CENTRAL UNIVERSITY "MARTA ABREU" OF LAS VILLAS

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

DIPLOMA WORK

A Model Webquest for the Subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries

Author: Youssouf Koke Camara

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Santa Clara

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Santa Clara

June, 2012

54th year of the Revolution

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Thought

"Ser culto es el único modo de ser libre." José Martí

"To be educated is the only way to be free." José Martí

Dedication

To God for always showing me the best way,

To my dear family specially my mother Makale Camara and my big brother Ibrahima Sory Camara for always being there for me, through good and bad,

To my friends for being real friends.

Acknowledgments

To Mayra for trusting me to develop this diploma paper,

To Luis Romero and Amelita for their support and wise advice,

To Alicia, Dianelis, Katia Karen, Anabel, Dalila and Darlen for being so professional,

To the Cuban government for giving me the opportunity to study at this prestigious University,

To my sister Neusa Olinda Varela Spinola for being with me all those years

To my friends: Ravi, Akuna, Lakchan, Mamadi.

To all my teachers for their invaluable support.

To all those people who were willing to cooperate.

Abstract

Nowadays ICTs, especially Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) materials, are given great importance as tools to support the teaching and learning process in higher education. The implementation of this technology is supported by the more progressive pedagogical approaches which promote the ideology of active learning and students' self-assessment as better ways to construct new knowledge. The general aim of this diploma paper is to propose a model webquest to improve the teaching and learning process of the culture of English-speaking to students of the course English Language with a Second Foreign Language (French) at UCLV.

Key Words: ICTs; multiple intelligence; task-based approach; webquest; English-speaking countries; culture; education.

TABLA DE CONTENIDOS

INTRODUCTION

During the second half of the 20th century there emerged new technology in various areas of life in human society that has improved any spheres of either interest or business. The continuous and rapid development of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) over the last years has proliferated into the vast range of human activities and the truth is that most of today´s students possess relatively high level of ICT competences. The reason is that they use computers and the Internet almost daily. It has become an integrated part of everyday life both in school and leisure environment. (Dudeney and Hockly, 2008)

ICTs are given a special interest in Cuba, and education is one of the most privileged sectors. Taking into account the challenges students and teachers have been forced to face concerning the lack of supporting materials and updated bibliography, new alternatives are needed to be implemented. Therefore, ICTs have gained an outstanding importance in the country's educational system.

In the last few years, the task-based approach to teaching has become an important element in syllabus design, classroom teaching and learners' assessment. It has influenced educational policy (Ellis, 1993)

According to Willis (1959) task-based learning offers an alternative for teachers. In a task-based lesson the teacher does not pre-determine what language will be studied, the lesson is based around the completion of a central task and the language studied is determined by what happens as the students complete it.

In our days, students of the English language at the university 'Martha Abreu de Las Villas' are more interested and feel comfortable in learning through computer than reading books and class notes. For instance in the subject Panorama of the

English-Speaking Countries, lessons are difficult to follow and also take down. At the end of the lesson, we are almost always lost because the notes are not complete and accurate enough. Another problem students face is the lack of a text book of the subject. So students have to gather all the notes and information they obtain from other sources during the semester in order to have complete notes.

Consequently, this diploma paper aims at **answering** the following **scientific problem**:

- How can the teaching and learning process of the culture of English-speaking countries be improved?

Thus, the scientific object of this paper is the culture of English-speaking countries and the field of action the enhancement of the teaching and learning of the colure of English-speaking countries

The general aim of this diploma paper is:

- To propose a model webquest to improve the teaching and learning process of the culture of English-speaking countries.

To accomplish the previous aim, the following scientific questions were answered:

- What are theoretical bases about information and communication technologies in education, task-based approach to teaching and multiple intelligence?
- What is the opinion of English Language students at UCLV concerning the teaching and learning process of the subject Panorama of English-speaking countries?
- What characterizes a webquest to improve the teaching and learning process of the culture of English-speaking countries?
- What are specialists' opinions about the webquest designed?

In order to accomplish this objective, some scientific tasks were accomplished:

- Setting the theoretical and pedagogical bases that support the design of a web quest to improve the teaching and learning process of the culture of English-speaking countries.
- Determining the opinion of English Language students concerning the teaching and learning process of the subject Panorama of English-speaking

countries and how a Webquest can complement the study of the culture of English-speaking countries**.**

- Designing a webquest to improve the teaching and learning process of the culture of English-speaking countries.
- Assessing the proposed webquest by specialists**.**

To achieve these tasks, different methods were used:

Historical and logical method

This method allowed the analysis of theoretical bases about information and communication technologies in education, task-based approach to teaching and multiple intelligences.

Theoretical methods

- Analytical and synthetical method
- Inductive and deductive method

These methods were used for establishing the research process foundations.

Empirical methods

- Analysis of documents: in order to determine the expected situation according to the existing official documents dealing with the study of the culture of English-speaking countries
- **Survey:**

To determine teachers and students' opinion about the convenience of a Webquest on this topic.

 To find out teachers' opinion about the webquest proposed.

Statistical and mathematical methods

- Percentage analysis: to process data obtained from surveys.

The sample chosen for the current research involved 15 students of the English Language with a Second Foreign Language (French) and 5 teachers of the English language department at   UCLV.

To choose the sample, we took into account:

- **Academic level of students:** Students of first and second years of English Language Studies with a Second Foreign Language (French)

- **Academic and scientific degree of teachers:** The teachers hold academic degrees of PhD, MSc and hold academic degrees of Associate Professor or Full Professor
- **Willingness:** All the students and teachers were willing to collaborate. This diploma paper is necessary because it may contribute to the enhancement of the culture of the English speaking countries, because at present students have to depend only on either lesson notes or any other scattered information from different sources.

This diploma paper is structured into three chapters. Chapter 1 deals with theoretical bases about information and communication technologies in education, task-based approach to teaching and learning and multiple intelligence. Chapter 2 deals with necessities for the design for the model webquest to improve the study of the culture of English-speaking countries. Chapter 3 consists of the proposal of a model webquest, and its assessment by specialists. Conclusions, recommendations and appendixes are also provided.

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1.1.1   ICT in education

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can contribute to universal access to education, equity in education, the delivery of quality learning and teaching, teachers' professional development and more efficient education management, governance and administration. In this program, lessons are presented visually and verbally so that students and teachers are able to interact directly in this virtual environment, hearing, answering questions and participating in discussions of what appears on the screen. Students must provide their own computer to facilitate the learning process. The maximum class size is 20 students per class, with an average of 13 students.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) take a holistic and comprehensive approach to promote ICT in education. Access, inclusion and quality are among the main challenges they address. The Organization's intersect oral platform for ICT in education focuses on these issues through the joint work of three of its sectors: Communication & Information, Education and Science.

UNESCO's global network of offices, institutes and partners provide Member States with resources for elaborating ICT in education policies, strategies and activities. In particular, the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE), based in Moscow, specializes in information exchange, research and training on the integration of ICT in education while UNESCO's Bangkok office is strongly involved in ICT for Education in Asia and the pacific.

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1.1.2 ICT in language learning

ICT has great potential to support the teaching of languages at primary and secondary schools where dealing with Multiple Intelligences, could be beneficial to teachers or students to have an opportunity to work on as many intelligences as possible. This variety is possible to cover by use of relatively broad spectrum of miscellaneous digital media, and virtual learning environment. The theory of Multiple Intelligences emerged during the same era as the New Technologies: CD-ROMs, Videodisks, The Internet and The World Wide Web." (Dudeney and others, 2008).

The teaching of languages should be supported and enriched by the use of CD and DVD based resources alongside websites, which allow the space for different learning styles to be incorporated into working and learning, each learner constitutes an individual collection of strengths and weaknesses with particular preferences. Therefore some learners can benefit from simpler drill-and-practice vocabulary reinforcement and extension. For others, the opportunity to use foreign language online and in collaboration with other learners could be useful in learning, chatting on line, or sending emails, from interactive exercises to regular email exchange with peers worldwide, to voice-mail, video mail; interactive map, a voice-chat.

According to Allen and others (2007), all those activities (and even many others) learners can experience in class. There are several advantages in using intercommunication tools and registering it all online. It generates-Portfolios for learners, promotes collaborative learning, develops e-literacy skills, stimulates intercultural awareness, or caters with different learning styles for easier motivation.

There are many tangible benefits which ICT tools provides for either teachers or learners such as sharing the work, materials, documents, listening practice,

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projects; accessing outside the classroom; independent work; focus on the message (not on the form); or recording the speaking presentation, online evaluated – for enhancing students´ oral skills. It is considered the cheapest, fastest, and the most comprehensive means of communication – creating the blogs, for instance, gives a sense of community, encourages shy students to express themselves.

The online environment can be a non-threatening space for extra practice of English. As also stated by Lee (1997), using the Internet and multimedia in the language learning process allows introducing content in different ways and all appeal to the learning styles or "intelligences" of more pupils, which is by all means highly motivating. They can be used to encourage independent learning and creative thinking skills. What is more, the number of supportive sources on the Internet has enormously increased recently as many teachers create wide range of interactive materials available for other educators interested in using them in their lessons. They can be shared worldwide, which is very advantageous for all people involved. Many schools place those materials on their web pages on display to be browsed and used publicly.

1.1.3 The use of ICTs in the teaching and learning process of English

According to Marchisio (2004) the most fundamental possibilities that ICTs bring to the teaching and learning process of English are:

> *Access to authentic and understandable materials taking into account the student's level.* The Web is the place where students can find different types and formats of linguistic and culturally authentic materials. The audiovisual materials in the Web offer access to updated native speaker's situations and accents.
> *An interactive and participatory environment that favors collaborative learning.* The Web is an interconnected environment allowing students to interact with other students in the same group or have access to a distance interaction. These way students can interact with teachers and

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native speakers through e-mail, electronic mailing lists, threaded conferencing systems, online discussion boards, wikis and blogs, among others. The online interactive environment is easily used and allows professors to obtain a fast answer and a good participation from students' side.

➢ *Flexible opportunities of practice exercises.* The Web offers the possibility of doing and repeating exercises to reinforce grammatical structures and vocabulary. These exercises can be used as self-evaluation means allowing students to follow their own learning process. All these exercises can provide a quick and clear feedback and can be adapted to a variety of learning styles.

1.1.4 ICTs & CAL effectiveness as new tools for generating knowledge

For many specialists, ICTs are the solution to the practical problems that progressive teachers face nowadays. But are ICTs and particularly the Internet tools for the progressive approach? The majority of literature suggests that the latter is true. For example O'Shea and Self (1983) describe the revolutionaries in education as encouraging students to use IT which allows them to avoid a mass educational system with its national syllabuses and examinations, its non-adaptive teachers and classrooms of thirty or forty students.

Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL) involves an interaction between a person and a software-based course or unit of study. There are literally thousands of these types of CAL units. Often they are a combination of CAL and entertainment. There are extensive sets of CAL materials that cover substantial amounts of curricula. These sets of CAL materials typically contain a record keeping system. They can record individualized reports for the various students using the system. (http://www.uoregon.edu/~moursund/ICT-planning/ict-in-education.htm).

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CAL is a powerful solution to many of the issues that confront teachers in higher education--the need to innovate in course delivery and to accommodate increasing numbers of students, sometimes at physically distant sites.

CAL provides perhaps the best opportunity for student self-guided learning. It is self-paced and self-planned, with the students themselves choosing their own paths through the amount of information accumulated in CAL materials. The successful use of such materials will not only increase students' knowledge, but will require them to develop other important skills, including self-assessment and planning of studies, information technology skills, creativity, and self-motivation. (http://horizon.unc.edu/projects/monograph/CD/Professional_Schools/Cann.html).

1.2.   ICTs implementation in Cuban higher education

ICTs are given a special interest in Cuba, and education is one of the most privileged sectors. Considering the lack of supporting materials and updated bibliography, new alternatives have been implemented and ICTs have proved to be one of the best choices.

An increasing numbers of students are being trained in 12 Cuban higher education institutions. For example, "Universidad de las Ciencias Informáticas" (University of Computer Science) began to operate in the academic year 2002-2003. This university has played an important role in the development of the Cuban software industry.

(http://www.cubaminrex.cu/Sociedad_Informacion/Cuba_TIC/TIC_Masivo.htm).

1.2.1 Previous work related to ICTs with educational purposes at UCLV

The role of the Central University "Marta Abreu" of Las Villas has been important **in the implementation of ICTs in higher education. Many professionals from this**

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University have devoted their work to the creation and implementation of ICTs materials to improve the teaching and learning process.

At the Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering, the PhD Dissertation "Metodología para el perfeccionamiento del proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje de la economía, dirección y organización de la construcción en la carrera de Ingeniería Civil mediante el uso de las NTIC" deals with the implementation of a software to support the teaching and learning process of some subjects in that faculty.

In the Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences there is a diploma paper entitled: "Diseño e implementación del Sitio Web del Centro de Estudios, Documentación e Información de Medicamentos de Villa Clara".

In the Faculty of Electrical Engineering there is a diploma paper "Sitio web de Electrónica Analítica I" which aims at the improvement of the teaching and learning of the subject Electronica Analitica I.

In the Faculty of Humanities, specifically in the Course English Language with a Second Foreign Language (French), some diploma papers related to ICTs to improve the teching and learning process have been presented:

"A Web site for the discipline Panorama of the English-Speaking Countries" (2007)

"An interactive Web site for the teaching and learning process of interpreting" (2010)

"An Interactive Website for the Enhancement of Academic Writing Skills" (2011)

In addition, some professionals of the Faculty of Humanities have dealt with ICTs in their Master's degree studies. For instance, the Master´s Degree Thesis

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"Las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación como herramientas de apoyo en la enseñanza de la asignatura Idioma Inglés I en la carrera de Telecomunicaciones y Electrónica" by professor Pedro Julio Contreras Borroto. Another example is the Master´s Degree Thesis "La instrumentación de las tecnologías de la información y las comunicaciones como herramienta de apoyo al aprendizaje en la asignatura Inglés IV en la carrera de Arquitectura" by professor Humberto Miñoso Machado.

A relevant step forward in the use of ICTs for teaching English has been the creation of CAELTIC (Center of Advanced English Language Training for International Collaboration) in 2007 in our University. This self-access resource center (SARC) is the result of a shared project VLIR-IOS / UCLV, whose main purpose is building the capacity of the university staff to communicate in English for international collaboration.

A significant tool used in CAELTIC is the Electronic Portfolio. Students and professionals can use this portfolio to develop their learning, their skills and also they can record/register their achievements in the subjects they take.   The portfolio has sound applications for students, teachers and institutions.

Another major electronic tool related to ICTs in CAELTIC is the WebQuest. This tool promotes the use of superior cognitive skills, cooperative work, authentic evaluation and students' autonomy.

Summing up, ICTs and more specifically CAL materials have gained relevance as new tools to support the teaching and learning process in higher education. Besides, ICTs materials represent a step towards active learning. They provide self-guided learning; they are self-paced and self-planned, and their appropriate use will not only enhance students' peformance, but will make them to develop other important skills such as self-assessment and planning of their learning.

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1.3.   Webquest

As more students gain access to the Internet, there is growing pressure on teachers to help their students use this valuable resource as an effective study tool. Webquests are just one way in which teachers can help.

Defining a webquest

According to Bernie Dodge (1995) of San Diego State University a webquest is "an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from the web''. Webquest are designed to use learners' time well, to focus on using information rather than looking for it, and to support and develop learners' thinking at the levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

On the other hand, he defines a Webquest as "a scaffolded learning structure that uses links to essential resources on the World Wide Web and an authentic task to motivate students' investigation of a central, open-ended question, development of individual expertise and participation in a final group process that attempts to transform newly acquired information into a more sophisticated understanding. It also inspires students to see richer thematic relationships, facilitate a contribution to the real world, increases student motivation.

This definition has been refined over the years, and adapted for various different disciplines. Some authors describe a webquest as a Constructivist approach to learning. Students not only collate and organize information they've found on the web, they orient their activities towards a specific goal they've been given, often associated with one or more roles modeled on adult professions." Essentially, webquests are mini-projects in which a large percentage of the input and material is supplied by the Internet. Webquests can be teacher-made or learner-made, depending on the learning activity the teacher decides on.

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Reasons for using webquests

According to Dudeney & Hockly (2008), there are many compelling reasons for using webquests in the classroom, including:

1. They are an easy way for teachers to begin to incorporate the Internet into the language classroom, on both a short-term and long-term basis - no specialist technical knowledge is needed either to produce or use them.
2. 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.
3. They can be used simply as a linguistic tool, but can also be interdisciplinary, allowing for crossover into other departments and subject areas.
4. They encourage critical thinking skills, including: comparing, classifying, inducing, deducing, analyzing errors, constructing support, abstraction, analyzing perspectives, etc. Learners are not able to simply regurgitate information they find, but are guided towards a transformation of that information in order to achieve a given task.
5. They can be both motivating and authentic tasks and encourage learners to view the activities they are doing as something 'real' or 'useful'. This inevitably leads to more effort, greater concentration and a real interest in task achievement.

Structure of a webquest

Webquests have now been around long enough for them to have a clearly defined structure. However, this structure - whilst being unofficially recognized as the definitive schema for these activities

There are usually four main sections to a webquest:

The *Introduction* stage is which is normally used to introduce the overall theme of the webquest. It involves giving background information on the topic and, in the language learning context, often introduces key vocabulary and concepts which learners will need to understand in order to complete the tasks involved.

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The *Task* section of the webquest explains clearly and precisely what the learners will have to do as they work their way through the webquest. The task should obviously be highly motivating and intrinsically interesting for the learners, and should be firmly anchored in a real-life situation. This often involves the learners in a certain amount of role-play within a given scenario.

The *Process* stage of a Webquest guides the learners through a set of activities and research tasks, using a set of predefined resources. In the case of the Webquest, these resources are predominately web-based, and are usually presented in clickable form within the task document (it's important to bear in mind that it's much easier to click on a link than to type it in with any degree of accuracy). In the case of a language-based Webquest, the Process stage of the Webquest may introduce lexical areas or grammatical points which are essential to the Task.

The *Evaluation* stage can involve learners in self-evaluation, comparing and contrasting what they have produced with other learners and giving feedback on what they feel they have learnt, achieved, etc. It will also involve teacher evaluation of the same, and good webquests will give guidance to the teacher for this particular part of the process.

The C*onclusion* stage closes the quest, reminds students about what they have learned, and they are encouraged to extend the experience into other domains.

Producing a webquest

Producing a webquest does not entail any detailed technical knowledge. Whilst all of the examples in the further reading are essentially web-based, it is extremely easy to produce a professional-looking and workable design using any modern word processor. The skillset for producing a webquest might be defined as follows:

Research skills

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It is essential to be able to search the Internet and quickly and accurately find resources. It is beyond the scope of this article to delve into the finer points of using search engines and subject guides, but a good reading of their respective help pages will dramatically improve the accuracy of any search.

Analytical skill

It is also very important to be able to cast a critical eye over the resources you do find when searching. Make sure to visit any website you are considering using thoroughly before basing any activity around it.

Word processing skills

You will also need to be able to use a word processor to combine text, images and weblinks into a finished document. This particular set of skills can be acquired in approximately ten minutes.

Before sitting down to plan a webquest, it is always worth searching around on the Internet to see if someone has produced something which might fit your needs. There are plenty of webquest 'repositories' on the Internet, so there is little point in reinventing the wheel.

Webquest is related to task-based learning, as the students have to deal with amount of specific information on the web and perform a task. The task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language. In frame of task-based learning, webquest offers chances to students to learn certain or integrated skills by completing the task. Further, Stoks (2002) suggested that by engaging in a Webquest students increase their language comprehension and do problem solving through language learning facilitated by Webquest. In addition, it provides

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access to online resources while scaffolding the learning process to encourage order thinking and in some extent Webquest brings together the most effective instructional practice into one integrated learning activity (Hung, 2007).

1.4. Task-based approach to teaching and learning

A Task-based approach

The concept of task has become an important element in syllabus design, classroom teaching and learners' assessment. It underpins several significant research agendas, and it has influenced educational policy (Ellis, 1993)

In recent years a debate has developed over which approaches to structuring, planning and implementing lessons are more effective (Kumaravadivelu, 1993).

Present Practice Produce (PPP)

PPP offers a very simplified approach to language learning. It is based upon the idea that you can present language in neat little blocks, adding from one lesson to the next. However, research shows us that we cannot predict or guarantee what the students will learn and that ultimately a wide exposure to language is the best way of ensuring that students will acquire it effectively. Restricting their experience to single pieces of target language is unnatural. During an initial teacher training course, most teachers become familiar with the PPP paradigm. A PPP lesson would proceed in the following manner; first, the teacher presents an item of language in a clear context to get across its meaning. This could be done in a variety of ways: through a text, a situation build, a dialogue etc, second the students are then asked to complete a controlled practice stage, where they may have to repeat target items through choral and individual drilling, fill gaps or match halves of sentences.

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All of this practice demands that the student uses the language correctly and helps them to become more comfortable with it and finally, they move on to the production stage, sometimes called the 'free practice' stage. Students are given a communication task such as a role play and are expected to produce the target language and use any other language that has already been learnt and is suitable for completing it. (Skehan, 2001)

Teachers who use PPP soon identify the following problems with it: Students can give the impression that they are comfortable with the new language as they are producing it accurately in the class. Often though a few lessons later, students will either not be able to produce the language correctly or even won't produce it at all, secondly students will often produce the language but overuse the target structure so that it sounds completely unnatural and lastly students may not produce the target language during the free practice stage because they find they are able to use existing language resources to complete the task.

A Task-based approach

According to Willis (1959) Task -based learning offers an alternative for language teachers. In a task-based lesson the teacher doesn't pre-determine what language will be studied, the lesson is based around the completion of a central task and the language studied is determined by what happens as the students complete it. The lesson follows certain stages.

Pre-task
The teacher introduces the topic and gives the students clear instructions on what they will have to do at the task stage and might help the students to recall some language that may be useful for the task. The pre-task stage can also often include playing a recording of people doing the task. This gives the students a clear model of what will be expected of them. The students can take notes and spend time preparing for the task.

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Task

Students complete a task in pairs or groups using the language resources that they have as the teacher monitors and offers encouragement.

Planning

Students prepare a short oral or written report to tell the class what happened during their task. They then practice what they are going to say in their groups. Meanwhile the teacher is available for the students to ask for advice to clear up any language questions they may have.

Report

Students then report back to the class orally or read the written report. The teacher chooses the order of when students will present their reports and may give the students some quick feedback on the content. At this stage the teacher may also play a recording of others doing the same task for the students to compare.

Analysis

The teacher then highlights relevant parts from the text of the recording for the students to analyze. They may ask students to notice interesting features within this text. The teacher can also highlight the language that the students used during the report phase for analysis.

Practice

finally, the teacher selects language areas to practice based upon the needs of the students and what emerged from the task and report phases. The students then do practice activities to increase their confidence and make a note of useful language.

The advantages of TBL

Unlike a PPP approach, the students are free of language control. In all three stages they must use all their language resources rather than just practicing one pre-selected item.

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A natural context is developed from the students' experiences with the language that is personalized and relevant to them. With PPP it is necessary to create contexts in which to present the language and sometimes they can be very unnatural.

The students will have a much more varied exposure to language with TBL. They will be exposed to a whole range of lexical phrases, collocations and patterns as well as language forms.

The language explored arises from the student's needs. This need dictates what will be covered in the lesson rather than a decision made by the teacher or the course book.

It is a strong communicative approach where students spend a lot of time communicating. PPP lessons seem very teacher-centered by comparison. Just watch how much time the students spend communicating during a task-based lesson. It is enjoyable and motivating.

Task-based language learning (TBLL)

Task-based language learning (TBLL), also known as task-based language teaching (TBLT) or task-based instruction (TBI) focuses on the use of authentic language and on asking students to do meaningful tasks using the target language. Such tasks can include visiting a doctor, conducting an interview, or calling customer service for help. Assessment is primarily based on task outcome in other words the appropriate completion of tasks) rather than on accuracy of language forms. This makes TBLL especially popular for developing target language fluency and student confidence.

In practice

The core of the lesson is, as the name suggests, the task. All parts of the language used are deemphasized during the activity itself, in order to get students to focus on the task. Although there may be several effective frameworks for creating a task-based learning lesson, here is a rather comprehensive one suggested by Willis, (1959).

Pre-task

In the pre-task, the teacher will present what will be expected of the students in the task phase. Additionally, the teacher may prime the students with key vocabulary or grammatical constructs, although, in "pure" task-based learning lessons, these will be presented as suggestions and the students would be encouraged to use what they are comfortable with in order to complete the task. The instructor may also present a model of the task by either doing it themselves or by presenting picture, audio, or video demonstrating the task.

Task

During the task phase, the students perform the task, typically in small groups, although this is dependent on the type of activity. And unless the teacher plays a particular role in the task, then the teacher's role is typically limited to one of an observer or counselor thus the reason for it being a more student-centered methodology, (Willis, 1959).

Planning

Having completed the task, the students prepare either a written or oral report to present to the class. The instructor takes questions and otherwise simply monitors the students.

Report

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The students then present this information to the rest of the class. Here the teacher may provide written or oral feedback, as appropriate, and the students observing may do the same.

Analysis

Here the focus returns to the teacher who reviews what happened in the task, in regards to language. It may include language forms that the students were using, problems that students had, and perhaps forms that need to be covered more or were not used enough.

Practice

The practice stage may be used to cover material mentioned by the teacher in the analysis stage. It is an opportunity for the teacher to emphasize key language.

Advantages of Task-based learning

Task-based learning is advantageous to the student because it is more student-centered, allows for more meaningful communication, and often provides for practical extra-linguistic skill building. As the tasks are likely familiar to the students who are more engaged, this may further motivate them in language learning process.

   Additionally, tasks promote language acquisition through the types of language and interaction they require. Although the teacher may present language in the pre-task, the students are ultimately free to use what grammar constructs and vocabulary they want. This allows them to use all the language they know and are learning, rather than just the 'target language' of the lesson. On the other hand, tasks can also be designed to make certain target forms 'task-essential', thus making it communicatively necessary for students to practice using them. In terms of interaction, information gap tasks in particular have been shown to promote negotiation of meaning and output modification.

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The Webquest provides an interactive learning experience for students to explore the theory of multiple intelligences and enhance their learning by guiding them through a self-reflection of their teaching skills. Student feedback regarding the Webquest as a mediating tool indicated that it served as a frame of reference to learn about themselves and their students' diversity. Ultimately, students gain new insights into student performance, behavior and success by using learning and multiple intelligence theories to tap the individual needs of their students through the Webquest. (Cardelle-Elawar, M. & Irvin, M.. Webquest on Multiple Intelligences, 2005).

1.5.   Multiple intelligence

Different authors argue that the traditional definition of intelligence is too narrow, and thus broader definition more accurately reflects the differing ways in which humans think and learn. They would state that the traditional interpretation of intelligence collapses under the weight of its own logic and definition, noting that intelligence is usually defined as the cognitive or mental capacity of an individual, which by logical necessity would include all forms of mental qualities, not simply the ones most transparent to standardized I.Q. tests.

The theory of multiple intelligences was proposed by Howard Gardner in 1983 as a model of intelligence that differentiates intelligence into various specific (primarily sensory) modalities, rather than seeing it is dominated by a single general ability.

Gardner argues that there is a wide range of cognitive abilities, and that there are only very weak correlations amongst them. For example, the theory predicts that a child who learns to multiply easily is not necessarily more intelligent than a child who has more difficulty on this task. A child who takes more time to master simple multiplication may best learn to multiply through a different approach, may excel in a field outside mathematics, or may even be looking at and understand the

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multiplication process at a fundamentally deeper level, or perhaps as an entirely different process. Such a fundamentally deeper understanding can result in what looks like slowness and can hide a mathematical intelligence potentially higher than that of a child who quickly memorizes the multiplication table despite a less detailed understanding of the process of multiplication.

The theory has been met with mixed responses. Traditional intelligence tests and psychometrics have generally found high correlations between different tasks and aspects of intelligence, rather than the low correlations which Gardner's theory predicts. Nevertheless many educationalists support the practical value of the approaches suggested by the theory.

The multiple intelligence

Gardner articulated several criteria for a behavior to be an intelligence, they are; potential for brain isolation by brain damage, place in evolutionary history, presence of core operations, susceptibility to encoding (symbolic expression), a distinct developmental progression, the existence of savants, prodigies and other exceptional people, and finally support from experimental psychology and psychometric findings.

Gardner believes that eight abilities meet these criteria, they include, spatial, linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic.

He considers that existential and moral intelligence may also be worthy of inclusion. The first three are closely linked to fluid ability, and the verbal and spatial abilities that form the hierarchical model of intelligence.

Logical-mathematical

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This area has to do with logic, abstractions, reasoning and numbers. While it is often assumed that those with this intelligence naturally excel in mathematics, chess, computer programming and other logical or numerical activities, a more accurate definition places less emphasis on traditional mathematical ability and more on reasoning capabilities, recognizing abstract patterns, scientific thinking and investigation and the ability to perform complex calculations. Logical reasoning is closely linked to fluid intelligence and to general ability.

Spatial

This area deals with spatial judgment and the ability to visualize with the mind's eye. Careers which suit those with this type of intelligence include artists, designers and architects. A spatial person is also good with puzzles. Spatial ability is one of the three factors beneath g-loaded abilities in the hierarchical model of intelligence.

Linguistic

This area has to do with words, spoken or written. People with high verbal-linguistic intelligence display a facility with words and languages. They are typically good at reading, writing, telling stories and memorizing words along with dates. They tend to learn best by reading, taking notes, listening to lectures, and by discussing and debating about what they have learned. Those with verbal-linguistic intelligence learn foreign languages very easily as they have high verbal memory and recall, and an ability to understand and manipulate syntax and structure. Verbal ability is one of the most g-loaded abilities.

Bodily-kinesthetic

The core elements of the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence are control of one's bodily motions and the capacity to handle objects skillfully. Gardner elaborates that this

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intelligence also includes a sense of timing, a clear sense of the goal of a physical action, along with the ability to train responses so they become like reflexes.

In theory, people who have bodily-kinesthetic intelligence should learn better by involving muscular movement (e.g. getting up and moving around into the learning experience), and are generally good at physical activities such as sports or dance. They may enjoy acting or performing, and in general they are good at building and making things. They often learn best by doing something physically, rather than by reading or hearing about it.

Careers that suit those with this intelligence include: athletes, pilots, dancers, musicians, actors, surgeons, builders, police officers, and soldiers. Although these careers can be duplicated through virtual simulation, they will not produce the actual physical learning that is needed in this intelligence.

Musical

This area has to do with sensitivity to sounds, rhythms, tones, and music. People with a high musical intelligence normally have good pitch and may even have absolute pitch, and are able to sing, play musical instruments, and compose music. Since there is a strong auditory component to this intelligence, those who are strongest in it may learn best via lecture. Language skills are typically highly developed in those whose base intelligence is musical. In addition, they will sometimes use songs or rhythms to learn. They have sensitivity to rhythm, pitch, meter, tone, melody or timbre.

Careers that suit those with this intelligence include instrumentalists, singers, conductors, disc jockeys, orators, writers and composers. Research measuring the effects of music on second language acquisition is supportive of this music-language connection. In an investigation conducted on a group of elementary aged English language learners, music facilitated their language learning. Gardner's

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theory may help to explain why music and its sub-components (i.e., stress, pitch, and rhythm) may be viable vehicles for second language learning.

Interpersonal

This area has to do with interaction with others. In theory, people who have a high interpersonal intelligence tend to be extroverts, characterized by their sensitivity to others' moods, feelings, temperaments and motivations, and their ability to cooperate in order to work as part of a group. They communicate effectively and empathize easily with others, and may be either leaders or followers. They typically learn best by working with others and often enjoy discussion and debate. Careers that suit those with this intelligence include sales, politicians, managers, teachers and social workers.

Intrapersonal

This area has to do with introspective and self-reflective capacities. This refers to having a deep understanding of the self; what your strengths and weaknesses are, what makes you unique, being able to predict your own reactions and emotions. Philosophical and critical thinking is common with this intelligence. Many people with this intelligence are authors, psychologists, counselors, philosophers, and members of the clergy.

Naturalistic

This area has to do with nurturing and relating information to one's natural surroundings. Examples include classifying natural forms such as animal and plant species and rocks and mountain types; and the applied knowledge of nature in farming, mining, etc. Careers which suit those with this intelligence include naturalists, farmers and gardeners.

Existential

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Some proponents of multiple intelligence theory proposed spiritual or religious intelligence as a possible additional type. Gardner did not want to commit to a spiritual intelligence, but suggested that an "existential" intelligence may be a useful construct. The hypothesis of an existential intelligence has been further explored by educational researchers. Ability to contemplate phenomena or questions beyond sensory data, such as the infinite and infinitesimal careers or callings which suit those with this intelligence include shamans, priests, mathematicians, physicists, scientists, cosmologists and philosophers.

Use in education

Gardner (1999) defines an intelligence as ''biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture''. According to Gardner, there are more ways to do this than just through logical and linguistic intelligence, he believes that the purpose of schooling "should be to develop intelligences and to help people reach vocational and vocational goals that are appropriate to their particular spectrum of intelligences. People who are helped to do so, he believes feel more engaged and competent and therefore more inclined to serve society in a constructive way."

   Traditionally, schools have emphasized the development of logical intelligence and linguistic intelligence mainly reading and writing. IQ tests (given to about 1,000,000 students each year) focus mostly on logical and linguistic intelligence. Upon doing well on these tests, chances of attending a prestige college or university increase, which in turn creates contributing members of society (Gardner, 1993).

While many students function well in this environment, there are those who do not. According to Helding (2009), Standard IQ tests measure knowledge gained at a particular moment in time, they can only provide a freeze-frame view of crystallized knowledge. They cannot assess or predict a person's ability to learn, to assimilate new information, or to solve new problems. Gardner's theory argues that students

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will be better served by a broader vision of education, wherein teachers use different methodologies, exercises and activities to reach all students, not just those who excel at linguistic and logical intelligence. It challenges educators to find ''ways that will work for this student learning this topic'' (Gardner, 1999).

Many teachers see the theory as simple common sense. Some say that it validates what they already know that students learn in different ways. The challenge that this brings for educators is to know which students learn in which ways.

The application of the theory of multiple intelligences varies widely. It runs the gamut from a teacher who, when confronted with a student having difficulties, uses a different approach to teach the material, to an entire school using M.I. as a framework. In general, those who subscribe to the theory strive to provide opportunities for their students to use and develop all the different intelligences, not just the few at which they naturally excel. There are many different tests teachers can have their students take in order to determine which of the intelligences are best suited for their personal learning.

Therefore, interactive computer-based courseware represents a move towards active learning (i.e., student self-guided teaching) and can be used as a constantly available learning resource for students. In addition to their advantages for students, such systems also provide powerful and flexible tools for course administration.

CHAPTER 2. NECESSITIES FOR THE DESIGN OF A MODEL WEBQUEST FOR THE STUDY OF ENGLISH–SPEAKING COUNTRIES

2.1. Methodology and stages of research

The methodology of the research corresponds to a qualitative paradigm since it is based on the experiences, perceptions and suggestions of students. However, methods belonging to the quantitative paradigm were also used to obtain general descriptions about the object of research.

The research consists of three main stages:

***First stage*:** Determining the students´ perceptions about the subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries and the use of *ICTs in education*.

Second stage: Designing a webquest for the improvement of the study of English –speaking countries

***Third stage*:** Assessing the webquest through specialists' criteria.

2.2. Sample and context of research

The research was carried out at the Central University ¨Marta Abreu¨ of Las Villas. Fifteen (15) students of the English Language with a Second Foreign Language (French) were surveyed to find out the main problems they face when studying English-speaking countries as well as their opinion about the use of Webquests in the subject Cultural Panorama of English-speaking countries. (Appendixes 1 and 2)

A very important step to choose the sample was to determine the academic level of students and their willingness to cooperate with this research:

- Academic level of students: Students of first and second years of English Language Studies with a Second Foreign Language (French) have taken the subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries (Curriculum "D")
- Willingness: All the students were willing to cooperate with the research.

2.3 Methods

In this research, some methods were applied to diagnose the necessities to improve the teaching and learning process of the subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries. **Those methods were**:

- *Historical and logical method*, which made possible the analysis of the evolution and current situation of the teaching of the culture of the English speaking countries
- *Theoretical methods* (analytical and synthetical method and the inductive and deductive method). They were used to establish the research process foundations.
- *Empirical methods* such as analysis of documents and surveys were used.
- *Statistical and mathematical methods* (percentage analysis) were used to process data obtained from surveys.

2.3.1 Analysis of documents

Three documents were analyzed: *Modelo del professional,* the Syllabus of the subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries and the *Syllabus of the subject Computer Science. Modelo del professional* refers to the characteristics, values, attitudes and capacities of the future professional.

The document *Modelo del professional* (Curriculum *"D"*) for bachelors of the English Language with a Second Foreign Language (French) establishes that they should be able, among other things:

- To work as translators and/or interpreters in a concrete historical situation
- To contribute to the communication between Spanish speakers and non-Spanish speakers
- To teach English efficiently in order to contribute to the cultural development of a foreign language in our society.

According to the Syllabus of the subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries, students should:

- Increase their socio-cultural and aesthetic level by being in contact with other societies and cultures
- Continue shaping their personal convictions according to the principles of the present Cuban society through the analysis and study of other societies and cultures
- Be familiar with the cultural diversity of English-speaking countries and develop empathical feelings towards their culture
- Continue developing their research skills so that they can adequately

perform as graduates
- Acquire a panoramic view of the English-speaking countries and the different degrees of subordination to the ruling country that has prevailed in these nations
- Enrich their socio-cultural competence through the knowledge of the language and culture of these countries
- Develop their reading, listening, speaking and listening skills by getting in touch with the foreign language
- Develop their capacity to process information and write term papers about English-speaking countries

Therefore, students of the English Language with a Second Foreign Language (French) should acquire and develop the necessary skills in order to function properly as mediators between people from different cultural backgrounds. It is obvious that the subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries plays a very important role in the fulfilment of this objective.

In the course English Language with a Second Foreign Language (French), Curriculum "D", the subject Computer Science is taught in the second semester of the Introductory Course; however, along the rest of the academic years, students are challenged with tasks to improve their computing skills. This subject is intended:

- To develop skills and habits in the use of computers as a means of communication in order to obtain, process and store information.
- To know and to apply the established regulations for the use of computers in the University networks.
- To familiarize students with concepts, tools and specific procedures for the use of computer applications in their professional life.

But this Syllabus does not take into account the students' growing interest towards the creation of ICT tools to complement the teaching and learning process.

2.3.2 Students´survey

Two surveys were applied to 15 students of first and second years of academic year 2011-2012. One explored their general views on the subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries and the other their opinion about using ICTs in this subject, more specifically about the convenience of using Webquests in this subject (Appendixes 1 and 2). From the application of these surveys, the following results were obtained:

- 93.3 % of students are partially satisfied with the subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries, while 0.6 % is totally satisfied
- 100 % consider the bibliography available for this subject is not enough
- 100 % agree with the use of ICTs to support the teaching and learning process
- 100 % is familiar with the application of webquests to support the teaching and learning process
- 100 % totally agree that the implementation of webquests will improve the teaching and learning process of the subject Panorama of the English-Speaking Countries

Regularities obtained

After analyzing the documents *Modelo del professional,* the Syllabus of the subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries and the *Syllabus of the subject Computer Science* as well as the results from the application of the surveys, the following regularities can be pointed out:

- The overall findings suggest that the bachelors of English Language with a Second Foreign Language (French) will play a very important role as mediators in the process of communication, for which they must be aware of the history and cultural backgrounds of English-speaking countries
- Most of the students of 1and 2nd years surveyed think they need more supporting materials in order to improve the subject Panorama of English-speaking countries.
- There is a growing need to develop supporting materials with the aid of ICTs to complement the teachers' role in the teaching and learning process of the subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries.
- It is necessary to include the teaching of ICTs tools to support the teaching and learning process of the English Language course (websites, webquests, etc.) in the syllabus of Computer Science.
- The majority of the surveyed subjects think that the implementation of a model webquest will improve the teaching and learning process of the subject Panorama of the English-speaking Countries.

All these results obtained were taken into consideration to design a model webquest as a tool to enhance the teaching and learning process of the culture of English-speaking countries to students of English Language with a Second Foreign Language (French). This model webquest will be analyzed in Chapter 3, as well as its assessment by specialists.

CHAPTER 3. A MODEL WEBQUEST FOR THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS OF THE CULTURE OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

3.1 Characteristics of the proposal

Considering the theoretical foundations of Chapter 1 and the regularities presented in Chapter 2, this chapter offers the characteristics of a model webquest to improve the teaching and learning process of the culture of English-speaking countries.

3.2 Model webquest

The model webquest proposed is an alternative to solve problems that students face during the learning process of the subject Panorama of the English-speaking Countries.

There are several programs and web sites through which we can create a WQ such as:

- EDUTIC-WQ, (Educación y Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación)
- PHPWebQuest
- Generator 1, 2, 3 your WebQuest
- Zunal.Com
- Publisher
- Joomla
- Drupal

The webquest proposed was designed using Drupal. It is a free and very popular social and open source content management system (CMS), written in PHP. Drupal allows an individual or a community of users to easily and effectively publish, manage, and organize a wide variety of content on a website.

This software is useful for managing content; it introduces us to the concept of CMS or content management system. This CMS software enables bloggers to view, post, and edit content even without the knowledge of HTML, CSS, or webmaster tasks. Another beauty of Drupal is that it combines easily the social multimedia publishing with the web standards. At present, Drupal is a leader in the

open source software. It offers some options like file uploading and downloading, taxonomy, blocks, etc

Drupal has the following advantages **(http://lucid.com.au/services/the-advantages-drupal.html):**

> ➢ It is easy to use an update
> ➢ It is an open source software (people do not need to pay any licensing fees or development costs)
> ➢ Reliable and secure
> ➢ It can be configured for friendly URLs
> ➢ It is modular and extendible

As it was mentioned in the first chapter, the webquest is an activity that helps students to develop their way of thinking and to work independently in a short time.

This Webquest is composed of the following sections:
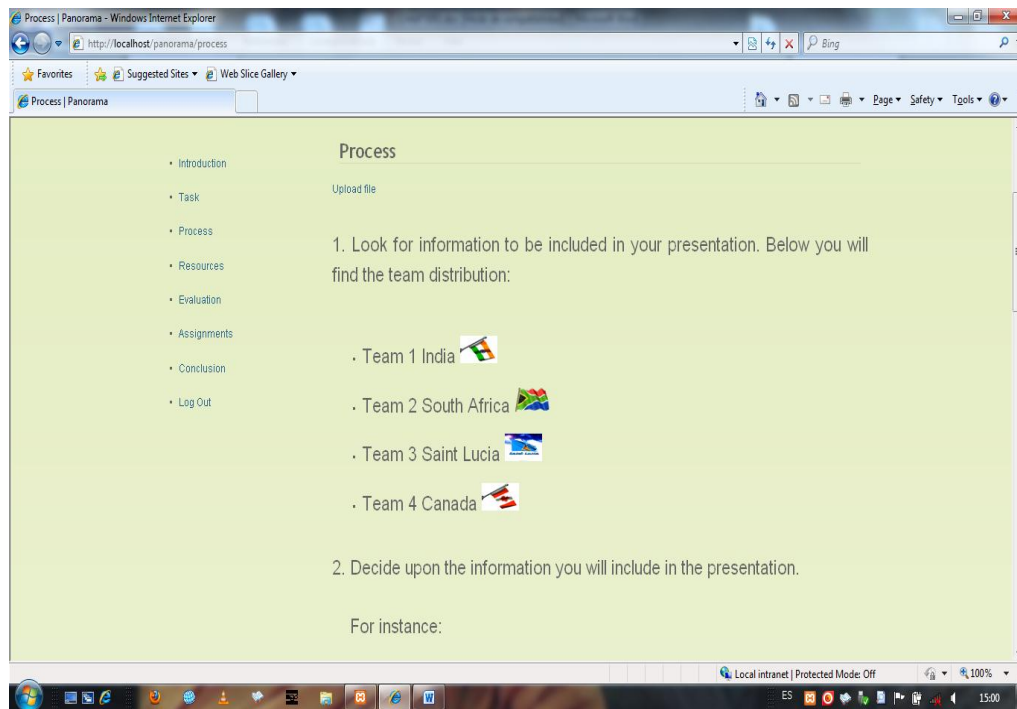
- **Home page**
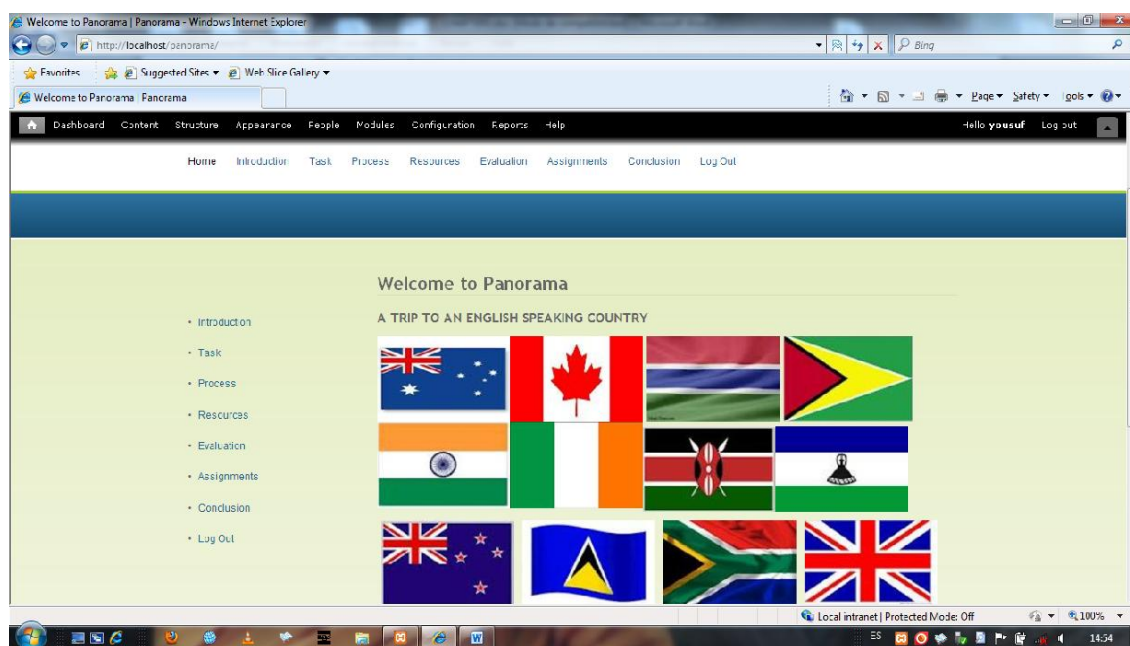
- **Introduction:** the overall theme of the Webquest is introduced; students are motivated to do the task
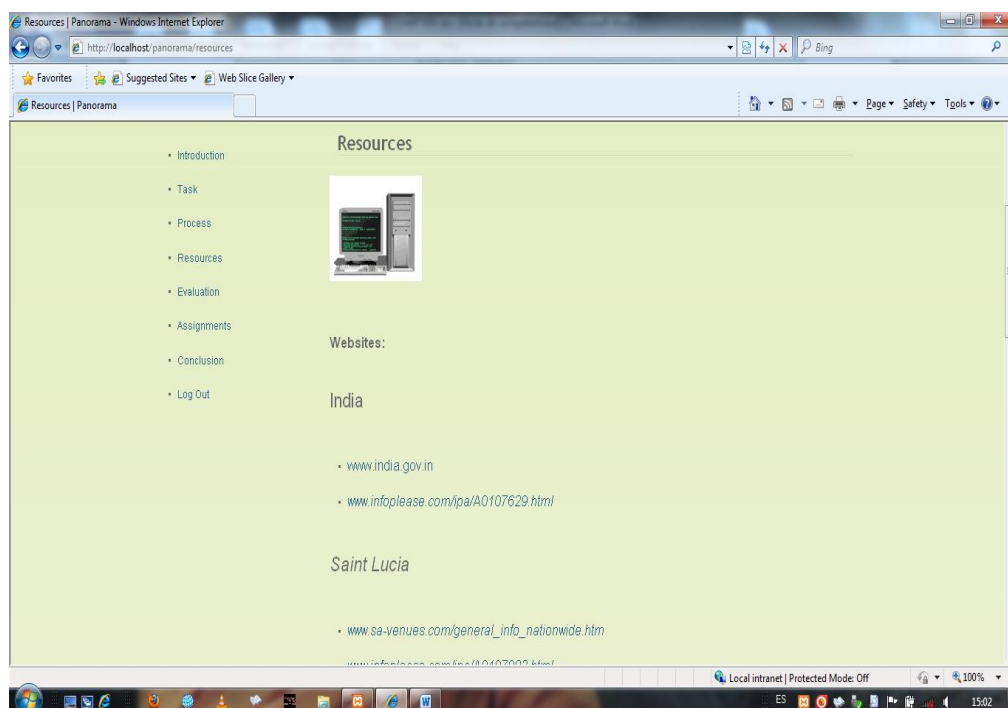
- **Task:** explains clearly what the learners will have to do as they work through the webquest
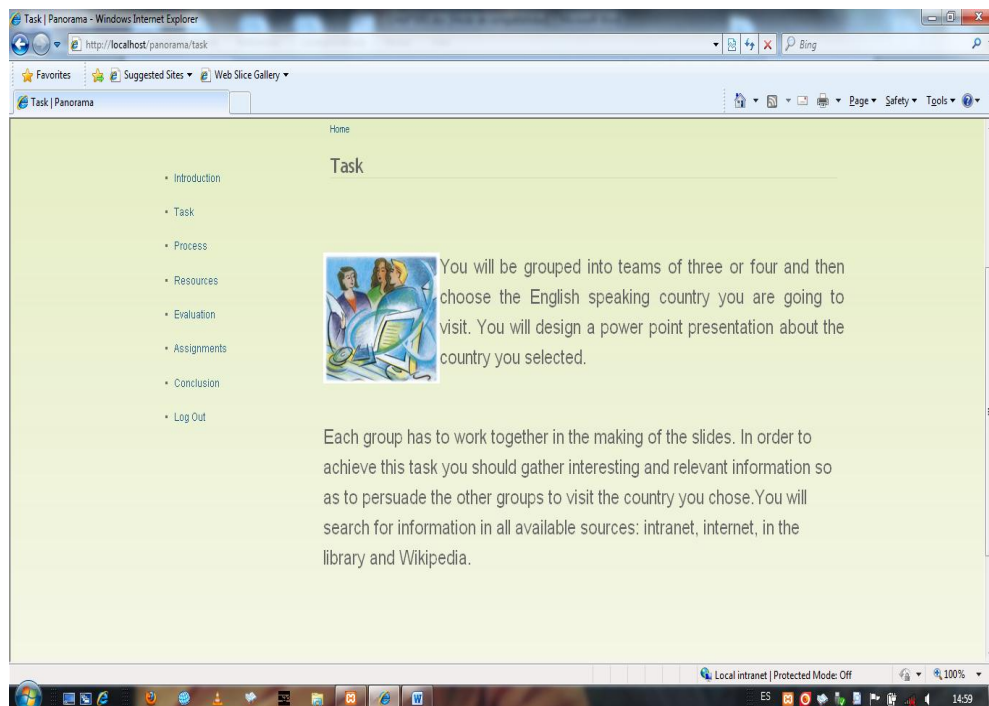
- **Process:** guides the learners through a set of activities and research tasks, using predefined resources.

- **Resources:** usually the bibliography (digital, web-based, or printed) students may use to complete the activities and research tasks

- **Evaluation:** involves learners in self-evaluation; it will also involve teacher's evaluation

Evaluation | Panorama - Windows Internet Explorer

http://localhost/panorama/evaluation

Favorites | Suggested Sites ▼ | Web Slice Gallery ▼

Evaluation | Panorama

SELF EVALUATION	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
I have visited the webpages assigned to me.			
I have accepted the tasks assigned to me.			
I have listened to and respected my classmates' opinion.			
I have contributed with ideas for the fulfillment of the task.			
I have handed in my work on the planned date.			
I have looked for the best pictures and videos to fulfill the task.			

Local intranet | Protected Mode: Off   100%

Evaluation | Panorama - Windows Internet Explorer

http://localhost/panorama/evaluation

Favorites | Suggested Sites ▼ | Web Slice Gallery ▼

Evaluation | Panorama

| CATEGORY	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (2)
Content Accuracy	All content throughout the presentation is accurate. There are no factual errors.	Most of the content is accurate but there is one piece of information that seems inaccurate.	The content is generally accurate, but one piece of information is clearly inaccurate.	Content confusing or contains more than one factual error.
Sequencing of Information	Information is organized in a clear, logical way. It is easy to anticipate the next slide.	Most information is organized in a clear, logical way. One slide or piece of information seems out of place.	Some information is logically sequenced. An occasional slide or piece of information seems out of place.	There is no clear plan for the organization of information.
Effectiveness	Presentation includes all material needed to give a good understanding of the topic. The project is consistent with the driving question.	Presentation is lacking one or two key elements. Project is consistent with driving question most of the time.	Presentation is missing more than two key elements. It is rarely consistent with the driving question.	Presentation is lacking several key elements and has inaccuracies. Project is completely inconsistent with driving question.

Local intranet | Protected Mode: Off   100%

Assignments: in this section the teacher can analyze and evaluate students' performance
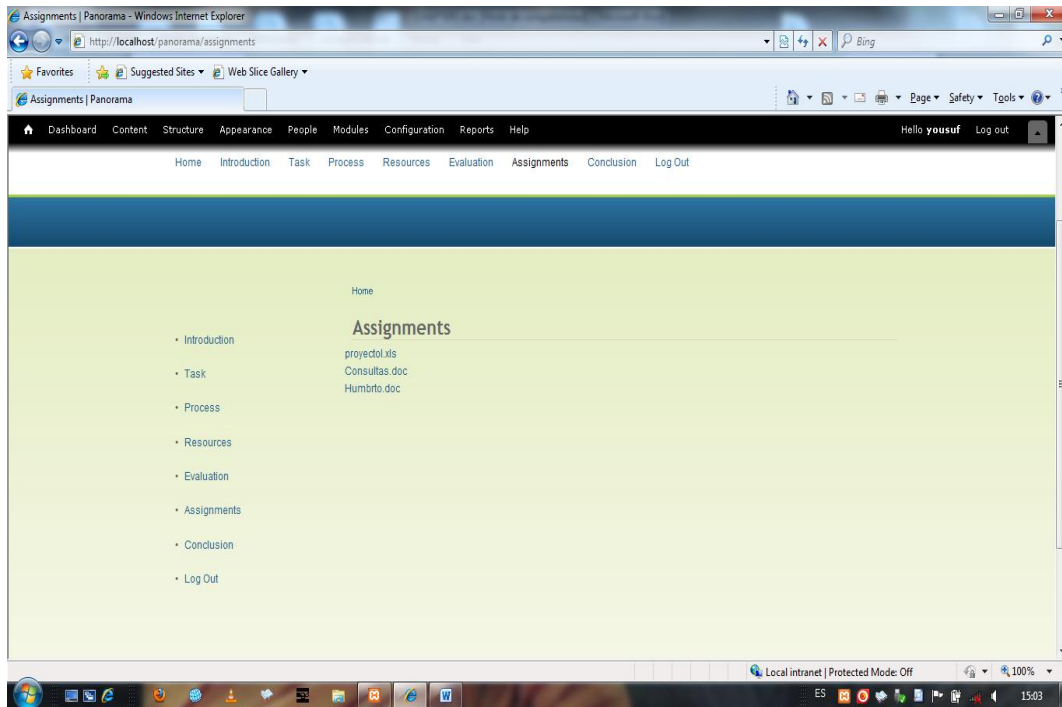
- **Conclusion:** the quest comes to its end, students remind what they have learned, and are encouraged to extend the experience into other domains.
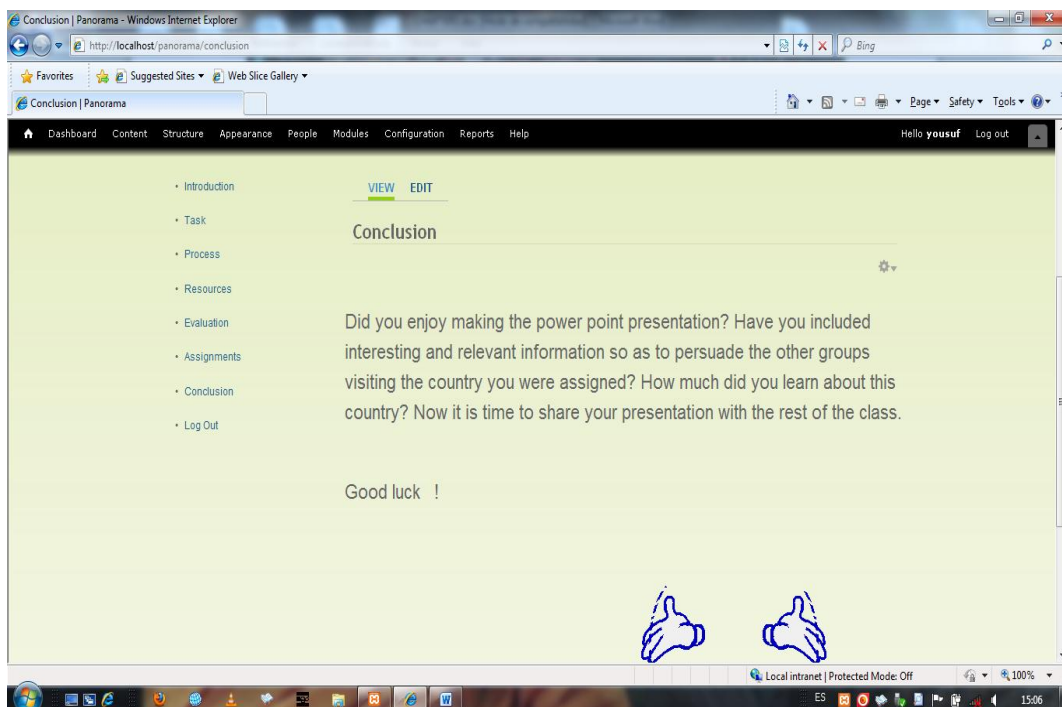
3.3. Assessment of the proposal

In order to assess the webquest, a survey (Appendix3) was applied to specialists of the English Language (Appendix 4). The sections of the webquest were evaluated on the bases of the following criteria:

➢ Unacceptable
➢ Acceptable
➢ Target

From the application of this survey, these results were obtained:

➢ 60% thought the *Introduction* deserves category *target,* while 40% marked *acceptable*
➢ 60% thought the *Task* deserves category *acceptable*, whereas 40 % evaluated it as *target*
➢ 60% marked *target* for the section *Process,* while 40% considered it *acceptable*
➢ 80% of specialists evaluated the *Resources* as *target,* while 20% gave it category *acceptable*
➢ 60% thought that the *Evaluation* section deserves category *target* and 40% thought it as *acceptable*
➢ 40% selected category *target* for the *Conclusion, 40%* evaluated it as *acceptable and 20% as target*
➢ 60% marked category target for the Design and 40% as acceptable

The suggestions given by the specialists of the English Language were taken into consideration for the improvement of the final version of the webquest designed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Although there is still much to do for the improvement of the teaching and learning process of the culture of English-Speaking Countries, this diploma paper is an important contribution to the better training of Bachelors of the English Language with a Second Foreign Language (French). Therefore, after finishing this diploma paper we come to the following conclusions:

- The Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and more specifically software tools can significantly help to improve students' active learning and develop their critical thinking.
- Most of the students of first and second years think they need more supporting materials in order to improve their knowledge about the culture of English-speaking countries
- Specialists agreed that the model webquest proposed can be an effective tool for the subject Panorama of English-Speaking Countries.

RECOMENDATIONS

This diploma work is another contribution for the implementation of ICT tools in the teaching and learning process of the English Language course. However, we consider advisable:

- To improve the webquest designed by adding more relevant and useful information
- To validate the effectiveness of the webquest proposed after 1 academic year benchmarking.
- To train students and professors in webquest design to create supporting materials for the improvement of the teaching and learning process of the English Language course

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