



A visit to London

A WebQuest for students at the scuola Scuola Media di Commercio Maturità Professionale di Chiasso

Classroom Practice / Pratique scolaire / Unterrichtspraxis / Pratica scolastica

A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented activity in which students use information they find on the internet. WebQuests exist for many subjects and many different groups of students. Babylonia wishes to promote the development and distribution of WebQuests for modern languages and has created a database on its homepage www.babylonia-ti.ch

One of the WebQuest in the Babylonia collection was developed by Antonio Pagani, a teacher of English at the scuola media di commercio maturità professionale di Chiasso. He developed the WebQuest "A visit to London" in which students plan a five-day visit to London. Each group of four students had to plan one day. After the introduction they had 8 lessons to plan the visit. On 15 November the students presented their projects. One group presented their work with a PowerPoint presentation; the other groups had made overhead projector transparencies. The PowerPoint presentation can be seen by clicking on the teacher pages of the webquest "A visit to London". Their contributions were highly original, although every group had included a visit to Madam Tussaud's, they had also found interesting shopping centres, pubs, restaurants, discos and museums. During the project the students decided to actually go to London with the whole class later this year, which gave the whole project a much more realistic dimension.

After the presentations the students could pass a judgement on their classmates' presentations. The group with the most spectacular presentation (PowerPoint) was second. It showed that the students were quite able to distinguish between a flashy show and a presentation that was more interesting with respect to content and originality.

In an interview with the class the students showed their enthusiasm. They had been able to actually use the language they had been learning; they appreciated the autonomy with which they could work. They could make a lot of choices themselves concerning the organisation and planning, but also the content of their presentation. Some students said they really felt well prepared for the trip now and were really looking forward to it. The fact that each group wanted to present an interesting programme for one day, created a sound rivalry among the students.

The teacher was also satisfied. Creating the WebQuest took a lot of time. It was done as part of a course on information and communication technology, in which the participants had to develop a didactic application. Although a bit worried at the beginning, he soon realized that the students were actually learning a lot during the project. Their motivation was high. When the groups were formed the students were told that the group would receive a mark for the project. Some students were a bit worried that the weaker students in the group might prevent them from getting a better



Antonio Pagani and his class at Chiasso.

mark, but in the end everybody seemed to be satisfied with the mark they got.

Antonio plans further WebQuest with his students. The next one is probably the one about selecting and presenting a film, which the class will decide to see together. He will pay a bit more attention to the presentations. Some students had learned their text by heart, probably because they felt so insecure. They probably need a few techniques to help them prepare a presentation. (gs)