This class has introduced me to many new concepts and tools. A WebQuest is brand new to me. From my very basic understanding, a WebQuest is an interactive method for teaching a specific topic through the use of Internet resources. Students are given an authentic task to investigate online and eventually complete a final project and reflection. A WebQuest consists of key elements, which often include an overall goal, an authentic task, an explicit description of the process to complete the task, a list of web-based resources, a final evaluation and a reflection.

A WebQuest is an effective teaching tool for any classroom. It allows a student to learn at his/her own pace and comfort level. They are engaged in reading Internet resources effectively, which means they are using key strategies to make meaning. While completing the process of the WeQuest, students are thinking critically, collaborating, using problem-solving skills and evaluating information. Students may even be able to learn new information about the topic that the teacher did not expect. By allowing students to choose how they would like to demonstrate their learning (i.e. letter writing, presentation, poster-making), the teacher can get an idea about how her/his students feel most comfortable being assessed. This should guide future decisions made by the teacher in terms of instructional methods and activities.

The benefits of using WebQuests in the classroom are that it engages children in a topic and fosters independence. For students who are used to sitting quietly without participating or who wait until someone else gives an answer, a WebQuest is an opportunity to participate to your comfort level. Some students will engage with others more while working, while other students will take off independently. A WebQuest allows for in-depth understanding, promotes cooperative learning and allows students to learn to use the Internet as a learning tool.

On the other hand, WebQuests require students to have many opportunities to access and utilize the Internet. They may need to use the Internet independently or they may need to collaborate in groups. Internet access may be limited in the classroom. Extensive computer time will need to be provided, which could conflict with other instruction. As the Internet grows and changes regularly, the resources utilized on the WebQuest may also change or become inactive. The teacher needs to carefully monitor what he/she is including in the WebQuest due to copyright issues. Teachers will have to consider their students levels of comfort and skill in using the Internet.

In the second grade curriculum, particular units are not given enough attention in terms of resources for learning, types of activities or depth of learning. Specifically, I could create a WebQuest on either a Health unit or a Social Studies unit. I would like to focus on Illness and Disease for Health or Citizenship in the Community in Social Studies.