest, it is much better to use it for a long term, so as to develop the learners' critical thinking skills.

2・3 WebQuest "Off to London"

I developed "Off to London!" in 2008 to create a fun, practical and relevant Internet based material for the Japanese learners[14]. I thought devising tasks that will introduce the cultural diversity and richness of London will be highly motivating for them. Here is the home page of the website.
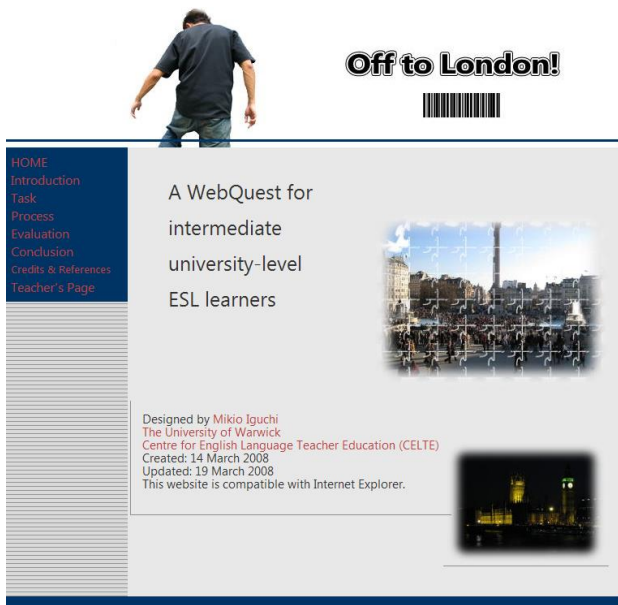
Fig. 8 The home page of "Off to London!"[14]

The structure of the website is based on the template offered by Dodge[5], and therefore it is composed of the basic six parts (introduction, task, process, evaluation, conclusion, credits & references) plus the teacher's page.
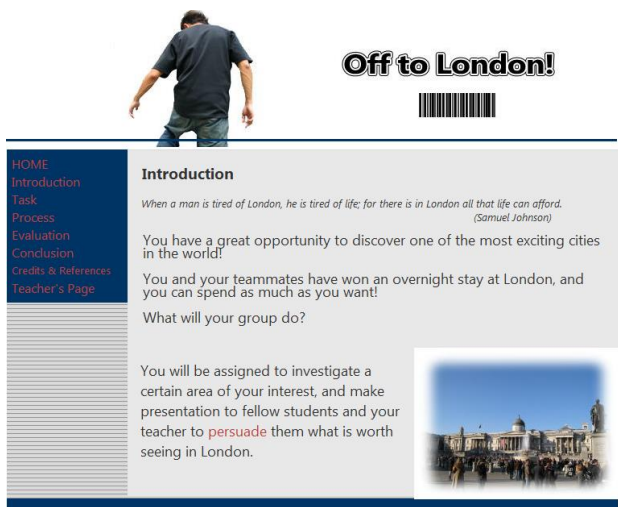

Fig. 9 The introduction page of "Off to London!"[14]

The introduction page uses an eye-catcher which attracts the learners to an overnight stay at London. Implicit here is that they will form a group and will be making a presentation to persuade their peers and a teacher what they value as worth seeing in London. The term "persuade" is linked to an online English dictionary so as to give scaffold to learners, and also to give them opportunities to familiarise themselves with English-English dictionaries, instead of relying heavily on English-Japanese dictionaries.
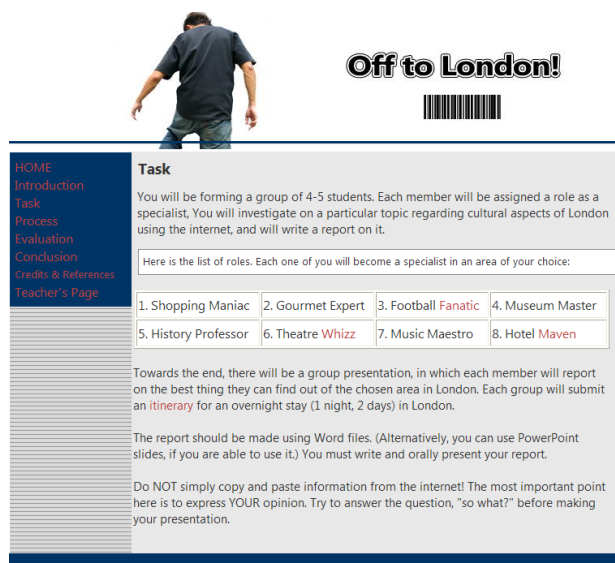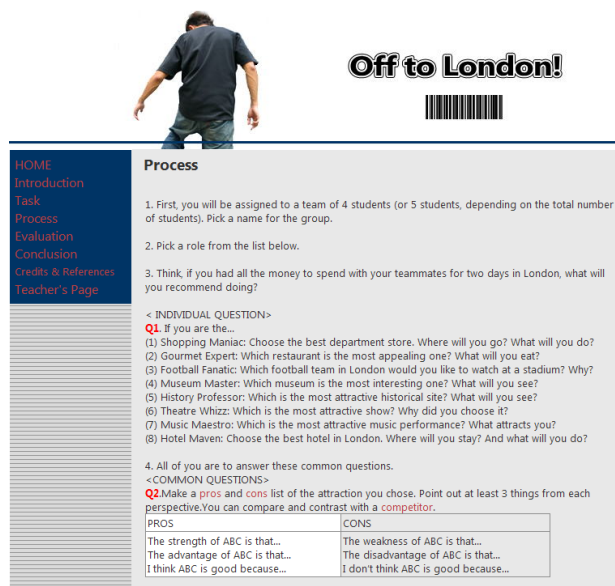

Fig. 10 The task page of "Off to London!"[14]

The task page guides the learners to share roles within the group, which lets them become a specialist to investigate a variety of cultural life in London. More importantly, it gives them a picture of the goal of the task to give a group presentation which involves writing and speaking. It also reminds them not to copy and paste the information from the Internet, but to express their own point of view. I find that Japanese learners need improvement in formulating their own argument which is attributable to the mainstream Japanese education which emphasises reproduction of information given from teachers and textbooks. This is the diverging point where learners are taken away from mere reproduction into TBLT based on constructivism.

Fig. 11 The process page of "Off to London!"[14]

The process page gives them step-by-step instruction and links to resources on the Internet. The questions are directed towards individuals as well as groups, so as to practice individual work functioning as a part of a group work. Learners are given a role, tasks and some scaffold to break down a huge chunk of tasks into visualisable sub-tasks, such as preparing pros and cons list which are all recommended by Dodge[2], March[3] and Smith and Baber[7].

I believe that learners will feel responsible and motivated once they choose a role within a team, because they are delegated full responsibility in a certain area. Using the pros and cons list, and the list which compares the attractions in London with their counterparts in Japan should have two positive effects. Firstly, it frees them from dry reproduction tasks and elevates their tasks to critical thinking tasks. Secondly, the nature of the task should contribute to deeper understanding of British culture because they not only learn about them objectively, but also are required to think and express their own point of view based on their real life experience.

When learners face Question 4 and 5, they realise that they ought to cooperate with other group members. In Question 4, they are expected to agree on the best souvenir and convince the teacher.

Fig. 12 The itinerary template of "Off to London!"[14]

Also all individual works are put together into an itinerary, which should prevent the learning to be solely individual, but to be group-oriented. Learners should have a lively discussion by brainstorming, making assertions, making adjustments and interacting with one another. Ideally, it would be better in English, but I would say that a teacher may compromise if this is done in Japanese, if their language level is not high enough for such interaction. I would delegate this decision to the teachers.

Presentation	Voice is too low. Boring and monotonous. Rhythm is too slow or too fast. Inaccurate pronunciation, difficult to understand.	Fairly clear voice. Some variety in rhythm, but at times too slow or too fast. Fairly accurate pronunciation, but some confusing mistakes. Fairly easy to follow.	Clear voice. Varied rhythm and good pace. Pronunciation is accurate. Mistakes did not affect the message contents.	Very clear, well organised and enjoyable. Creative and varied presentation. Excellent pace and intonation, as well as accurate pronunciation.	25%
Working together (group cooperation and collaboration)	Students did not help one another. The team did not function properly. There was either a member who dominated things and someone who did not do anything. Group tasks were not done.	Students worked individually mostly and there wasn't much collaboration. There were some members who did too much or some who did not do much. Many group tasks were not done.	Good cooperation. Members helped one another. Group task was done sufficiently.	Great collaboration. Each member made outstanding contribution to the whole work. All group tasks were done thoroughly.	25%

Fig. 13 The evaluation page of "Off to London!"[14]

On the evaluation page, the four criteria (content, language, presentation, and group work) are indicated. As Smith and Baber noted that evaluating both individual and group work is vital, the evaluation is geared towards both[7]. The content, language and presentation are mostly aimed to individual work, whereas the group work only assesses the group as a whole.

I would like to point out that the basis of this WebQuest is TBLT. Teachers need to assess the outcome of the learning but this also seems to value only product and hence process, which is a crucial factor in TBLT, is neglected. To compensate for this gap, the process of how learners cooperated with other group members should be assessed here.

Conclusion

Congratulations on completing this journey!

At the end of this quest, you will have gained:

1. Skills for searching the internet, reading updated and authentic information in English.
2. Knowledge of various aspects of British culture.
3. Critical thinking skills to transform data into your own words.
4. Writing skills to produce a report in English.
5. Social skills to cooperate and collaborate with others to produce a piece of work together.
6. Skills for making oral presentation in English.

Fig. 14 The conclusion page of "Off to London!"[14]

Finally, the conclusion page should give learners an idea of what they will have achieved by the end, if they are at the initial stage of WebQuest, or it should remind them what they have acquired after completing the course.

Credits & References

I would like to express my gratitude to WebQuest.org . This website was based on the template for WebQuest.

I would also like to thank Tilly Harrison, since this WebQuest website was developed as a part of the postgraduate course, CALL (Computer-assisted Language Learning) which she teaches at the University of Warwick.

Fig. 15 The credits & references page of "Off to London!"[14]

The credits and references page gives acknowledgement to people and organisation who contributed to the development of the website.

Teacher's Page

This WebQuest was initially created for Japanese university students who learn English as a second language. However, the contents were made so that it can accommodate the needs of various students, especially those who are planning to go to London!

This WebQuest is aimed for those who are around pre-intermediate to intermediate level, but depending on students' needs and teachers' skill, it can reach out to other levels.

Please note that if you are intending to use it for less than three classes, you should use limited parts of this site, so that students can simply intake information and present it. However, mainstream WebQuests and this site are aimed for long sessions which might be a week or longer. This is attributable to the fact that WebQuest is based on constructivist view of education, and the basic requirement is that student intakes new information, transform it, and present it in their own point of view.

For more discussion, please refer to 'Some Thoughts About WebQuests' written by the founder of WebQuests, Professor Bernie Dodge.

Fig. 16 The teacher's page of "Off to London!"[14]

Teachers are given some instructions for how to use the website, but I decided not to impose strict rules in how to apply this website because each context has different needs and features, and therefore I would like to delegate teachers more flexibility and responsibility in how to apply it in their classrooms.

3 Critical evaluation of implementing WebQuests

The most important question here is, "why use a WebQuest for the Japanese learners studying English?" To answer this question, I would like first of all to start with "why use Internet?"

3・1 Rationale for choosing Internet as a delivery medium

CALL is a means to an end. Had it been developed

solely to satisfy the developers' skills, it will not be useful at all. Internet applications are not exceptions in this respect and need to have rationale that abides by principles and practices that have been established within ELT.

Kern and Warschauer point out that the birth of the Internet computing accelerated the use of authentic materials in L2 teaching[15]. Learners were able to collaborate in a project with a common goal, by sharing information on the server, or using computer-mediated communication (CMC) such as e-mails, chat, or blog to interact with one another which they labelled as "network-based language learning".

3・1・1 Advantages of Internet applications over paper materials

I would like to point out the advantages of Internet applications over analogue paper materials. Firstly, information on Internet is relatively new. It is frequently updated and some of them are real-time which is not what paper materials, especially textbooks can attain.

Secondly, information on Internet is vast and virtually limitless, whereas information provided by paper material is limited. This is true in two ways, either a learner accesses information and intakes it unilaterally, or a learner finds another person and interacts with him/her bilaterally. The fact that learners may find someone to interact with via Internet leads to the third point.

Thirdly, learners may interact with a real person in and outside classrooms through the use of Internet via e-mails, chats, social networking sites (SNS), wikis and blogs which promote communication whereas paper materials can only promote communication with others that are normally in the same class. Brown points out that the mainstream L2 pedagogy today is communicative language teaching (CLT), in which teachers are expected to teach authentic uses of the language and to make a shift from teaching knowledge "about" language to teaching how to communicate genuinely, spontaneously, and meaningfully[16]. He argues that technology (video, television, audiotapes, Internet, computer software) can aid non-native teachers to teach CLT so that learners can use the language productively and receptively in unrehearsed contexts[16].

Lastly, Internet allows learners to be immersed in authentic English. It frees learners from artificial, censored and spoon-fed English and lets them dive into a water of real-life English. Warschauer maintains that cyberspace is not a mere virtual reality, but is a real world in which learners can use computers to "read the world, to write it, and to rewrite it[17]".

3・1・2 Advantages of Internet applications over non-Internet applications

I would like to point out the advantages of Internet applications over non-Internet applications using computers. One example is stand-alone applications in which users are limited to resources that are available only on the hard disc and are not connected to a network, and the other is intranet applications in which access to application is limited to users within the same organisation, and hence not shared worldwide.

Firstly, the decisive advantage of Internet applications over stand-alone and intranet applications is that it connects learners to limitless users and resources. Only Internet realises interaction and collaboration with intangible users worldwide and allows learners to access limitless resources.

Secondly, Internet applications save time and money. As long as there is a browser software, there will not be any need to purchase and install extra software on each computer like stand-alone applications. In addition, usage of intranet requires that contents are written and posted on the web server by the organisation that are to use them. Thus, using the Internet saves both installation time and money.

Thirdly, it is worth pointing out that Internet services are providing cutting edge services since 2004 when Web 2.0 gradually became prevalent. The term "Web 2.0" was coined by Tim O'Reilly which points to the second generation of the web[18]. SNS, blogs, wikis and podcasts are examples of Web 2.0 which emphasise online collaboration, user participation and interaction amongst users. March contends that "WebQuests can serve as a framework to integrate Web 2 into school learning[13]". I would like to add that services provided by WebQuest templates do not incorporate features of Web 2.0, but it can be a gateway to provide opportunities for learners to find real-time and authentic information provided by Web 2.0 services such as finding out ongoing debate about political issues on a SNS or a blog, or to find a definition of a brand-new word which cannot be found on analogue dictionaries such as the noun "informania", a term which points to the obsessive act of constantly checking e-mails, SMS or text messages.

3・2 Rationale for choosing WebQuests

We have observed major advantages of using the Internet in ELT. Now we would like to turn to the question, "why WebQuests?"

3・2・1 WebQuests in constructivist framework

Brown defines constructivism as "the integration of various paradigms with an emphasis on social interaction and the discovery, or construction, of meaning" [16]. The rationale of using WebQuests is that learners construct their knowledge, and WebQuests induce it. Teachers are expected to be facilitators than direct-instructors [13]. WebQuests are suitable tools to develop learners' English proficiency based on constructivism. March argues that WebQuests boost their learning from simple information retrieval to higher level thinking [12]. He also maintains that scaffolding used in WebQuests facilitate more advanced thinking by breaking tasks into understandable sub-tasks and hence guiding learners to imitate the higher thinking found in more competent others. Lastly, he contends that WebQuests build an understanding that is relevant to the learners' prior knowledge and builds new schema because they encourage them to obtain information from limitless resources and build up their own point of view. He notes that this was only made possible by the Internet because it enables learners to select information from a huge range of sources which no other media could do.

There are two specific techniques adopted by Webquests that reflect the constructivist nature. Firstly, it uses open-ended questions which allow learners to discover answers for themselves, without being constrained to answer simple "yes" or "no". The process page in "Off to London!" [14] consists of open-ended questions, and have avoided simple "true or false" questions for this reason. March argues that:

> When a WebQuest poses an open-ended question, students must do more than "know" facts. Open-ended questions activate students' prior knowledge and create a personal curiosity that inspires investigation and brings about a more robust understanding of the material [3].

Secondly, WebQuests enable scaffolding, which is a structured support given by more competent others to a less skilled learner. Within the sociocultural theory which can be classified under social constructivism, scaffolding plays a vital role in stretching the language level of a learner to a higher stage, which is known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky defined ZPD as:

> … the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers [19].

Dodge points out that there are three types of scaffolding that can be delivered using WebQuests [20]. The first type is reception scaffolding which supports learners to gather information, to focus on important information, and to organise and retain what was learned [7, 20]. An example of this is seen in Iguchi in which learners can click the link on some seemingly difficult words to read an online dictionary, or to look at relevant websites for relevant information [14].

The second type is transformation scaffolding which supports learners to transform information that was learned into some other form [7, 13, 20]. For instance, WebQuests can facilitate learners to compare and contrast information by providing a pros and cons list, which is provided in the process page in "Off to London!" [14].

The third type is production scaffolding which supports learners to produce something observable that has been digested. WebQuests can provide templates, conventions of some genre, publication or presentation format [7, 20]. Again, this is provided as an itinerary form in Iguchi [14].

3・2・2 Strengths of WebQuests

There are six main points that accentuates the strengths of WebQuests.

Firstly, they nurture learners' schemata in reading [12]. WebQuests challenge learners to process and interpret new information from the Internet and assimilate it. Thus, after experiencing the learning tasks, they can activate the schemata for a similar topic and make different kinds of judgements and decisions.

Secondly, WebQuests facilitate communicative competence. As we have seen thus far, WebQuests are based on TBLT. Brown points out that TBLT puts meaning as the first and foremost, and promotes communication by solving a problem in relationship to real-world activities [16]. Learners interact with their group members, write reports and make oral presentation to convey realistic meaning, instead of practicing unrealistic language forms. Artificial and unreal language might prove useless once learners start communicating in L2. In contrast, WebQuests

let learners use authentic English[11]. Dodge states that "[a] WebQuest that isn't based on real resources from the web is probably just a traditional lesson in disguise"[2]. WebQuests links users to authentic websites which is abundant in real life language, which in turn enhance learners' communicative competence.

Thirdly, WebQuests motivate learners. March claims that WebQuests develops learners' intrinsic motivation because the tasks develop their autonomy, own ideas and imagination[13]. Intrinsic motivation is a choice, persistence or effort that is derived from inner potentialities and latent resources, which is found in people engaging in the activity for its own sake. According to Deci:

> Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake not because they lead to an extrinsic reward.... Intrinsically motivated behaviors are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feelings of competence and self-determination[21].

For instance, in "Off to London!"[14], learners will be researching where they are going, which will enhance their intrinsic motivation because it is real, useful and most importantly, relevant. Williams and Burden point out that personal relevance plays an important role in creating perceived value of activity within learners' mind[22].

The fourth point is, WebQuests foster critical thinking skills[3), 6), 8), 12), 13)]. The tasks do not use a simple quiz in which learners can find answers on the Internet or dictionaries and reproduce them. It enables them to think and analyse, and come up with their own answers. Warschauer argues that "[i]n the online era, to read is to interpret information and create knowledge from a variety of sources"[17]. In this way, learners are encouraged to think critically and propose their idea.

The fifth point is that, learners can learn about culture through English language, instead of learning artificial language forms and merely focusing on accuracy based on imaginary cultural experience. This can be observed in Iguchi[14], and in many other WebQuests that introduce target language culture via Internet.

Lastly, WebQuests promote collaboration amongst learners. Regarding the learning activities of WebQuests, Dudeney and Hockly point out that:

> More often than not, they are group activities and as a result tend to lend themselves to

communication and the sharing of knowledge - two principal goals of language teaching itself[8].

Throughout my own experience, I have known that Japanese are rather collectivistic than individualistic, and therefore WebQuests suit them to enhance their teamwork skills and communication.

3・2・3 Weaknesses and possible difficulties of WebQuests

There are certain drawbacks of WebQuests. I would like to point out seven threats to using WebQuests. Firstly, because it relies on other websites for gathering information, it needs to be constantly maintained so as to avoid a "link rot"[7]. Teachers need to maintain and update WebQuests constantly to ensure that learners are navigated to active websites without clicking on any broken links.

Secondly, WebQuests may not suit low-level learners, paradoxically due to its authentic contents[7]. This is attributable to the fact that most WebQuests are designed for native speakers of English who are learning non-language subjects such as maths and geography. Therefore, embedding scaffolding in WebQuest pages that are optimal to stretch learners' ZPD is essential lest they should lose their motivation tackling on tasks that are far above their ZPD.

Thirdly, because WebQuests are rooted in constructivism, they do not focus on language forms[7]. For learners who want to master forms, it may be an elusive and a frustrating material.

The fourth point is, WebQuests may not suit those who rather work independently since it aims at collaboration. It does not provide opportunities for self-study as Godwin-Jones point out:

> While Webquests foster cooperative learning through guided discovery, they do not generally provide a means for the individual practice of communication skills[11].

The fifth point is, information on Internet is not always reliable. March points out that:

> Whereas an encyclopedia is organized and cross-referenced, the Web is amorphous and chaotic. Whereas the content of an encyclopedia is carefully researched and striving for bias-free presentation, the Web is passionately posted and full of opinions and rarely hidden agendas. Finally, whereas an encyclopedia is written by professionals, anyone can write a Web page[12].

Godwin-Jones points out that Internet provides content full of misinformation and poor language use[11]. Gresham contends that while much of the contents are useful, much more is of questionable

value or accuracy[23]. Therefore, accuracy of content and grammar on the Internet is questionable which is attributable to the fact that they are owned by mass population.

The sixth point is, Japanese learners might avoid using English websites and depend on Japanese websites. This is an expected outcome which I regularly observe among my students in the current institution, but I would say that, even if this is the case, they still have to transform the information to English, write it out and orally present it. Thus, the reading skill may be affected, but the whole activity is not undermined.

And finally, the use of a WebQuest very much depends on teachers' willingness to use it. There may be a risk that teachers might be inexperienced in teaching English using computers, or in worse case, they might have some sort of allergy using it. For instance, Stinson reports that when she made an attempt to introduce a keypal project to increase literacy skills of 9- to 11- year-old learners in the United States, it turned out to be a flop[24]. She reports that main reasons for the failure were because the elementary school teachers were reluctant to allow their learners to work on computers individually, and they opted for the learners to use more traditional dialog journals using spiral notebooks, than using unfamiliar computers. I propose that, in order to implement WebQuests successfully, teachers need to be equally open to use of CALL materials as well as using analogue materials. To resolve such problem, I propose that administrators should train teachers using "A WebQuest About WebQuests" which was created to teach the educators how to use WebQuests[25]. The material is based on group work, like any other WebQuest, so the administrator should organise a session for several teachers to learn how to use WebQuests.

4 Conclusion

WebQuests contribute to ELT. The Japanese learners of English can practice reading, writing and speaking with motivating TBLT that fosters authentic and meaningful communication in English, which is congruent with the prevalent CLT. In addition, their studying can be elevated from mere reproduction of knowledge which is still common in Japan, to higher critical thinking which demands them to transform information and present their own ideas they obtained from a pool of information via the Internet. The scaffolding embedded in the WebQuest such as links to an online dictionary and sub-tasks that contribute to solve larger tasks will stretch learners ZPD to a higher level and will motivate them. The tasks that present cultural aspects of London are expected to be motivating since it is relevant to their experience during their sojourn. And finally, WebQuests promote collaboration which is congruent with the collectivistic nature of Japanese learners.

Nevertheless, it is vital to provide proper training to teachers in order to maximise the use of WebQuests. Also, teachers should make sure that the website is updated properly and that it should link the learners to authentic and updated information. I have highlighted the advantages of cutting-edge ELT using WebQuests throughout this paper, but having said that, I want to emphasise that success or failure depends on teachers. Although computers will not replace teachers, teachers who make full use of computers might replace those who cannot. I believe that WebQuests and competent teachers can bring about numerous advantages to English language learners in this fast-evolving world.

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