

INSTRUCTIONALModule

Project-Based Learning, An Integral Approach: CSI

WELCOME!

Join us for our journey through the project-based learning experience using the proven strategies in the Cemetery Scene Investigators (CSI) module—one of the many successful journeys students, teachers, and community members collaboratively take in their lifelong pursuit of authentic learning.

WHAT IS THE CSI PROJECT?

CSI (Cemetery Scene Investigators) is a project-based learning module.

Why did we have students learn about their local cemetery, you ask? All Geo-Literacy Project modules are built on community-based resources. As a local resource, cemeteries are more than just a collection of headstones; as a repository of primary-source documents, they tell a story about a community. In this project-based learning module, students and community members become part of a "CSI" task force that investigates the entire cemetery. It is much more than just an occasion for making headstone rubbings; it is an opportunity for focused insight into the community's past—scientifically, mathematically, and historically speaking.

The Cemetery Scene Investigators (CSI) project identifies and analyzes elements of a cemetery. The investigation includes:

- Meeting standards.
- Classifications of headstone designs, quantities of each, directional settings, global-positioning information, weathering analysis.
- Statistical analysis of birth and death information.
- A cultural study as represented through the "World Cultures Model" (8 KB).
- Learning the history of the people buried at the cemetery under investigation.
- Habitat analysis for the presence of flora and fauna.
- Community mapping using geographic-information-systems (GIS) software.
- Learning the geography of the community cemetery, including mapping using GIS software, global-positioning-system (GPS) marking, and topographical mapping.

The investigation and comparison utilizes higher-order thinking skills, verbal-communication skills, reading, and high-quality writing as part of the detective work. Students and community members investigate, log, and interpret data on a cemetery's geography, cultures, and geology, as well as trends in headstone designs, epitaphs, and icons, plus the plants, animals, and architecture that call the cemetery home. The students explore the cemetery in the larger picture as well as taking a more focused perspective.

This project is an authentic multicultural and cross-curricular activity that addresses the

different modes of learning. It takes skills learned in the classroom and gives the students an opportunity to apply them in the real world. Through authentic learning, students see the real-life connections to the standards-driven curriculum they are learning in the classroom; it has a meaning and context that gives true understanding. The projects students undertake are made an integral part of their triangulated assessment package.

The CSI project fully supports national standards for math, science, history, geography, reading, and writing.

The Geo-Literacy Project CSI Module: A Three-Phase Approach

Phase 1: Getting Started

- Prepare for project implementation.
- Present essential question to drive project (students can create their own essential questions as well).
- Document students' and parents' prior knowledge.
- Organize local resources and community groups.

Phase 2: Developing the Project

- Start research, fieldwork, and data collection with students.
- Connect students with community groups and experts in the field.
- Organize and analyze data.
- Students create presentation (Web site, PowerPoint).

Phase 3: Conclude the Project

- Celebrate.
- Reflect on the project.
- Assess the outcome.

Strategic Elements of the CSI: Cemetery Scene Investigators

The CSI project model seamlessly integrated the following components:

- A standards-driven core curriculum (Allen, Funkhouser, Kelliher, Rouk, & Rusnak, 1998).
- Curriculum driven by an essential question tied to the community (Wiggins & McTighe, 2000).
- Project-based learning.
- Technology integration.
- Community collaboration and service learning (key elements of service learning include standards utilized and tested within the context of an authentic learning experience while meeting a community need).
- Working with multiple intelligences.
- Addressing social and emotional learning.
- Utilizing parent involvement (also proven to increase student achievement).
- Crossing the digital divide; students have equal access to the online and classroom-technology materials in the classroom.
- Authentic assessment (assessment includes rubrics, the Six Traits of Writing, cooperative-behavior rubrics, etc.).
- Reflection, assessment, and ongoing collaboration for the students, teachers and the community, developing a common ground and point of interaction for sharing new learning, insights, and results.

GETTING STARTED:

PDF files can be viewed on a wide variety of platforms—both as a browser plug-in or a stand-alone application—with Adobe's free Acrobat Reader® program. Follow the link provided below for installation instructions.

Any video on this Web site requires that you have the QuickTime® Player installed on your computer. Although most of the video and audio material will play reasonably well on older versions of QuickTime,

we strongly recommend that you have QuickTime version 5.0.2 or later installed on your computer for an optimal viewing/listening experience. If you need help determining whether or not you have the appropriate version of QuickTime installed (and that it is installed properly), check out Apple's "Installation Check" Web page. To find answers to support questions often asked by QuickTime users, visit Apple's QuickTime Support Web page. To download QuickTime, click on the link provided below.

About the Authors:

Linda Ferguson, site technology coordinator/trainer/teacher in Sacramento's San Juan Unified School District, field trainer for MarcoPolo, director of the Geo-Literacy Project, consultant at PBS.org, and the Region 3 California Technology Assistance Project technical representative for California Online support. Degrees include a bachelor's degree from the University of California, a master's degree in curriculum and instruction with special emphasis in educational technology, and a doctorate in curriculum and instruction (in progress). Certifications include credentials in elementary education; online learning; computers, concepts and applications; administrative early-childhood program management; social studies; art; and cross-cultural, language and academic development; and from Project Management International. She has facilitated teacher training and developing online learning resources for the Sacramento County Office of Education, the National Educational Computing Conference (NECC), Computer Using Educators (CUE), the California Technology Assistance Project (CTAP), and Portland State University.

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The following Web site(s) appear on this page:

Geo-Literacy Project: www.geolit.org/
Meeting Standards: www.geolit.org/RockvilleCSI/Timelines_Compared.htm
A standards-driven core curriculum: www.ed.gov/pubs/Idea_Planning/index.html
Project-Based Learning: www.edutopia.org/modules/PBL
Technology Integration: www.edutopia.org/modules/TI
Community Collaboration: www.edutopia.org/php/keyword.php?id=189
Key Elements of Service Learning: www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/sl/keyelements.asp
Multiple Intelligences: www.edutopia.org/php/interview.php?id=Art_975
Social and Emotional Learning: www.edutopia.org/php/keyword.php?id=020
Parent Involvement: www.edutopia.org/php/keyword.php?id=225
Digital Divide: www.edutopia.org/php/keyword.php?id=188
Authentic Assessment: www.edutopia.org/modules/Assessment
Apple "Installation Check" Web page: www.apple.com/quicktime/troubleshooting
Apple QuickTime Support Web page: www.info.apple.com/usen/quicktime
Adobe Acrobat Reader program: www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html
QuickTime Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/
San Juan Unified School District: www.sanjuan.edu/
MarcoPolo: www.marcopolo-education.org/
Region 3 California Technology Assistance Project: www.techsets.org/
Springfield Middle School: www.sps.lane.edu/index.html