**Structured Web Activity Exploration**

Structured web activities are teaching strategies that incorporate the power of internet resources to provide safe and engaging exploration of content. There is no one set way to design a structured web activity, although there are some very popular types. Teachers design these content-based activities to support their instruction, to support student exploration and information collection, problem-solving, project development or combinations of several teaching goals. The best structured web activities use online resources to promote higher order thinking, critical analysis of issues from multiple perspectives, development of 21st century skills and the creative use of technology to demonstrate understanding and knowledge acquisition.

**WebQuest** - Created by Bernie Dodge and Tom March, a WebQuest is a structured web activity built on problem-based learning and collaborative inquiry. Visit this site to learn more about the specifics of developing (and publishing) a WebQuest: <http://www.webquest.org/index.php>. Search for WebQuests and see if you can find a good model for your content area. Notice the precise structure that WebQuests employ, and consider the pros and cons for classroom instruction.

**Quest Garden** – Bernie Dodge’s site for educators to design their own Web Quests: <http://questgarden.com/> . You can get a free 30-day trial to use this site for your project.

**Google Lit Trip** – Google Lit trips are structured web activities that combine the power of Google Earth with travel-related literature or literature that intrinsically connected to setting/s. This *Edutopia* article provides an overview/description of Google Lit Trips: <http://www.edutopia.org/google-lit-trips-virtual-literature>.

Jerome Burg has developed a web site to support teachers’ development of Google Lit trips and provide resources for getting started. Check his site and explore some sample Google Lit trips <http://www.googlelittrips.org/>. Before you click on “getting started”, go to Google Earth and view the tutorial <http://earth.google.com/>. You will then need to download Google Earth in order to fully view the Google lit trips on Burg’s site.

**TrackStar:** <http://trackstar.4teachers.org/trackstar/>. This site provides server space for teachers to develop structured web activities and then provides a sorting system for other teachers to locate “tracks” that have already been created. Even though a track created by one teacher might not work all that well for another, this is a great place to explore another type of structured web activity and harvest content-relevant resources that have been selected by other teachers for use in their classrooms.

**Virtual Travel Plan** – This type of project-based structured web activity has been around for awhile and is now increasing in popularity because of the expenses associated with REAL travel. They are also a great way to explore world cultures and languages. Virtual Travel Plans can be created for any content area and rely on the teacher’s selection of useful web sites to guide and structure student exploration of a specific city, region, or country.

**Free Web sites:**

Wet Paint - <http://www.wetpaint.com/>

Great resource – lots of distractions

**Blogs:**

Blogger - <http://www.blogger.com>

Free Blog site by Google

EduBlogs - <http://edublogs.org/>

Free blogs for teachers and students

Ten ways to use your Edublog to teach: <http://edublogs.org/10-ways-to-use-your-edublog-to-teach/>