Creating *Operation: Philanthropist*
A WebQuest for High School English Language Arts Students

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Contents:

Introduction:

The idea for *Operation: Philanthropist* is to create a web-based project that will have students work in teams to conduct online research, enabling them to learn the value of supporting local charities, and to carry out all of the necessary steps to develop and present a formal charity fundraising proposal in a business-like environment. The project is designed to teach online researching skills, collaborative teamwork, formal business practices, the styles and formats of formal business communications documents, and public speaking and presentation skills.

The Project URL:

The web site for *Operation Philanthropist* can be found online at:

http://www.geocities.com/rlpmedit/winter03/ed537/assignment3.html

The Project Framework:

The decision to choose a WebQuest was probably one of the easiest decisions we had to make in this whole project. We both wanted to choose a framework that was relatively new to us and that at the same time, when completed, would provide us with the skills to create and use this extremely useful framework in our own work environments. We both felt that a WebQuest could certainly enhance the teaching and learning process in our own jobs. We liked that the WebQuest has the potential to increase student motivation, develop thinking skills and facilitate cooperative learning (Disney, n.d., *b*; Dodge, 1998; March, 1998). A WebQuest is a learning environment supported by extensive Internet and other resources which prompts learners to inquire and construct meaning through collaborative research, critical thinking and decision making (Janes, 2003). We felt that the potential of the WebQuest is enormous and we wanted to investigate how we could avail of this potential.

Learning Theory and Accommodation of Multiple Intelligences:

Constructivist Theory and Principles in our WebQuest:

Constructivism is a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in. Each of us generates our own "rules" and "mental models," which we use to make sense of our experiences. Learning, therefore, is simply the process of adjusting our mental models to accommodate new experiences (Funderstanding, 2001). When developing our own WebQuest model we tried to remain cognizant of constructivist theory and incorporate some of the principles of constructivism into our own model. We feel that we have succeeded in this task. First of all, our

Operation: Philanthropist WebQuest certainly allows for collaborative work. Actually, this is one of the main purposes of our project. The project is designed to teach online researching skills, collaborative teamwork, formal business practices, the styles and formats of formal business communications documents, and public speaking and presentation skills. Our web site itself does in fact contain numerous multimedia components including graphics, etc. This is consistent with a conctructivist learning environment. Finally, at the end of our actual project we have included a section called Reflection. Here students can reflect on the whole process and what they have learned throughout. This again, is characteristic of the principles of constructivist learning.

Operation: Philanthropist and the Multiple Intelligences:

Dr. Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences suggests that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on I.Q. testing, is far too limited. Instead, Dr. Gardner proposes eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. These intelligences are: linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, music intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and naturalist intelligence (Armstrong, 2000). When creating our WebQuest model we tried to accommodate as many of these intelligences as we possibly could (Campbell and Campbell, 1993; Harvard Project Zero, 2000; Disney, *n.d.*; Haywood, *n.d.*). We did succeed to a certain degree as is evident from the following. Throughout the *Operation: Philanthropist* WebQuest students were required to write various letters to staff, memorandums, complete a presentation and present it as well as many more written activities. These certainly address the linguistic intelligence. Linguistic intelligence is the capacity to use language, your native language, and perhaps other languages, to express what is on your mind and to understand

other people (Harvard Project Zero, 2000). Another intelligence we addressed in this particular project was the interpersonal intelligence. This was addressed particularly though the use of the computer based project or WebQuest itself. Working in groups on a piece of software or on a project relying heavily on technology would be a good way to foster growth and development of this intelligence (Haywood, *n.d.*). Another intelligence we addressed was the Intrapersonal Intelligence. This particular intelligence was covered quite extensively. There were numerous instances for example where students were required to post individual messages to the virtual boardroom. In addition, as Haywood suggests, "working on tech-rich projects which help the students explore issues that touch them personally, or that they have strong opinions about" (*Ibid.*). This was certainly encouraged throughout this project. These are probably the three main intelligences addressed in this project. However, others could certainly have been addressed depending on the students' choices throughout the project.
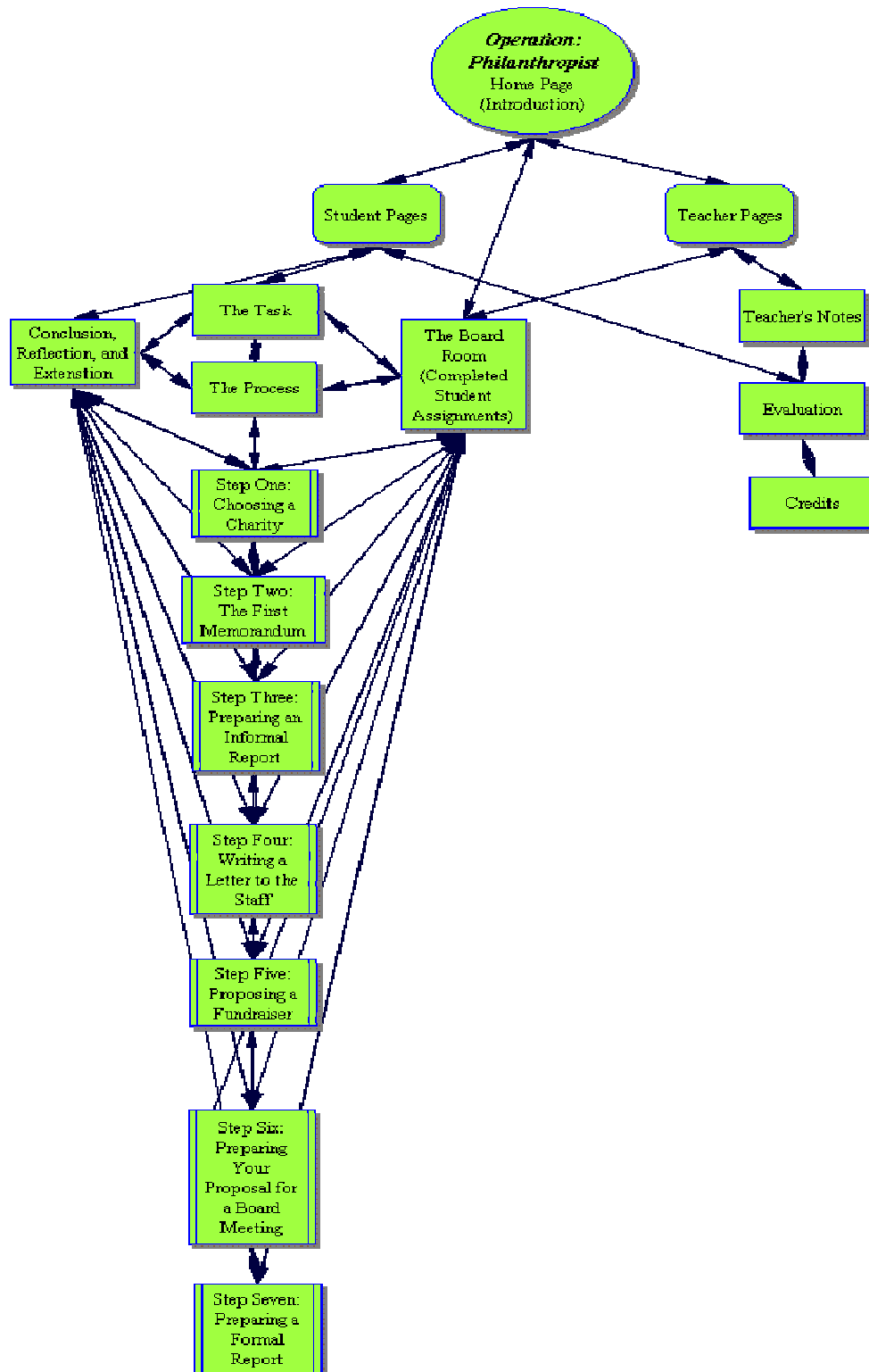
Project Creativity:

Creativity has been incorporated into the design of this web-based project both in terms of the creation of the unit and the unique integration of technology into unit planning, and in terms of the types of tasks, peer interactions, and final project products expected of students throughout their participation in *Operation: Philanthropist* (Disney, n.d., *b*; Dodge, 1998; March, 1998). The project itself is designed to serve as the primary mode for teaching several units in Language 3102 under the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation English Language Arts Curriculum (*APEF*, 2000). In addition, the project is designed to incorporate practical, real world activities and experiences into the learning experiences for the units covered (Fleming, et. al., 1990). Rather than simply taking notes, and creating meaningless examples of the document

styles and group interaction formats covered in the Language 3102 curriculum, students will have the opportunity to create necessary documents with a purpose, build ties with the community, interact in actual real world scenarios, and gain a sense of purpose and accomplishment from the products created throughout the unit (Disney, n.d., *b*; Dodge, 1998; March, 1998).

Creativity has also been incorporated into this project in terms of the types of tasks, peer interactions, and final products expected of students (*Ibid.*). Students will have the opportunity to create documents with the aim of persuading their peers, and their school, to support a local charity organization. They will also have the opportunity to create group web sites, and a *PowerPoint* presentation, in whatever manner they feel most effective to illicit support for the charity organization of their choice. Students will be responsible for making decisions on which charity they feel is most worthy of their attention and support, what information to convey to others regarding the charity of their choice, and what form of fundraising activity would be the most widely accepted and effective within their own school (*Ibid.*).

The Project Layout:

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                    Operation:
                   Philanthropist
                    Home Page
                   (Introduction)

       Student Pages                    Teacher Pages

            The Task              The Board          Teacher's Notes
 Conclusion,                        Room
 Reflection, and The Process     (Completed          Evaluation
 Extension                         Student
                                 Assignments)        Credits
            Step One:
            Choosing a
             Charity

            Step Two:
            The First
           Memorandum

           Step Three:
           Preparing an
             Informal
              Report

           Step Four:
           Writing a
          Letter to the
              Staff

           Step Five:
           Proposing a
            Fundraiser

            Step Six:
            Preparing
              Your
          Proposal for
            a Board
            Meeting

          Step Seven:
          Preparing a
             Formal
             Report
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Copyright Issues:

Copyright issues were not a major problem during the creation of this project. In only once instance was copyrighted material incorporated into the web site itself. The definition of a philanthropist was taken from the online version of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, 2002). In this case, a link was provided to the definition at the *Oxford English Dictionary* web site itself, and the web site was cited in the credits and educational resources sections of the project web site. The images incorporated in the *Operation: Philanthropist* web site are all examples of shareware, and the sites were the images were found were also referenced in the credits for the project.

Project Lesson Plan:

Subject:

Language 3102: Business Communications (though *Operation: Philanthropist* can be adapted for other English Language Arts, Social Studies, or Consumer Studies courses).

Learning Level:

Level III (Grade 12) English Language Arts students.

Authors:

Gary Barrett and Rob Power (*Education 537: Designing Web-Based Learning*, Winter Semester, 2003)

Purpose:

The purpose of *Operation: Philanthropist* is to teach students the formats and uses of standard business communication formats, and to involve students in peer and community interactions, through the integration of multimedia technology and practical, real world experiences into the teaching and learning experience.

Credits for Lesson Idea:

The credits for this lesson idea come from the study units in *Communicating for Business* (Fleming, et. al, 1990) the Language 3102 course textbook, and from a variety of web sites related to the purpose, uses, and creation of WebQuest projects (Disney, n.d., *b*; Dodge, 1998; March, 1998).

Outcomes/Objectives:

Operation: Philanthropist can be used to meet each of the following outcomes as specified under the *Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation English Language Arts Curriculum Outcomes, 10-12* (*APEF*, 2000):

a) Speaking and Listening Skills:
- Examine others' ideas and synthesize what is helpful to clarify and extend their own understanding?
- Articulate, advocate and justify positions on an issue or text in a convincing manner, showing an understanding of a range of opposing viewpoints?
- Interact in both leadership and support roles in a range of situations, some of which are characterized by complexity of purpose, procedure, and subject matter?
- Adapt language and delivery for a variety of audiences and purposes in informal and formal contexts, some of which are characterized by complexity of purpose, procedure, and subject matter?
- Consistently demonstrate active listening and concern for the needs, rights and feelings of others?
- Demonstrate how spoken language influences and manipulates and reveals ideas, values and attitudes?
- Address the demands of a variety of speaking situations, making critical language choices, especially of tone and style?

b) Reading and Viewing Skills:
- Select texts to support their learning needs and range of special interests?
- Articulate their understanding of ways in which information texts are constructed for particular purposes?
- Access, select and research, in systematic ways, specific information to meet personal and learning needs?
- Critically evaluate the information they access?
- Show the relationships among language, topic, purpose, context and audience?

c) Writing and Other Ways of Representing Skills:
- Make effective choices of language and techniques to enhance the impact of imaginative writing and other ways of representing?
- Produce writing and other forms of representation characterized by increasing complexity of thought, structure and conventions?
- Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which the construction of texts can create, enhance or control meaning?
- Apply their knowledge of what strategies are effective for them as creators of various writing and media productions?
- Use the conventions of written language accurately and consistently in final products?
- Use technology to effectively serve their communication purposes?
- Demonstrate a commitment to the skilful crafting of a range of writing and other representations?
- Integrate information from many sources to construct and communicate meaning?

Background to Lesson:

Before integrating *Operation: Philanthropist*, into classroom teaching and learning, students will need to have experience in working as groups. Functioning as groups, and group brainstorming techniques, are covered in the earlier units of *Communicating for Business* in Language 3102. In addition, it would be ideal if students had prior experience in using either *Microsoft PowerPoint* or *Corel Presentations*, and in using web creation software, such as *Microsoft FrontPage* or *Netscape Composer*. While these skills would be ideal, access is provided through the *Operation: Philanthropist* web site to tips and tutorials on using presentation software, and learning how to use the software could be included under the objectives for the project itself.

Tasks:

Students participating in *Operation: Philanthropist* will be required to complete the following tasks:

- Function in a group setting, including selecting team leaders, and assigning roles or duties to team members.
- Create a group home page on which to post all completed assignments throughout this project.
- Conduct online research into local charity organizations and, as a group, select a charity that they would like to support.
- Write a memorandum, using proper business format, stating their intentions to develop a fundraising proposal for the charity organization of the group's choice.
- Prepare an informal report, using proper business format, outline relevant information on the charity organization they have selected, and the reason for choosing to support that charity.
- Write a letter to the school staff, using proper business letter format, requesting the staff to donate the proceeds of a weekly Jeans Day to the charity organization the group has selected.
- Write a memorandum to the class, in proper business format, stating the group's intention to present a proposal for a fundraising activity that could be held in the school for the charity the group has selected.
- Create a *PowerPoint* Presentation designed to introduce the group's charity organization to the class, and to convince the class of the merits of supporting that organization, and of the fundraising activity the group is proposing to hold at the school.
- Prepare a formal report, using proper business format, on the group's efforts to research and select a local charity organization to support, the development of a fundraising proposal, and the results of the group's presentation of their proposal to the class.

Interaction:

Students will work in groups of 3-5 for all parts of this project. Group size can be determined by the teacher, depending on the size of the class, and the number of actual groups desired.

Assessment:

A rubric has been developed for the evaluation of the tasks students must complete while participating in *Operation: Philanthropist*. The rubric includes the assessment criteria of Format, Content, Resources, Appearance, Spelling and Grammar, and Group Work. The

evaluation criteria cover each of the English Language Arts curriculum objectives outlined above

(*APEF*, 2000).   A copy of the evaluation rubric has been included in the *Operation:*

Philanthropist web site, and is reproduced in Appendix A, below.

Tools:

- Access to a school computer lab with at least one Internet-ready computer for each group.
- Internet access.
- Web creation software, such as *Microsoft FrontPage* or *Netscape Composer*.
- Presentation Software, such as *Microsoft PowerPoint* or *Corel Presentations*.
- Word processor software, such as *Microsoft Word* or *Corel WordPerfect*.
- Server space to host the project web site, and student web sites for posting completed assignments.

Technology Integrated:

Technology has been integrated into this project primarily in the form of Internet access.

Students will be required to access the *Operation: Philanthropist* project web site, as well as to

use the links provided in the project web site, or to search the Internet, for the web sites of local

charity organizations. In addition, students will be required to use word processor software to

create necessary documents, web creation software to create a group home page for posting

assignments, and presentation software to create and present a group fundraiser proposal to the

class. The primary limitations to the integration of other forms of technology were a lack of

necessity, given the context of this project, and a consideration for the types of technology

common to school computer labs in general.

Student Expectations:

- Form and function as a cohesive group.
- Create a group home page, and post completed assignments to their home page by expected due dates.
- Create a variety of documents in proper business format, including memorandums, business letter, formal and informal reports.

- Create a group presentation, using presentation software, to introduce the charity that they have selected, and convince the class to support their charity, and the school-based fundraising activity they are proposing.

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13

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Appendix A: *Operation: Philanthropist* Student Evaluation Rubric

	1	2	3	4	Mark
Format	Does not use proper format for task.	Shows little understanding of proper format.	Needs more practice at using proper format.	Uses proper format.	
Content	Does not provide necessary content. Choice of content appears unfocused and rambling.	Provides some useful information but choice of content is unfocused and rambles.	Provides necessary information but choice of content needs sharper focus.	Provides necessary information. Choice of content is clear and focused.	
Resources	Makes no use of resources provided.	Poor use of resources. Shows little variety of resources. Resources not properly cited.	Adequate use of resources. Properly cites resources.	Uses provided resources effectively. Uses a variety of recources. Properly cites resources.	
Appearance	Final submission is not type-written. Appearance is sloppy, and difficult to read.	Final submission is not type-written. Appearance is neat, but uninteresting.	Final submission is type-written. Appearance is neat and easy to read. Adequate use of fonts and graphics to enhance appearance.	Final submission is type-written. Neat and tidy. Uses a variety of fonts and graphics effectively.	
Spelling/ Grammar	Very frequent grammar and/or spelling errors.	A few grammar and/or spelling errors.	Only one or two errors in grammar or spelling.	All grammar and spelling are correct.	
Group Work	Group members do not work together effectively. Little or no division of tasks. Few group members participating fully.	Group members work together somewhat effectively. Some division of tasks. Some group members not participating fully.	Group members cooperate effectively, most tasks divided evenly. Most group members participating fully.	Group members work together effectively and divide up tasks evenly.	
				Total	