Using the WWW to Guide Science Inquiry Lessons: Barriers and Solutions to Creating WebQuests in Elementary/Middle School

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Abstract: There is questionable educational benefit in elementary/middle school in having learners surfing the Web without a clear task in mind. This is a report on the barriers and solutions encountered by three elementary/middle level teachers during their creation of two science WebQuests during the WebQuest/PDN Project, a joint university/school network venture in Maine. In the development phase, the barriers to creation of the WebQuests included the following examples: a) Scarcity of Reflective Time (absence of time in a teacher's busy schedule for unhurried, thoughtful computer access); b) Web-Surfing Tendencies of the "Read and Click Generation" (rapid and often unfocused web-surfing practices of students); and c) Students' Tendencies to Simply "Copy and Paste from the Web" (frequent lack of student reflectiveness and analytic ability while on the web). The teachers' WebQuests will be demonstrated, and their solutions for surmounting the above, and other, barriers will be examined.