

Websites

5.4

Information sheet to support schools in addressing the question, 'How can the use of websites promote independent learning?'

In the new secondary curriculum, the core skills for pupils include that of being 'independent enquirers' and 'self-managers'. In principle, primary pupils will also be developing the skills. Below are two core ideas, using web resources, for promoting this.

Webquests

A webquest is an enquiry-based online learning activity.

The teacher sets up a series of learning activities based on materials from identified websites. These can be done in lesson time or out, and at the pupil's own pace. Information obtained from the sites will be used for further tasks with the expectation that the pupil undertakes some analytical and evaluative work.

A webquest will usually involve at least three websites and may involve more. For further details, see www.mmiweb.org.uk.

Example

Pupils are studying a unit on Islam and being a Muslim in the UK today. The first couple of lessons looked at the basic beliefs of Muslim groups in the UK (Sunni and Shi'a). The teacher then wanted pupils to explore a range of ideas about being a Muslim through looking at online resources.

She finds a number of useful sites (see below) and constructs a simple word-processed document which gives the web addresses of these sites and some prompt questions for the pupils to explore when looking at them. Thus, the document she constructs allows pupils to enter on a 'quest' for information which they can then use to make a presentation, or video, or put into a writing frame.

The sites used:

'The art of integration': www.artofintegration.co.uk/aoiEng/homeEng.php. Pupils look at the Gallery in particular and have to comment on three pictures that surprised, informed or challenged them.

Pupils then progress to the sites at www.teenperspectives.com/muslim-teen-uk/ and news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_4200000/newsid_4202800/4202819.stm where they have to digest the information and then write a short reply to either Somayya or Fatima.

Finally they go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1O-BocOTeg to listen to a story of conversion (or 'reversion' as Muslims sometimes refer to it) and are asked to comment on the core ideas about Islam that attracted Sis Jan.

Websites

5.4 (Continued)

Vertical and horizontal learning or 'e-boxes'

Using the school's website or Virtual Learning Environment, the teacher develops materials to support learning for the main learning objectives undertaken in the classroom.

This will include teacher and pupil resources for the lesson (the *vertical* strand) but also support for areas in which pupils may choose to develop their learning outside the main programme of study aims (the *horizontal* strand).

The learning outside the classroom (homework) activities then use these materials to aid independent research and learning, allowing the pupils to respond in a variety of media of their own choice.

Example

The Year 11 class has been looking at the ideas of ethics within the development of medicine and how issues of life were being constantly challenged by the development of new medical, especially genetic, developments. The teacher wants the class to undertake a project over the course of the next 2–3 weeks looking at stem-cell research and how different religions engaged with this idea.

To develop this, the teacher set up a webpage of resources that the pupils would be able to use 'anywhere, anytime' they had access to the web. All but two of the students in the class had access to the web at home and the teacher arranged for these two pupils to have access to the school network and also checked that their local library had web access.

The e-box resource can be found at www.srsp.net/kassel/ and is part of the Science and Religion in Schools Project.