

# CULTUREQUEST CONSORTIUM NEWS

Please send comments, questions tips and suggestions to: [nshapiro@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:nshapiro@ccny.cuny.edu).

## WELCOME NEW CULTUREQUEST CONSORTIUM MEMBERS!



*The purpose of this newsletter is to share the work of the Culture-Quest Programs with Consortium members.*

In 2005/6 the CultureQuest program in New York City sought to identify people and institutions interested in developing CultureQuest programs in their cities, states, regions and countries. Thanks to support from **JPMorganChase** we provided orientation sessions in New York City. Individuals who participated came from universities, school districts, ministries of education, professional training institutions and individual schools. We would like to welcome the following:

### From the United States:

**Alaska:** Amy Hasty

**Connecticut:** David Stoloff

**Kansas:** Kay McCord

**Michigan:** Robert Leneway

**New York:** Sheila Gersh, Rhoda Peltzer, Norman Shapiro and Fausto de la Rosa

**Pennsylvania:** Alicia Montoya, Lisa Schonberger

**Vermont:** Joyce Morris

**Virginia:** Anne Pierce

### From Around the World:

**Chile:** Jeanne Simon

**Dominican Republic:** Jacqueline Lora Gomez

**India:** Bharat Thakur, Anju Mehta, Neelam Verma

**Israel:** Esther Feffer

**Japan:** Kyoko Murikami, Jun Sakamoto

**Spain:** Ursula Vallejo Moreno

**Sweden:** Ulf Akerberg, Charlotte Cristoffersen

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## NEW: INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION AND FEATURED COUNTRIES

Two new ideas that are being developed this academic year include: **featuring a different country** each year and an **International Competition**.

This spring we would like to **feature projects on the culture(s) of India**. Teachers and students who opt to do projects on India will go to our website which will be rich with links to informational web resources on India as well as e-mail addresses of student and adult 'am-

bassadors' in India and the US willing to serve as online cultural mentors. Providing this added support should make the task of doing a CultureQuest project less daunting and more inviting. Combined with this, we will plan an **International Competition** that will award prizes for the best CultureQuest India projects. We are developing criteria and rubrics for successful projects, and will identify individuals to serve as judges, and decide on prizes and

awards and the categories in which prizes would be awarded. Prizes would go to k-12 classes and their teachers, university students in pre-service or graduate education, and students in history, foreign language and other appropriate college classes. This voluntary competition should bring more teachers and students to CultureQuest and serve as a pilot for awarding prizes for all CultureQuest entries in the future. .

## CULTUREQUEST in *NEW DELHI*



Amy Hasty, Esti Feffer, Neelum Verma and Anju Mehta dine after workshop.

CultureQuest India (currently limited to New Delhi) had its start thanks to a grant from the **America India Foundation (AIF)** and to the efforts of **Professor Ravi Kalla** at City College who made the link to India at the highest levels of the government's educational system. Within three years, four administrators and teachers attended workshops in New York, and our staff has gone to India twice. Initially, a pilot was conducted with 35 children, undertaken by **Bharat Thakur, Snehlata Gupta** and **Girija Shankar**, doing Cul-

tureQuests on America. Students made use of books, magazines as well as the Internet. They also e-mailed and 'Skyped' with American students. An American college student pursuing his college education in India was invited to speak with the students. Future CultureQuest projects are planned with Australia, Japan, China, South Africa and Pakistan.

In January 2006, the Directorate of Education formally launched CultureQuest India and its website [www.edudel.nic.in/cqi.htm](http://www.edudel.nic.in/cqi.htm) along with a very attractive and informative booklet. Their next step is to support other New Delhi schools in undertaking CultureQuest projects.

As an example of one current project, **Anju Mehta** in New Delhi reports working with 16-17 year olds in a Humanities class on a CultureQuest Malaysia. Students will be exploring different aspects of Malaysian culture (e.g. dance, food, customs, etc.) as they learn to work on computers and the Internet.

ers in Tokyo.

## CULTUREQUEST in *MALMO, TOKYO and CONCEPCION*



**Ulf Akerberg's** program resides in a pedagogical resource centre with 31 employees for more than 4000 teachers working in 80 schools in ten city districts in Malmo, Sweden. He works with **Charlotte Chistoffersen** facilitating and supporting the integration of ICT in education. They participate extensively in many projects on a local, national and international level. Ulf will be providing CultureQuest courses for teachers, support for projects, working with Malmo Uni-

versity, linking with the Centre for Diversity in Education and applying for EU funding.

**Jun Sakamoto** and **Kyoko Murikami** in Tokyo received a grant to write a book about CultureQuest, which is due for publication in the spring of 2007. They will be coming to New York City in November with four Hosei University students to interview the CultureQuest staff in depth and to visit schools and interview teachers and students. They have also begun to provide training for inservice teach-

ers in Tokyo.

**Jeanne Simon** in Chile implemented the CultureQuest methodology in an undergraduate class on Comparative Politics, and asked her students to develop presentations on the political systems of different countries. The results have been interesting, and will be incorporated in conceptual maps in the next theme. She has also discussed CultureQuest with colleagues in Education and is working on developing material in Spanish to present to elementary school teachers.

## CULTUREQUEST in *CONNECTICUT, VERMONT and VIRGINIA*



Autumn in Vermont

**David Stoloff** from Eastern Connecticut State University tells us that CultureQuest is offered as part of the graduate course "Computers in the Classroom and the Curriculum", a course he teaches online. David plans to discuss CultureQuest as part of his presentations at AAC&U Conference in January and the

AACTE conference in February. See: [www.eastern.edu/depts/edu/dept/culturequest.html](http://www.eastern.edu/depts/edu/dept/culturequest.html).

**Joyce Morris** at the University of Vermont is in the process of creating the syllabus for a summer course that features Culturequests from a technology and multicultural

pedagogy. Joyce, with **Kristen Courcelle** (an Ed Tech MS candidate), will be presenting "Take A Virtual Trip to China" via CultureQuest at VermontFest on November 3rd.

**Anne Pierce** at Hampton College in Virginia is doing a CultureQuest on Ecuador with her teacher education students.

## CULTUREQUEST in *SANTO DOMINGO, MADRID* and NYC

This past summer, **Sheila Gersh** met with representatives from the Dominican Republic and Spain in Santo Domingo to develop a CultureQuest project involving students from Santo Domingo, Madrid and New York City. Both Madrid and New York City have large numbers of students with Dominican roots. Plans for the project to start in October are underway and schools and classrooms are being recruited. In the Domini-

can Republic the project is being sponsored by the Department of Education and coordinated by **Jacqueline Lora**; in Madrid coordination is being provided by **Ursala Moreno**; and in New York it is being coordinated by **Fausto de la Rosa**. Also present at the Santo Domingo meeting were the Directors of Instruction and Technology for the Department of Education. These leaders are determining where CultureQuest best

fits the national curriculum of the Dominican Republic. The connection to the Dominican Republic was made with the help of **Ramona Hernandez**, Director of City University's Dominican Studies Institute and by **Anthony Stevens-Acevedo**, its Assistant Director. At City College NY, identifying and using all of the resources at our institution has been enormously important in moving the CultureQuest agenda forward.



## CULTUREQUEST in *MICHIGAN* and *TEL AVIV*

**Robert Leneway** from Western Michigan U did CultureQuest for 200 pre-service students in the fall of 2006. During one class he "Skyped" to Sheila and her graduate class in NYC. Since the NYC students were already doing the CultureQuest project, they were able to assist the Western Michigan students who were beginning their projects. Four groups of students at WMU did CultureQuests for their final projects this semester. See for example: <http://t3.pacific.edu/teams/MO26506>. Bob also presented CultureQuest to a "large room of educators" in Grand Rapids at the Michigan Association of Computer Users in Learning

and the presentation generated much interest and discussion. Bob and Sheila had a paper on CultureQuest accepted for a Conference in Hawaii later this year.

**Esther Feffer** met with the Mayor of Raanana and Deans from Tel Aviv University and the Open University to discuss their involvement in CultureQuest. She expects there will be a training workshop for teachers in the very near future. She has also arranged an interesting partnership: **Dr. Ilan Juran** from New York Polytechnic University has provided a grant of \$1,000 to each of 10 Druze high school students in Israel to support

their living expenses while attending Haifa University. In return, students are required to do some kind of project involving helping others. Of these students, a group will be involved in a CultureQuest project about Druze culture. Their CultureQuest will serve to introduce their culture to others in Israel and around the globe. Esti and **Anam Hasson**, an Israeli-Druze, will coordinate the project. In general, even when students do a CultureQuest about another country, we recommend that their projects give them the opportunity to reflect on their own culture as well as the culture under study.

**The government of New Delhi oversees the functioning of some 3,000 schools**

## CULTUREQUEST RESOURCES

In addition to featuring particular countries and building an international contest, staff at the Center for School Development in New York are currently working to: a) enhance the CultureQuest website, [www.culturequest.us](http://www.culturequest.us), b) develop and publish a Teachers Guide and a Trainers Guide, and c) develop an online CultureQuest workshop to serve teachers at a dis-

stance. The Online Course workshop will begin Feb.26th and other resource materials will be ready by the spring of 2007. All will be made available to all CultureQuest partners.

**Skype** is a free resource and if you haven't tried it why not go to <http://www.skype.com> and download it. Skype has many uses. From speaking to people around the world, to meeting

online with up to 8 people, to conducting a video conference. Not only is Skype free, all you need is a web cam and a mike.

We just had a demo of software from [www.Tech4Learning.com](http://www.Tech4Learning.com). One of their products is **Web-Blender**, easy software for creating websites by even young children. Try a 30 day demo and look at their other software and some of their free resources for technology trainers.



Let's Type and Skype

Please send comments, questions  
tips and suggestions to:  
[nshapiro@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:nshapiro@ccny.cuny.edu).

**CHECK OUT [www.CultureQuest.us](http://www.CultureQuest.us)**

Special thanks to **JPMorganChase** for  
providing the resources that make this  
pioneering project possible.

**REQUEST FOR RESOURCES**  
(See Article Below)

Each of our projects can serve as a gateway to  
teachers and their students from around the world  
who are interested in studying about your country,  
city or region. If you are willing and able, please  
begin to collect:

1. Websites related to your country & culture
2. Other resources of value
3. Adults willing to inform classes online &
4. Teachers and students willing to inform other classes.

*We want to especially thank the dedicated college professors,  
school and district administrators and school teachers who con-  
tributed their resources and their time to attend the Culture-  
Quest Orientation Workshops this past year. Let us know  
how we can support your work and what resources you need to  
insure a productive and fulfilling year.*



David Stoloff watches as Ulf Akerberg has a light moment during  
CultureQuest workshop in NYC. Bharat Thakur keeps working.

## CultureQuest Expands and Seeks Gateway Programs

### Expansion

The last academic year was exciting, as we began to identify and work with national and international partners to extend CultureQuest within the US and around the world. CultureQuest programs and activities are starting up in eight states in the US and in eight countries! This academic year may well prove to be even more exciting. We hope to expand our presence in Europe and Asia with contacts that we have made with key people in the European Union and China. We would also like to develop programs in Central and South America as well as in the Middle East and Africa. If you know people in the US or around the world who would be interested in starting CultureQuest

programs, do not hesitate to contact them or have them contact us.

### Gateway Programs

Partners who attended our orientation programs are not always interested in or able to play a lead role in their nation or state. Their work may be primarily developing CultureQuest at their own institution. While we welcome such participation, we are also seeking partners who will serve to expand CultureQuest well beyond their institution and serve as a **gateway** to their country. While we are developing our capacity to play that role for the United States, so too may other programs in the US play this role by serving as a gateway to US culture or as a gateway to the culture of their state, city or region.

Gateway programs would provide many different kinds of resources at their web-

sites that would give students from all parts of the world access to:

- a) **websites** about their country/state,
- b) **teachers and their students** (K-12 & University) that would be willing to serve as online ambassadors to students from other countries and,
- c) **knowledgeable adults** who would also serve as online ambassadors willing to inform a class online.

Programs that have these resources would make doing CultureQuests less daunting for teachers and more interesting and informative for students. Our project will begin to identify online resources related to US culture and seek student and adult ambassadors. We will share our online resources with our partners and ask that they do the same for us to the extent possible.