

**USING A WEBQUEST MODEL TO DEVELOP
CRITICAL READING ACHIEVEMENT AMONG
LANGUAGES AND TRANSLATION
DEPARTMENT STUDENTS AT ARAR
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND ARTS**

Manal Mohamed Khodary*

Mahmoud Mohamed AbdAllah**

***Northern Border University _ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

**** Northern Border University _ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

USING A WEBQUEST MODEL TO DEVELOP CRITICAL READING ACHIEVEMENT AMONG LANGUAGES AND TRANSLATION DEPARTMENT STUDENTS AT ARAR COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND ARTS

Abstract_ *This study aimed at investigating the effect of using a WebQuest Model (WM) on developing critical reading achievement among Languages and Translation Department students. The participants were fourth level English Diploma students at Languages and Translation Department at Arar College of Education and Arts in Saudi Arabia. Twenty-five fourth level English Diploma students participated as an experimental group. This group was pre-tested by using the Critical Reading Achievement Test (CRT) to assess their critical reading achievement before conducting the experiment. The experimental group was trained on using the WM to develop their critical reading achievement. The experimental group was post-tested by using the CRT. Then, they were tested by using the delayed CRT after one month of the post-CRT. The results revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group between the pre- and post- CRT in favor of the post- CRT. The results also revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group between the post- and the delayed CRT. The results indicated the usefulness of using the WM in developing English Diploma students' critical reading achievement.*

Keywords: *WebQuest, WebQuest Model, critical reading skills, critical reading achievement.*

I. INTRODUCTION

THE emergence of the Internet as a language learning resource has led to the development of numerous technology applications in classrooms. Using the Internet in Foreign Language (FL) classrooms could increase students' motivation and participation in classroom. WebQuests offer good Internet-based language learning opportunities because they provide learners with exposure to authentic material, meaningful content and possibilities for real communication in the target language [37]. WebQuests are designed to "focus on using information rather than looking for it, and to support students' thinking at the levels of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation" [8, p. 6]. They enable students to make sense out of the web documents while skimming and scanning the provided websites.

The WebQuest has several advantages such as providing a relatively easy way to incorporate the Internet into classroom, encouraging critical thinking, leading to more communication and interaction through group activities, and eliciting greater learner motivation through

real-life tasks. Therefore, WebQuests have been developed for the purpose of engaging the learner in a task which elicits higher order thinking than simple information searching [33]. They continue to grow in popularity, with teachers from around the world and experts in the field of educational technology to promote higher level thinking. WebQuests could allow teachers to access information at their own convenience and at their own pace and to utilize student-centered learning, co-operative learning, and authentic assessment while also tapping into the vast resources on the Internet [15].

Critical reading refers to a careful, active, reflective and analytic reading [19]. The possession of critical reading skills could open real possibilities in students' future working and personal lives [14]. It could help students analyze the written texts in terms of the author's main argument, sufficiency of the evidence provided to support this argument, tone and style employed by the author in the text and the overall plausibility of the subject matter [12]. Critical reading is considered a highly reflective skill that requires students to stand back and gain some evidence from the text they are reading [17]. Therefore, it is essential for teachers of English to help their students become critical readers.

Considering the important role of critical reading in university students' academic and personal lives and taking into account the benefits regarding the application of critical reading lessons in classrooms and the growing use of WebQuests as collaborative web tools that could be implemented in classrooms, a greater emphasis should be given to using the WebQuest to develop students' critical reading achievement. It is also important that students should be more concerned about developing their critical reading achievement. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the effect of using a WebQuest Model (WM) on developing critical reading achievement among English Diploma students at Arar College of Education and Arts.

A. Context of the study

The principal researcher works as an Associate Professor at Languages and Translation Department at Arar College of Education and Arts. She realized that students enrolled in English Diploma at Languages and

Translation Department at that college suffer from weaknesses in critical reading in English as they used to produce words and sentences that are directly stated in a reading text when answering questions about it. Moreover, they used to read texts without enough consideration to important critical reading skills such as identifying the main idea in the text, detecting the author's purpose, guessing the meaning in context, drawing conclusions, making comparisons, identifying cause and effect relationships, and making inferences.

To determine how serious the problem of critical reading achievement among English Diploma students at Languages and Translation Department is, the principal researcher conducted a pilot study on a random sample of 19 English Diploma students. She discussed with the pilot sample the problems they had concerning their critical reading achievement. They indicated that the weaknesses they suffer from in critical reading included the inability to guess the meaning of words in context, recognize bias, draw conclusions, identify the audience and make inferences. They also stressed that these weaknesses could be a result of being not given enough opportunity to engage in instructional activities which could help them develop their critical reading achievement.

The researcher also administrated a critical reading test at the beginning of the second term of the academic year 2012-2013 on the same students. The reason was to reveal the problem of critical reading that English Diploma students suffer from. The results of this test revealed that these students are weak in critical reading. Moreover, the researcher analyzed English Diploma students' past critical reading exam results in reading on the academic year 2012-2013. The analysis showed that they suffer from weaknesses in critical reading. These weaknesses were such as the students' inability to identify the main idea, make inferences, draw conclusions, identify supportive information and details, distinguish fact from opinion and identify cause and effect relationship.

Moreover, the principal researcher conducted a pilot study with 9 English Language instructors at Languages and Translation Department at Arar College of Education and Arts. They were randomly selected to investigate their opinions regarding how serious the problem of critical reading achievement of English Diploma students is. They indicated that English Diploma students suffer from weaknesses in critical reading such as their inability to draw conclusions, identify supportive information and details, distinguish fact from opinion, and make comparisons. They asserted that the reason behind these weaknesses could be attributed to the inappropriate methods of teaching critical reading provided to them. These methods are void of Internet based technology that could be used in teaching critical reading.

The researchers conducted a survey on previous studies designed to investigate the use of the Internet in

teaching critical reading. Research revealed a positive correlation between Internet based language learning and academic achievement because Internet integration into classroom teaching and learning of a language could meet the needs of the students and promote their interest in the task [25]. However, there is little empirical research on the extent to which the Internet effectively supports teaching critical reading [26]. Moreover, although the WebQuest is believed to be theoretically and pedagogically sound for language learning, most research on WebQuests focused on their use for interdisciplinary teaching [28] and co-operative learning [4].

Besides, few studies evaluated the effects of using WebQuests by students on their learning and motivation [25]. In fact, although the WebQuest is believed to be theoretically and pedagogically sound for language learning, there have not been any studies which explore the usefulness of WebQuests in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts [29].

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As indicated by the results of the pilot studies on English Diploma students' critical reading achievement, it was found out that they suffer from weaknesses in their critical reading achievement. These weaknesses are represented in their inability to identify the main ideas of passages in which the main ideas are not directly stated, detect the author's purpose and tone, guess the meaning of words in context, draw conclusions, make comparisons, form personal justified opinions, make inferences, recognize bias, identify cause and effect relationships, recognize contradictions in a text and evaluate arguments. These weaknesses might be attributed to the inappropriate approaches of teaching critical reading provided to them. Using a WM is, therefore, suggested to develop critical reading achievement among English Diploma students at Languages and Translation Department at Arar College of Education and Arts.

A. Questions of the Study

This study provided answers to the following questions:

- 1- What is the WM program that was utilized to train English Diploma students to develop their critical reading achievement?
- 2- Would there be statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group between the pre- and post- Critical Reading Test (CRT) in favor of the post-CRT?
- 3- Would there be no statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group between the post- and delayed CRT?

B. Purpose of the Study

The purpose is to investigate the effect of using a WM on developing critical reading achievement among English Diploma students at Languages and Translation Department at Arar College of Education and Arts.

C. Significance of the Study

The results of this study could be significant to English Diploma students at Languages and Translation Department at Faculties of Education and Arts as it represents an attempt to overcome the shortcomings in teaching critical reading by offering a teaching strategy based on using a WM to develop critical reading achievement among them. It could also be significant to English language instructors and curriculum developers as it introduces them an easy way to incorporate the Internet represented in the use of the WebQuest into English language classrooms encouraging critical reading among learners of English.

D. Variables of the Study

The independent variable is using the WM in teaching critical reading. The dependent variable is students' critical reading achievement.

E. Limitations of the Study

The study was confined to:

- English Diploma students at Arar College of Education and Arts as the principal researcher works as an Associate Professor at Languages and Translation Department at Arar College of Education and Arts.
- This study was conducted in the second term of the academic year 2012-2013.

F. Definition of Terms

1-A WebQuest

March [22] defined a WebQuest as "a scaffold learning structure that uses links to essential resources on the World Wide Web and an authentic task to motivate students' investigation of a central, open-ended question, development of individual expertise and participation in a final group process that attempts to transform newly acquired information into a more sophisticated understanding" (p. 3).

The present study defined a WebQuest as an activity that is based on using resources from the Internet and presents authentic tasks with scaffolding that encourage students' participation in an autonomous and collaborative way.

2- Critical reading

Kurland [19] defined critical reading as " a technique for discovering information and ideas within a text" (p. 1).

The present study defined critical reading as a technique for evaluating what is read. It involves the ability to identify the main idea, find the evidence the text employs, show author's point of view, guess the meaning of words in context, guess the author's intended meaning, identify cause and effect relationships, recognize bias, draw conclusions, identify the audience, make inferences and recognize the tone. These critical reading skills will be measured by using the CRT.

3- English Diploma Students

The present study defined English Diploma Students as students who are enrolled in an English Language program provided by Northern Border University in Saudi

Arabia. They are fourth level and received this program at Languages and Translation Department at Arar College of Education and Arts. All of them were females and their ages ranged from 19 to 20 years old.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. History of WebQuests

With the advent of the Internet, a recently developed educational strategy called the WebQuest has been utilized as a form of guided inquiry using web resources and an instructional tool for promoting critical thinking skills, scaffolding and co-operative learning [43]. The first WebQuest was created by Dodge at San Diego State University in 1995. Since then, it has been widely used in all areas and levels of education. The WebQuest approach is based on teaching subject area content through computer generated web-based instructional activities. It has also been regarded as an inquiry-based learning activity and an effective tool that incorporates Internet resources into lessons organized around a particular topic [8]. Educators value the WebQuest's impact and encourage its use in various educational settings [24]. Therefore, WebQuests have gained popularity and have become a frequent topic of discussion at technology and education conferences [20]

A WebQuest offers an ideal social constructivist Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) environment [35]. It blends the benefits of the constructivist approach, inquiry-based learning approach, project-based approach and co-operative learning [3]. By using the WebQuest approach, EFL students could avoid the pitfall of the Internet while exploiting efficiently its useful resources of language learning [11].

WebQuests could be either short-term or long-term, depending on the instructional goal. A short-term WebQuest can take from one to three days to complete. It can involve the students in knowledge acquisition and integration, making sense of a large amount of information. A long-term WebQuest can take from one to four weeks to complete. It can involve the students in extending and refining information through analysis and demonstration [15].

Recognizing the benefits of implementing WebQuests into language instruction, thousands of schools and universities all over the world and many teachers have used WebQuests in classroom language instruction for several years [22].

WebQuests include six major components:

- Introduction: The introduction provides the learners background information on the topic to prepare them to what is coming [7]. It motivates them to want to learn more and explore the topic in depth [22]. It discusses the importance of the topic of the WebQuest and reasons why the topic is worth investigating. A good topic included in the introduction of a WebQuest should be clearly tied to the curriculum standards, build on the learner's prior

knowledge by explicitly mentioning important concepts or principles, require a level of understanding that goes beyond mere comprehension and be challenging, motivating and suit the learners' interests [3]

- Task: It involves a description of what the learners are going to accomplish. It should be doable and interesting to them. It needs synthesis of multiple sources of information, and /or going beyond the given data and making a generalization or product [15]. It identifies roles for co-operative group members and describes clearly what the end result of the learners' activities will be. It could be a problem to be solved, a position to be defended, a product to be designed, or anything that requires the learners to process and transform the information they have gathered [3]. Its guidelines should be attractive and student-centered, flexible and provide possibilities for differentiation opportunities for interim reflection on the process and product [18].

- Process: It includes scaffolding which is a temporary structure that provides help at specific points in the learning process [7]. It provides a clear description for the learners on how to find and organize the information via suitable tools, and what they should do to complete the task. It describes whether the task will involve more than one class and the time it will take [3]. It should involve a variety in the activities performed and / or roles and perspectives to be taken by the learners. It should be well written and provide the learners with clear descriptions of responsibilities and how to divide these responsibilities among them.

- Resources: They provide a set of links to high-quality Internet-based resources which the learners should use to accomplish the task. All web links should be pertinent to the task, make excellent use of the web and are working [15]. Some WebQuests have a separate section for information resources while other WebQuests have their resources embedded in the process [7]. Resources should be pre-selected by the teacher to help the students focus on the topic. Some of the possibilities include specific software, specific hardware, e-mail accounts for all the students and video or audio materials. It should describe the human resources needed [3].

- Evaluation: It includes an evaluative tool that might be in a form of a rubric. Explicit directions should be included in the WebQuest rubric to describe to the learners what they should exactly do to be successful with the WebQuest components and to tell how they will demonstrate their growth in knowledge [7]. It should indicate selected aspects of the learners' performance to be evaluated and indicators reflecting a variety of performance levels [3].

- Conclusion: It brings closure to the activity and reminds the learners of what they have learned as a result of completing the activity. It may also encourage the learners to apply what they have learned in different contexts. It provides a summary statement about the worthiness of the

experience and the importance of what it will teach [3]. It encourages the learners to reflect on the process to help them extend what they have learned into other domains outside the classroom. It could give them suggestions for further learning experiences [30].

B. Critical Reading Skills

Critical reading skills in English Language are numerous. The following section includes the most important critical reading skills to learners of English Language. McClain [23] pointed out that critical reading skills include reading material with an alert and questioning mind, comparing and contrasting what has been read, considering the author's viewpoint and being aware of other viewpoints, detecting propaganda techniques, identifying relevant and irrelevant information and differentiating fact from opinion.

Robin [31] indicated that critical reading skills are interpretation, evaluation, identifying the author's purpose and point of view and distinguishing fact from opinion.

Thistlethwaite [40] revealed that critical reading skills are the writer qualification as an authority, the writer's bias and objectivity, the writer's purpose and tone, the up-to-dateness validity of the material, the writer's use of reasoning and support and the reader's own objectivity and biases.

To Abdel Aziz [1] critical reading skills are identifying the main idea, making inferences, drawing conclusions, identifying supportive information and details, distinguishing fact from opinion, identifying the author's purpose and tone, identifying the up-to-dateness and validity of the material and identifying propaganda techniques.

Abdel Moaty [2] asserted that the most important critical reading skills are identifying the main idea, making inferences, identifying cause and effect relationship, drawing conclusions, distinguishing between facts and opinions and making comparisons.

C. Review of Related Literature

WebQuests were used successfully with students of all ages and levels. Examples are studies conducted by [5,10,16,34,38]. WebQuests were also designed for academic English as a Second Language (ESL) [27], literacy studies and social sciences [5], history, anthropology and a range of science subjects [9]. Studies conducted by [21,6] and articles written by [36] indicated that WebQuests could be used as instructional activities that would provide students with a valuable experience in English and Language arts [6] and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) [13]. The WebQuest methodology has also been transferred to language learning in the 3D virtual world Second Life to create a more immersive and interactive experience [42].

Rozema [32] designed a study that described how two Web-based learning tools, the literary MOO and the

WebQuest, were used to reinforce reader-oriented and text-oriented literature instruction. The results revealed that the literary MOO, used in conjunction with the novel *Brave New World*, helped students evoke and elaborate on the story world of the text, make personal connections between the text and their own lives, and discuss the text in a collaborative way. The results also showed that the WebQuest, used in conjunction with the novel *Heart of Darkness*, helped the students read the text in an analytical and text-centered way.

Tsai [41] conducted a study which aimed at measuring reading vocabulary acquisition and reading performance of EFL students when a WebQuest learning module was used to develop EFL reading traditional instruction. A pre-, post-reading comprehension test was administered for both groups. The experimental group received a researcher developed WebQuest learning module involved in traditional EFL reading instruction, while the control group received traditional text-only EFL instruction. After the post-test, the experimental group received an attitudinal survey about learning attitudes and perceptions toward the WebQuest learning module. The results showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group as a result of using the WebQuest.

The researchers tried to find studies that have been conducted in the Saudi environment on the use of WM to develop critical reading achievement in English among EFL learners, they did not find any such studies. Therefore, there is an urgent need for conducting the present study.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was a pre-, post-test quasi-experimental study. It involved one experimental group. The students in the experimental group were pre-tested by using the CRT to assess their critical reading achievement before conducting the experiment. Then, the experimental group was trained by using a training program that based on using the WM to develop their critical reading achievement. The experimental group was post-tested by using the CRT. Then, they were tested by using the delayed CRT after one month of the end of the experiment and after being tested by using the post- CRT. Differences between the mean scores of the pre- and post- CRT and differences between the mean scores of the post- and the delayed CRT were calculated by using the t-test.

A. Participants

The participants were a 25 randomly selected fourth level English Diploma students at Languages and Translation Department at Arar College of Education and Arts. All of them were females and their ages ranged from 19 to 20 years old. All the participants were proficient in using computer as all of them obtained the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) before conducting the experiment. Moreover, all of them have access to the Internet at their homes as the experimental group was

required to use the Internet to complete tasks at home. They used to read and study the reading texts provided in their Student's Textbook by using reading software given on Compact Disks (CDs). They were also familiar with participating in collaborative work during reading lessons. However, they were not provided with any opportunities to access into the Internet during reading lessons. Besides, they had no previous experience with using WebQuests before conducting the experiment. The principal researcher taught the experimental group during all the stages of the experiment.

B. Instruments

-The Critical Reading Skills Checklist (CRSC)

The researchers designed a Critical Reading Skills Checklist (CRSC). It included critical reading skills that could be the most important to be developed by English Diploma students. It is a rating scale checklist including twenty-one critical reading skills with three levels of importance that ranged from very important to less important. The reason behind constructing the CRSC was to design the CRT which will be used to assess the experimental group's critical reading achievement.

The researchers depended on the following sources for designing the CRSC: The Student's Textbook Interactions 1 Reading Gold Edition and the learning standards provided by Arar College of Education and Arts about learning critical reading by English Diploma students and the critical reading proficiency level in English language required for them. They also depended on previous literature on critical reading taxonomies and related studies concerned with developing critical reading skills of EFL students. Examples are studies conducted by [23,1].

To validate the CRSC, the researcher submitted it to a jury of 15 judges, professors of curriculum and TEFL at some faculties of education in Saudi Arabia. The jury members recommended that the critical reading skills should be limited to nine or ten to be more applicable. Their modifications were taken into consideration as the researchers selected ten critical reading skills that received the highest frequency under critical reading skills according to the jury members. Finally, the jury members agreed upon the selected ten critical reading skills. The selected critical reading skills are such as identifying the main idea, finding the evidence the text employs, showing the author's point of view, guessing the meaning of words in context, guessing the author's intended meaning, identifying cause and effect relationships, recognizing bias, drawing conclusions, identifying the audience and making inferences.

-The Critical Reading Test (CRT)

The researchers developed a CRT. They adapted the texts of the CRT from books available at Arar College of Education and Arts library, modified them to be more applicable for this study and designed multiple-choice questions to attach them in these texts. To design the CRT,

the researchers analyzed the reading texts in the Student's Textbook Interactions 1 Reading Gold Edition, the CRSC and the learning standards provided by Arar College of Education and Arts about learning critical reading skills needed to be developed by these students. Those procedures helped the researchers determine the level of reading difficulty of the CRT which English Diploma students can handle. The CRT included three texts with clear instructions. Each text provided 5 Multiple Choice Questions.

The CRT was administrated to a pilot sample of 19 English Diploma students at Arar College of Education and Arts. The students of the pilot sample were not involved in this research experiment. The first reason behind piloting the CRT was to test whether the CRT and its directions and questions were understandable to English Diploma students. The second reason of administrating the CRT was to estimate the time that English Diploma students would take in answering it. The pilot sample indicated that the CRT and its directions and questions were understandable to them. The researcher found out that the appropriate time for answering the CRT was 90 minutes.

To assess the validity of the CRT, the researchers submitted it to the same jury members. They agreed upon its validity for assessing English Diploma students' critical reading achievement. The researchers also used criterion related validity to assess the validity of the CRT. Criterion related validity was assessed as the principal researcher applied the CRT on a pilot sample of 19 English Diploma students. The researcher applied on the same pilot sample another Critical Reading Test which is valid and reliable. It included similar reading texts with questions and directions of the same level of difficulty. Correlation coefficient was calculated for the two tests. The statistical correlation of (Pearson, Kendall and Spearman) was found as follows: (0.955, 0.921, 0.915) and it was at the level 0.01. This result indicates the validity of the CRT.

To assess the reliability of the CRT, the researchers used the test / retest method of calculating the reliability coefficient of the CRT on a pilot sample of 19 English Diploma students. The statistical correlation of (Pearson, Kendall and Spearman) was found as follows: (0.737, 0.757, 0.671). It is a high correlation coefficient at the level 0.01. This shows a strong correlation between the first and the second applications of the same pilot sample and reveals that the CRT had a high degree of reliability.

C. Materials

A. A WebQuest Model (WM)

The researchers adapted the WM from the Internet. Then, they modified it to be more applicable for the present study. Factors that the researchers took into consideration when designing the WM were: The experimental group's age, EFL level, required vocabulary, prior knowledge of content, interestingness, technology

proficiency, length of each reading text, reading level and reading strategies to practice. The researchers used the first generation of the WebQuests to design the WM used in the present study because it is more applicable for it. To assess the validity of the WM for developing the critical reading achievement of English Diploma students, the researcher submitted it to the same jury members and to information technology professionals. They asserted the validity of the WM for developing critical reading achievement among English Diploma students.

B. A program based on using the WM in a critical reading lesson

The researchers designed a program which based on using the WM in a critical reading lesson. It was constructed to train the experimental group on using the WM when they perform critical reading. The program was also validated by the same jury members.

C. Framework of the program

- Goal of the program

The goal of the program is to help the experimental group develop their critical reading achievement.

- Training activities

The principal researcher conducted the following sessions for training the experimental group:

1- Identifying the WebQuest

2- Pre-reading phase

3- Reading phase

4- Post-reading phase

- Teaching aids

The following teaching aids were used throughout the different sessions of the program:

- A white board

- Charts

- An LCD projector

- Computers with Internet access

- Materials

Printed materials on the topics of the different sessions of the program were given to the experimental group.

- Assessment

Every student in the experimental group was provided with an assessment sheet by the end of each session.

D. Treatment

To investigate the effect of using a WM on developing English Diploma students' critical reading achievement, the principal researcher trained the experimental group by using the program which based on using the WM in a critical reading lesson. By the end of the training sessions, the researchers post-tested the experimental group by using the CRT. They also tested the experimental group by using the delayed CRT after one month of the end of the experiment and being tested by using the post- CRT. The statistical analysis that was carried out in the present study included calculating of the mean, standard deviation, standard error and t-value at level that was $P < 0.01$ for the pre, post- CRT and the delayed CRT of the experimental

group. The results were statistically analyzed by using the t-test.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1- Question two results: The second question stated that there would be statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group between the pre- and post- CRT in favor of the post- CRT. The researchers used the t-test to test the significance of the differences in the mean scores of the experimental group between the

pre- and post- CRT. The results indicated that the mean score of the experimental group on the pre- CRT was 32.86 with a standard deviation of 4.52. The mean score of the experimental group on the post- CRT was 74.14 with a standard deviation of 5.08. The results revealed that the difference in the mean scores of the experimental group between the pre- and post- CRT was statistically significant ($t = 26.648$, $p = 0.01$). These findings are presented in Table I.

TABLE 1
The t- Value of the Difference in the Mean Scores of the Experimental Group between the Pre- and Post- CRT

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	T	Sig.
Pre- Experimental	25	32.86	4.52	13	26.648	0.01
Post-Experimental	25	74.14	5.08			

This result shows that the experimental group achieved a significant improvement in their critical reading achievement on the post- CRT. This significant result is due to the following reasons: Integrating the WM into a critical reading lesson motivated the experimental group to engage in inquiry learning as it provided them with all the resources and guidance to do so. During training the experimental group on the use of the WM in a critical reading lesson, the researcher guided them on how to use the website links given on sections one and two of the resources part to read articles about the seven wonders of the ancient world and the wonders of the modern world critically, find information about them and write answers for the questions provided in the questions sheet. This means that this WM enabled the experimental group to work individually and in small co-operative groups to collect, analyze and synthesize information sourced from the Internet to develop their critical reading achievement. They co-operated in their small groups to ask and answer questions which require them to identify the main idea, identify cause and effect relationships, draw conclusions, make inferences and make comparisons. This shows that using the WM facilitated the acquisition, integration and extension of a vast amount of information through tasks designed to engage the experimental group in analysis and demonstration of understanding the topic of the WM to develop their critical reading achievement.

This result agrees with results revealed in the study conducted by [39] about the positive effects of using a WM in reading classrooms. It also supports studies that were conducted by [21,6] and an article that was written by [36]. They asserted that WebQuests could be used as effective instructional activities that would provide students with a valuable experience in learning English. Besides, this result agrees with results revealed in [32] study which investigated the effectiveness of teaching reading via the WebQuest and proved that WebQuest has positive effects in developing reading skills among learners.

2- Question three results: The third question stated that there would be no statistically significant differences in the mean scores of the experimental group between the post- and delayed CRT. The researchers used the t-test to test the significance of the differences in the mean scores of the experimental group between the post- and delayed CRT. The results indicated that the mean score of the experimental group on the post-CRT was 74.14 with a standard deviation of 5.08. The mean score of the experimental group on the delayed CRT was 75.13 with a standard deviation of 5.07. The results revealed that the difference in the mean scores of the experimental group between the post- and delayed CRT was not statistically significant ($t = 1.690$, $p = 0.115$). These findings are presented in Table II.

TABLE 2
The t- Value of the Difference in the Mean Scores of the Experimental Group between the Post - and Delayed CRT

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	T	Sig.
Post-Experimental	25	74.14	5.08	13	1.690	0.115
Delayed-Experimental	25	75.13	5.07			

This result shows that the experimental group did not change their critical reading achievement on the delayed- CRT. This result may be due to the following reasons: Training the experimental group on employing the WM while engaging in a reading lesson provided them step-by-step guidelines on how to accomplish the task. The scaffolding provided in this WM included samples, guiding questions and online dictionary. This made the task possible for them to complete by themselves. The task included in this WM gave the experimental group autonomy and creativity. It helped them find out

information about the seven wonders of the ancient world, think about some buildings or inventions that can be nominated as the wonders of the modern world, search the provided websites to find out information about the wonders of the modern world and pick one wonder of the modern world to share in the class.

The steps included in this WM encouraged them to complete research and activities which helped them develop their critical reading achievement. Moreover, the WM supplemented the experimental group's motivation because of the use of authentic material and the

development of tasks connected with reality. It engaged the experimental group's interests, encouraged critical thinking and supported co-operative groups to share the information about the modern wonders of the world as each group presented to other groups a brochure and a PowerPoint presentation about a modern wonder of the world and located its place on a map to think about the meanings behind the wonders of the modern world and how these modern wonders affect their lives and the world. Hence, the experimental group did not reduce their critical reading achievement level on the delayed CRT. This result agrees with results of other studies that revealed the positive impact of using WebQuests on students' English language learning (Examples were studies conducted by [10,27,16].

VI. CONCLUSION

The results of the present study are limited to fourth level English Diploma students at Languages and Translation Department at Arar College of Education and Arts in Saudi Arabia, the material used for the treatment and the instruments which the researchers used to collect the data. It can be concluded from the present study that using the WM in a reading lesson proved to be effective in developing the experimental group's critical reading achievement. The WM provided the experimental group with a collaborative environment which encouraged them to engage effectively in reading the texts given on the resources section and to learn from each others' work. Moreover, it represented an excellent way that allowed the experimental group to focus on information rather than looking for it. It facilitated the acquisition, integration and extension of a vast amount of information through tasks designed to engage them in analysis and demonstration of understanding. It emphasized authentic learning, scaffolding, inquiry and group work processes.

The WM provided the experimental group with the resources and guidance which enabled them to understand the meaning of new vocabulary. On the other hand, the WM was built around an engaging and doable task that challenged, motivated, engaged and elicited higher order thinking of the experimental group. The participants in each group worked together to explore the topic and to produce their group opinion as the final product in the form of a brochure and a PowerPoint presentation to tell the class of the group's knowledge about a certain wonder of the modern world. They expressed positive comments indicating that using the WM in a reading lesson proved to be more effective than traditional reading lessons void of it as it gave them variety to help them develop their critical reading achievement. The research results agreed with previous studies which revealed that the WM could provide an encouraging atmosphere for collaboration, knowledge creation and interaction.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions of the present study, the following recommendations are made:

- Extended use should be made of recent Internet technology represented in the WebQuest to be integrated into the reading lessons taught to English Diploma students to help them develop their critical reading achievement.
- Training programs should be provided to instructors of English to help them know how to use the WebQuest in teaching critical reading.
- Published materials about using the WebQuest in critical reading classrooms should be available to teachers and students.
- Curriculum designers, teacher-trainers and textbook writers should focus on providing strategies based on using the WebQuest in teaching critical reading to English Diploma students.
- A study could be conducted to investigate the effect of using the WebQuest on developing English Diploma students' reading comprehension.
- Another study is needed to investigate English Diploma students' attitudes towards the WebQuest use to develop critical reading achievement.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abdel Aziz, M. (1999). *The Effect of a Self-Instruction Strategy on Developing Critical Reading Skills in English at the University Level*. Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Women's College, Ain Shams University, Egypt.
- [2] Abdel Moaty, R. (2002). *The Effectiveness of Using First Year Secondary Students' Questions in Developing their Critical Reading Skills in the Light of Schema Theory*. Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Women's College, Ain Shams University, Egypt.
- [3] Blasszauer, J. (2003). WebQuests: Blending learning philosophy and practice. *A Journal of English Language Teaching and Cultural Studies in Hungary*, 10 (1). Retrieved from <http://www.geocities.com/bjohnnyus/presentations/webquests>
- [4] Brucklacher, B. & Gimbert, B. (1999). Role-playing software and WebQuests-What's possible with co-operative learning and computers. *Computers in the School*, 15 (2), 37-48.
- [5] Burleson, O. (2001). *Find a need and fill it: A WebQuest for life-long learners*. Retrieved from <http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/offices/di/Burleson/Lessons/index.html>

- [6] Chatel, R. & Nodell, J. (2002). *WebQuests: Teachers and students as literacy explorers*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Connecticut Readers Association (51 st November 14, 2002 Cromwell, CT). Retrieved from ERIC database (ED 471 843).
- [7] Dodge, B. (1997). *Some thoughts about WebQuests*. Retrieved from http://webquest.sdsu.edu/about_webquests.
- [8] Dodge, B. (2001). FOCUS: Five rules for writing a great WebQuest. *Learning and Leading with Technology*, 28 (8), 6-9.
- [9] Dutt-Doner, K. (2002). Actively engaging learners in interdisciplinary through the integration of technology. *Computers in the Schools*. 16 (3/4), 151-166.
- [10] Emmert, P. (2003). *Integrating WebQuests in ESL*. Retrieved from <http://www.call-esl.com>
- [11] Godwin-Jones, B. (2004). Emerging Technologies: Language in action: From WebQuests to virtual realities. *Language Learning and Technology*, 8 (3), 9-14.
- [12] Gulcat, Z. (2004). *Critical reading towards critical writing*. Retrieved from <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/critrdge.html>
- [13] Haddad, S. (2004). *Developing a classroom based business - a WebQuest for 12 th grade small management students*. Retrieved from <http://winchend12org/template15/students/webquest.html>
- [14] Haneline, D. & Aiex, N. (1997). *Asking the right questions: Reading assignments that work for writing*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication Digest#122. Retrieved from <http://www.indiana.edu/reading/ieo/digests/d122.html>
- [15] Johnson, D. & Zufall, L. (2004). Watch web--not just for kids anymore: WebQuests for professional development. *Reading Online*, 7 (5). Retrieved from http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/elec_index.asp?webwatch/webquests/index.html
- [16] Joyce, K. & Stohr-Hunt, P. (2004). *Web-based projects*. Retrieved from <http://oncampus.richmond/academics/education/projects/>
- [17] Knott, D. (2008). *Critical reading towards critical writing*. Retrieved from <http://www.buowl.Edu.tr/teachers/fcritical%20reading%20towards%20critical%20writing.html>
- [18] Koenraad, T. & Westhoff, G. (2003). *Can you tell a language quest when you see one? Design criteria for TalenQuests*. Retrieved from www.foe.hvu.nl/koen2/Home/talenquest/TQEurocall.pdf
- [19] Kurland, D. (2002). *How the language really works: The fundamentals of critical reading and effective writing-critical reading v. critical thinking*. Retrieved from http://www.criticalreading.com/critical_reading_thinking.htm
- [20] Lipscomb, G. (2003). I guess it was pretty fun: Using WebQuests in the middle school classroom. *The Clearing House*, 76 (3), 152-155.
- [21] Lou, Y. & MacGreogor, K. (2001). Learning with Internet Resources: Task Structure and Group Collaboration. In J. Price, D. Anna, N. Davis and J. Willis (Eds.), *Proceedings of society for information technology and teacher education international conference* (pp. 1697-1698). Chesapeake, VA: AACE. Retrieved from <http://www.editlib.org/p/7028>
- [22] March, T. (2004). *WebQuests: The fulcrum for systematic curriculum improvement*. Retrieved from http://www.rsdonline.net/departments/tech/WebQuestwebquest_fulcrum_necc.pdf
- [23] McClain, A. (1985). *Using traditional literature to teach critical reading skills*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Far West Regional Conference of the International Reading Association (15, Portland OR, March 7-9, 1985). Retrieved from ERIC database (ED 260 381).
- [24] Milson, A. & Downey, P. (2001). WebQuest: Using Internet resources for co-operative inquiry. *Social Education*, 65 (3), 144-146.
- [25] Murry, R. (2006). WebQuests celebrate 10 years: Have they delivered? *Action Research Exchange*, 5 (1). Retrieved from <http://teach.valdosta.edu/are>
- [26] National Reading Panel (2000). *Report of the national panel*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
- [27] Peterson, C., Caverly, D. & Macdonald, L. (2003). *Techtalk: Developing academic literacy through*

- WebQuests. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 26 (3), 38-41.
- [28] Pohan, C. & Mathison, C. (1998). WebQuests: The potential of Internet- based instruction for global education. *Social Studies Review*, 37(2), 91-93.
- [29] Prapinwong, M. & Puthikanon, N. (2008). An evaluation of an Internet- based learning model *EFL Journal*, 1-25. Retrieved from epljournal.com/pta_April_08.pdf
- [30] Perez Torres, I. (2005). *A model of WebQuests for teaching and learning an L2*. Retrieved from <http://www.isabelperez.com/webqwest/taller/2/english/handout-wq-12-en.pdf>
- [31] Robin, C. (1992). *Developing critical reading skills through whole language strategies*. Retrieved from ERIC database (ED 353 5556).
- [32] Rozema, R. (2004). *Electronic literacy: Teaching literacy reading through the digital medium*. Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3135103)
- [33] Sanders, J. (2005). Using WebQuests to enhance learning. *Work Based Learning*, 3, 210-217.
- [34] Siko, K. (2008). *WebQuests in the English classroom: How do they affect student learning?* Retrieved from http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl%3furl_ver=Z39.88-2004%26res_dat=xri:pqdiss%26rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:dissertation%26ft_dat=xri:pqdiss:3304271
- [35] Simina, V. & Hamel, M. (2005). CASLA through a social constructivist perspective: WebQuest in project-driven language learning. *ReCALL*, 17(2), 217-228.
- [36] Snider, S. & Foster, L. (2001). RESEACH-Stepping stones for linking, learning and moving toward literacy: Integrating emerging technology in author study project. *Computers in the Schools*, 16 (2), 91.
- [37] Stocks, G. (2002). *WebQuest: Task-based learning in a digital environment*. Retrieved from <http://www.babylonia-ti.ch/BABY102/geen.html>
- [38] Suraya, F. (2011) The use of WebQuest as a media to improve students' skill in writing descriptive text. Under Graduates thesis, University Negeri Semarang. Retrieved from <http://lib.unnes.ac.id/2694/>
- [39] Teclehaimanot, B. & Lamb, A. (2004). Reading technology and inquiry-based learning through literature rich WebQuests. *Reading Online*, 7 (4). Retrieved from http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art_index.asp?HREF=teclehaimanot/index.html
- [40] Thistlethwaite, L. (1992). Critical reading for at-risk students. *Journal of Reading*, 3 (33), 586-592.
- [41] Tsai, S. (2005). *The effect of EFL reading instruction by using a WebQuest learning module as a CAI enhancement on college students' reading performance in Taiwan*. Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3193423).
- [42] Vickers, H. (2007). *SurReal Quests: Enriched, purposeful language learning in Second Life*. Retrieved from <http://kt.flexiblelearning.net.au/tkt2007/edition-15/surreal-quests-enriched-purposeful-language-learning-in-second-life>
- [43] Zheng, R., Stuckey, B., McAlack, M. & Stoddart, S. (2005). WebQuest learning as perceived by higher-education learners. *Tech Trends*, 49 (4), 41-50.