

## **FIESTA CELEBRATIONS IN NEGROS ORIENTAL (A Webquest for English II)**

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“Fiesta Celebrations in Negros Oriental” was originally designed as an online project for the e-Learning Club core group composed of 10 selected second year students. This was an offshoot of the lesson on “The Town Fiesta” by I.V. Mallari (English Arts II TX, pp. 5-8). The objectives of the project were:

1. To present a better understanding of our local culture through fiesta celebrations
2. To cover the curriculum areas of research, reading, writing, communications and computer skills.

However, during the workshop on instructional design for Internet-enhanced learning activities conducted by the Foundation in IT Education & Development held in August of 2003, we were asked to re-design our project as a webquest to be undertaken by our regular classes. Revisions were made especially in the number of students involved. From the core group of 10 it ballooned into 300 students more or less belonging to five different sections that were under me in English II. All students have to be involved because the webquest became a regular classroom lesson.

Just as I.V. Mallari said in his essay “The Town Fiesta” that “a fiesta requires prodigious preparations even weeks before the celebration”, so did the making of this webquest. It took me at least two weeks to conceptualize and then

organize my ideas into the final webquest (see [www.geocities.com/kslasola/webquestculturalheritage.html](http://www.geocities.com/kslasola/webquestculturalheritage.html)).

The webquest became a lesson in itself (lesson plan dated October 1, 2003). Learning competencies were added to the two objectives of the project-based activity—that is, for students to learn how to:

1. Prepare interview guides and make write-ups of an interview
2. Make captions for pictures
3. Write different types of discourse: narration (personal experiences) exposition (book reviews) and description (apparatus, objects, etc.)
4. Do self- and peer editing using a set of criteria
5. Write reflections on learning experiences in diary and journal entries.

Values integration focused on taking pride in our cultural heritage while lateral integration included Araling Panlipunan and Art. The webquest activity became the focal point of the lesson procedure which integrated other skills like locating places in the map and enhancing the artistic ability of the students.

Since the students involved belonged to heterogeneous sections where slow learners outnumbered the brighter ones, groups had to be bigger in size (with 10-15 members each), and the brighter students had to be evenly distributed among the groups. Each group in each section was assigned a town/city of the province of Negros Oriental to avoid duplication. Only when groups were formed were students directed to read the webquest found at [www.geocities.com/kslasola/webquestculturalheritage.html](http://www.geocities.com/kslasola/webquestculturalheritage.html).

Each group was to function as a marketing agency promoting Negros Oriental as a tourist destination because of the province's many colorful fiestas. Their task was to look for travel advertisements and travel websites that would help them create an online travel brochure. The brochure will include descriptive essays, geographical map showing the city/town and photos with captions. Furthermore, each group must include a historical background and profile of the city/town, facts about the fiesta celebrations (date of the fiesta, patron saint, purpose of the celebration, the preparation for the feast as well as a personal experience interview on the fiesta), and other cultural events related to the celebration.

A step-by-step process was explained to them on how to go about their research. A list of websites found useful was also provided to them. Names of government offices and agencies with addresses were also given. Fortunately, at the time the webquest was given to them, the Buglasan festival was also celebrated. Booths manned by personnel coming from various cities and towns in Negros Oriental were available for interview. Students who were assigned to do research on a far-flung city/town did not have to go and visit the place personally. Information was within their reach.

A brainstorming session was held in the classroom to formulate a common set of questions for the personal experience interview on the fiesta. Each section came up with a list of questions. Finally a list of frequently asked questions and relevant ones was made:

1. How do you celebrate fiesta in your locality?

2. Why do you celebrate fiesta?
3. How much do you spend for a fiesta celebration?
4. What foods do you usually prepare for the celebration?
5. How long does it take you to prepare for the fiesta?
6. Who are your usual visitors during the fiesta?
7. What other activities are held during the fiesta?
8. How do you feel after the fiesta celebration?

The students gave the above set of questions to people they know in the town/city assigned to them. Once the questionnaire was answered, a class session was devoted for the students to rewrite the answers in paragraph form. The work was done individually although at a later time, all the answers were sorted out to come up with the most common and basic answers for the essay on the Fiesta Celebrations around Negros Oriental (see [www.geocities.com/nohselc2/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/nohselc2/index.html)).

Within the duration of the project, students learned to work as a team: visiting offices, asking questions, collecting pictures, locating towns/cities in the map, sorting much needed information to come up with a presentable output. Each student was also required to record in their journals what they have done, feelings regarding the activity, as well as problems encountered. A small portion of time before the class proper was devoted to sharing of journal entries. The sharing of journal entries gave us an opportunity to thresh out problems, remind students of the importance of teamwork, and stress the need to work

continuously on the project to produce a good output. Let me share an excerpt from a journal entry of one of the students:

*“...we went to Sibulan today to interview people and to get first hand information about the town’s fiesta. We visited the municipal hall as well as the church. The day’s activity made us experience to approach people properly, developed self-confidence, and especially polished our use of the English language...”*

Here is another excerpt from the journal of another student:

*“...when I gave my xeroxed copy of the questionnaire to my mother’s friend who hails from Dumaguete City, she asked what is it for. I explained to her about our class project and she was amused because it was her first time to hear that a project about fiestas was made but appreciated our effort to give importance to fiesta celebrations...”*

The original task of creating an online travel brochure was changed to a slide presentation as the latter is deemed less complex than creating a website. Two sessions were devoted to lessons on making slide presentations. I offered my expertise in scanning their pictures and maps for free so they can be used in their presentation outputs. They also submitted hard copies of their research work. Some students who were indifferent to the project were required to do other tasks like running simple errands such as buying diskettes, providing envelopes, bond papers, fasteners, paste, having the questionnaires Xeroxed and distributed them to other members of the groups. In short, nobody was left out in the cold; everybody helped in their own little ways.

Three sets of rubrics were made for the evaluation of the student outputs. One rubric was made for the oral and slide presentation, another for the individual evaluation, and a third for the printed output. With the rubrics, students

were made aware of how their work would be assessed. For the oral and slide presentation the following set of criteria was used:

- Format
- Summary
- Mechanics of Summary
- Visual appeal of the presentation
- Audience appeal
- Oral report
- Timing of the slide show

Each of the above was allotted 5 points each for a very good work, 4 points for a satisfactory output, and 3 points for a fair job. The total score for the whole slide presentation is 35 points. (See Appendix A)

The criteria for evaluating the printed output included the following:

- Data gathered
- Essay
- Pictures
- Neatness

Each of the above was given 5 points for an excellent work, 4 points for a very good work, 3 points for satisfactory, 2 points for fair and 1 point for a work poorly done, a total of 20 points. (See Appendix B)

For the individual grade, the scoring was based on the following criteria:

- Gathering of information
- Fulfillment of role/duties

- Equally share of work
- Cooperation with teammates

Each of the above was given 4 points for exemplary work, 3 points for accomplished work, 2 points for developing and 1 point for beginning, a total of 16 points. (See Appendix C)

In short, each student was graded using a portfolio of works. (See Appendix D)

After all student outputs were collected, my students and I did an assessment of the activity. What was the impact of the webquest on the students? How did it affect their view of learning? Their view of ICTs? Of what use are Internet-supported lessons such as this webquest? I'm sure these questions have crossed your minds and before my report is done, let me give you enlightenment on these queries.

We all know that the Internet is an information superhighway. It offers not only good and useful information but also bad and destructive ones. When online resources on curricular topics are selected by the teachers for students to use, as in the case of webquests, we call attention to what's useful in the Internet and help students avoid having to browse useless and destructive (as opposed to constructive) websites. Webquests help develop the critical thinking skills of the students as it gives them the opportunity to be involved in writing and reading with a purpose. In this webquest, the students had to make an essay and slide presentation promoting a fiesta celebration in Negros Oriental. They were involved in an authentic writing task.

A webquest is also a good tool to foster interaction as well as collaboration among group members to come up with a good and presentable output, and most of all it enhances cooperative learning. Finally, it is motivating for students to work with computers and the Internet. Classroom learning is no longer boring. It is challenging, rewarding and, most of all, enjoyable!

I admit that the webquest project was quite complicated for the set of students I handled. When I designed a second webquest with a similar theme (see [www.geocities.com/kslasola/webquest.html](http://www.geocities.com/kslasola/webquest.html)), I did away with conducting personal interviews, visiting offices, and collecting/taking pictures as these proved to be expensive for the students. I also reduced the number of members of each group from 10-15 to 4 members each so that everybody in the group will be actively involved this time. I also made sure that there was a long list of websites that they could browse and use for their research and I taught them how to save pictures from the websites visited so they can use these in their presentation. With the revisions made, the second webquest was completed in a shorter time—that is, from two grading periods to just one grading period. And the second webquest also proved to be engaging and enjoyable for my students.

## Appendix A

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Year & Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Group Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Group Members: \_\_\_\_\_

(Write the individual names of the members at the bottom of this paper)

### RUBRIC SCORING FOR THE ORAL REPORT AND SLIDE PRESENTATION

Project Criteria	5 Very Good	4 Satisfactory	3 Fair	SCORE
Format	Followed the prescribed format	Followed the prescribed format but has one missing page	Did not follow the prescribed format	
Summary	Inclusion of important and relevant details	Some relevant details are omitted	Inclusion of irrelevant details	
Mechanics of summary	Very few grammatical errors and has one or two misspelled words	Some grammatical errors and has three to four misspelled words	Incoherent sentences and has several misspelled words	
Visual appeal of the presentation	Appropriate thematic graphic elements; differences in type; Size and color are used well and consistently	Few graphic elements; some layout variations	No graphics, no variation in layout	
Audience Appeal	Has wowed the audience to the max	Has won some of the hearts of the audience	Only a few gave the thumbs-up sign	
Oral Report	Speaks fluently and in a well modulated voice	Some stuttering and some words are barely audible	Barely audible	
Slide Show	Very good timing	Has some lapses	No coordination at all	

TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_/35

Appendix B

RUBRIC SCORING FOR THE PRINTED OUTPUT

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Year and Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Group Members: \_\_\_\_\_

(Write the individual names of the members at the bottom of this paper)

Project Criteria	5 Excellent	4 Very Good	3 Satisfactory	2 Fair	1 Poor	SCORE
Data gathered	Several sources including online sources and has worked with experts	Several sources including working with experts	2-3 sources including working with experts	1 source only and has worked with one expert	1 source only	
Essay	Ideas well organized, very few errors in mechanics	Good in contents, few errors in mechanics	Good in contents, several errors in mechanics	Good in contents, many errors in mechanics	Poorly done	
Pictures	Relevant pictures with captions including a map showing the location	4 pictures with captions	3 pictures with captions	2 pictures with captions	Pictures without captions	
Neatness	Super neat	Neat but has one or two erasures	Neat but has one or two erasures and smudges in some pages	Not so neat and has several erasures including smudges in some pages	Untidy work	

TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_/20

## Appendix C

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Yr. & Sec. \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

### RUBRIC SCORING FOR THE INDIVIDUAL EVALUATION

CRITERIA	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Accomplished 3	Exemplary 4	Total
Gathering of information	Does not collect any information that relates to the topic	Collects very little information—some relates to the topic	Collect some basic information—most relates to the topic	Collects a great deal of information— all relates to the topic	
Fulfillment of role/duties	Does not perform any duties of assigned team role	Performs very little duties	Performs nearly all duties	Performs all duties of assigned team role	
Share equally	Always depends on others to do the work	Rarely does the assigned work—often needs reminding	Usually does the assigned work—rarely needs reminding	Always does the assigned work without having to be reminded	
Cooperates with teammates	Never cooperates with teammates	Rarely cooperates	Sometimes cooperates	Usually cooperates with teammates	

Total \_\_\_\_\_/16

Appendix D

**Students' Portfolio Checklist**

Output/Components	Individual	Group	% of Grade for Project
Notes gathered	<b>X</b>		<b>10</b>
Final Essay/Write-up (include rough drafts, revisions)	<b>X</b>		<b>10</b>
Interview questions	<b>X</b>		<b>5</b>
Journal	<b>X</b>		<b>5</b>
Pictures/Maps		<b>X</b>	<b>15</b>
Printed Output		<b>X</b>	<b>20</b>
Slide Presentation		<b>X</b>	<b>35</b>

**TOTAL GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_ /100%**