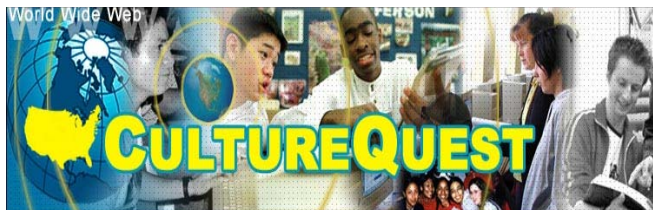


# CULTUREQUEST CONSORTIUM NEWS

*The purpose of this newsletter is to share the work of the CultureQuest Programs with Consortium members and friends of the project.*

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



## Greetings from CultureQuest, in New York City



Sheila, Rhoda and Norman

**Sheila Gersh, Rhoda Peltzer and Norman Shapiro** extend warm greetings from New York City. While we did not seek out additional CultureQuest Consortium partners this past year, there have been teachers who have found out about CultureQuest and who are doing or planning CultureQuest projects. These teachers are introduced on page 5.

We launched **CultureQuest India!** a competition for teach-

ers and students briefly described on page 5.

To recruit additional teachers last year we held a 3 hour workshop at the attractive and interesting Samsung Technology Center in Manhattan. Many of the teachers who heard about CultureQuest at this session went on to do CultureQuest projects.

We are also busy designing and offering **ScienceQuest** workshops for teachers (see p.4)

**CultureQuilt**, a new idea, is also described on page 4.

Changes and improvements were made to [www.CultureQuest.us](http://www.CultureQuest.us), most notably the addition of a **CultureQuest Teachers Guide**, a step by step explanation of the CultureQuest process. We also created an online CultureQuest workshop for English speaking teachers who would like to learn enough to help them undertake a CultureQuest project.

## Welcome: Sabu International School in Guinea, West Africa



In 1999, after fleeing a coup in his native country, Sierra Leone, to neighboring Guinea, West Africa, **Samuel Thoronka** (photo left) was a man without a country. After several days of sleeping under the sky in the Guinea Capital, Conakry, he met an old friend from Sierra Leone who wanted to start a school for the refugee's children. They rounded up 35 English-speaking children and began teaching them. They made a school out of a porch and shack.

In the years since, the Sabu International School (see photo-page 6) has grown into a K-7

school with 150 eager students, 11 staff members, and a group of involved parents. The school now leases two buildings in a fenced-in compound and teaches not only refugees from Sierra Leone, but children from Guinea, Ivory Coast, Gambia and Liberia. Thoronka is now the principal.

**Sheila Gersh** met Samuel in the Spring 2004 when one of Sheila's graduate students did an African CultureQuest project with students in Africa including Guinea. That project can be found at <http://www.geocities.com/AfricaCultureQuest/>.

In July 2005, Samuel came to New York to participate in a one-week Technology Boot Camp workshop that Sheila Gersh taught. Another teacher at the school, Conteh Abdulai, a fifth grade teacher, will be doing a CultureQuest project about Sierra Leonean culture. Though they still don't have computers at the school, they use a local Internet café.

Contact Conteh Abdulai, at [contehlai20006@yahoo.com](mailto:contehlai20006@yahoo.com). and Samuel at [samuel@sabuschool.org](mailto:samuel@sabuschool.org).

## CULTUREQUEST in *NEW DELHI*



Bharat, Snehlata and students Skyping with student in Japan.

Three teachers at the RPV Surajmal Vihar School (**Girija Shankar, Bharat Thakur and Snehlata Gupta**) who had received training in technology and CultureQuest pedagogy at SCERT in Delhi, have been training students and helping them to work on CultureQuest projects since January 2003. Their students initially completed some 15 projects on various aspects of American Culture and daily life. Subsequently, students have

been partners in answering questions and providing information to students in the USA, Spain, and Japan who have been interested in doing projects on India.

They hosted a group of teachers from Sweden this November to plan exchanges and CultureQuest Projects (see: <http://www.culturequest.se>), and are partnering with Japanese students from Nagoya University who are working on India projects

through both Skype and blogs (See: <http://culturequestindia.blogspot.com>)

Finally, New Delhi students are preparing their projects on Indian culture as part of the international competition **CultureQuest India!** Other New Delhi schools are also participating in **CultureQuest India!** The Directorate of Education is planning to take CultureQuest to other Government schools.

## CULTUREQUEST in *TOKYO*



**Jun Sakamoto and Kyoko Murikami** published four papers on CultureQuest and translated our CultureQuest Teachers Guide into Japanese. They have also received grants from Mombusho, the Japanese Ministry of Education, one of which enabled them to build a web-based communication system for CultureQuest. One part of that communications system is **www.Nota.jp**, a site that Professor Sakamoto's students can use for communication and for

creating web sites. You can get an ID and password and take a look at the site. It's very intuitive and easy to use.

This past October, Jun and Kyoko once again brought 16 of their undergraduate students at Hosei University to City College and schools in the surrounding community. Students presented their CultureQuest projects. The team has been forced to limit their CultureQuests work to college students since getting entry into the elementary and sec-

ondary schools is extremely difficult. This January, however, they expect to link PS 161 in Manhattan (see photo) with a primary school in Japan. Their strategy is quite clever. Since New York City and Tokyo are supposedly "sister cities" they will link the two schools and gradually work in CultureQuest. After they left NYC, the team stopped in Kansas, Texas and South Korea to expand the CultureQuest project.

## CULTUREQUEST in *NORTH CAROLINA*



Charlotte Prep School, Charlotte, North Carolina

In early 2007, **Sheila** presented a CultureQuest workshop at the **Core Knowledge Conference**, a concept schools around the country are adopting. After attending the session, **Annmarie Torres**, Assistant Head at the Charlotte Preparatory School in Charlotte, North Carolina, invited Sheila to do an all-day workshop on August 20. When the new school year began, teachers in 3, 4, 5, and 6th grade met in groups by grade level and planned their

CultureQuest projects for the year. Third grade teachers will compare and contrast Colonial culture with American culture; Fourth graders will explore African culture with the Sabu International School in Guinea; 5 & 6th graders will study Japan and look at the foods, arts and crafts, clothing, classroom practices, daily chores and values, attitudes and beliefs. They will also communicate to a class in Japan. The classroom teachers will work with Ellen, the com-

puter teacher. The school will use ePals (<http://www.epals.com>) as the communication tool and, when available, will SKYPE with their counterparts. The final projects include a digital story using PowerPoint and narration. In all grades students will present their projects at special events (Afro-American Cultural Center in Charlotte, at the schools' Japanese Culture Fair and at the schools' Colonial Day Fair.)

## CULTUREQUEST in *ISRAEL*

The first Israeli CultureQuest project will be done at the Bialik School in Holon, a suburb of Tel Aviv. Holon city is known for its investments and achievements in education. With assistance from the Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv, teachers will receive the training and assistance to plan and carry out the project. The Principal of the school is excited about this and held the launch for the

project during Sheila's recent trip to Israel. Sheila and **Esti Feffer** both spoke about the project. Parents, administrators, teachers and students attended the event. Three schools will do a CQ project based on looking at Israeli culture from the perspective of Arab students, Religious Jewish students and Secular Jewish students. The schools will receive assistance from three colleges.

Two schools in northern Israel will do a CQ project based on the theme "I am proud of my city" and "that's why I like to learn about other cities." They will look at Acco from the perspective of Arab and secular Jewish students.

Two 5<sup>th</sup> grade Hebrew classes in Hod Hasharon will do a CQ project about "60 Years of Israel", researching and reflecting on the history of Israel since 1948.



## CULTUREQUEST WORLDWIDE- SHORT TAKES

**Ulf Ackerberg**, received support to travel to India with a Swedish principal and two Swedish teachers. They visited New Delhi and worked with Snehlata and Bharat to develop a CultureQuest project.

**David Stoloff** at Eastern Connecticut State University reports that students in Ed Tech, Elementary and Secondary Ed programs have been doing CQ projects since the fall of 2006.

They develop PowerPoint presentations and, uniquely, curricular units incorporating CultureQuest in their lessons. In addition, during the summer of 2007, twenty-six high school students in an Institute for Future Teachers developed CultureQuest India! projects.

This past fall, David hosted a visiting professor from Thailand and, in turn, has recently spent

part of this winter in Thailand. David has taught Thai teachers how to teach with technology, and about CultureQuest. Hopefully he has recruited Thailand into the CultureQuest Consortium.

**Anne Pierce** at Hampton College in Virginia reports doing a CultureQuest project on Ecuador and Costa Rica with education students



## SOME USEFUL WEB RESOURCES

### US Library of Congress: Country Profiles

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles.html>

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html>

Two web sites that contain lots of useful data on lots of countries.

### Maps, Flags, and Pictures

<http://geography.about.com/library/maps/blindex.tm#below>

Links to an online World Atlas that includes maps and geographical information.

<http://www.iconbazaar.com/flags/index.html>

Images of flags (some animated) that can be copied and pasted into web pages.

<http://www.schoolink.org/twin/findingpicturesonline.htm>

This site has links to unrestricted images.

### Cultural Studies

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/educators/lessonplans/section.cfm?sid=4>

Activities and exercises to help understand cultural differences.

<http://www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/crossroads/sec3/gr3/unit1/u1g3l1.html>

Link to lesson plan to defining and understanding the term culture.







## SCIENCEQUEST: *So What's a ScienceQuest?*

One reason CultureQuest is so valuable for teachers is that it gives them the tools to integrate technology with different educational content. Teachers who learn how to do a CultureQuest should be able to apply the same skills, pedagogy, and technology tools to do ScienceQuests, HistoryQuests, HealthQuests or inquiry-based quests in any other subject matter area.

Because grant funds for science teacher education are more prevalent in the US, we decided to put the above proposition to the test and thus we

developed a ScienceQuest training program for teachers. We received a grant that has enabled us to begin training teachers in two NYC school districts in ScienceQuest. The inquiry-based approach is particularly consistent with most beliefs about science education and the technology learning is just as useful (if not more so) in science education. Our goal is to strengthen the teaching and learning of science, primarily in elementary and middle schools.

We will model the process with science teachers by having them develop web-based,

teacher-created ScienceQuest projects as part of their training. Following the five full days of training teachers will work with their students on **class** ScienceQuest projects that will also result in a project web site. You can follow our training schedule and progress at [www.culturequest.us/sciencequest](http://www.culturequest.us/sciencequest). We expect to work with 70 science teachers this year.

Some of our CultureQuest partners might consider expanding their efforts into other quests so as to better work toward the integration of technology and academic content in general.



## CULTUREQUILT: *A Metaphor for the Study of Culture*

Suppose we wanted teachers and students in our schools to look at culture in New York City. We might think of using the metaphor of a quilt whose patches represent the different cultures in the City. How might a quilt created in Phoenix, Arizona be different? Would a US CultureQuilt be a composite of the many different quilts from different US cities and towns? And how

would that US quilt differ from a Japanese quilt?

We are developing ideas for a project that would produce a multimedia CultureQuilt of New York City. With support from professors in American and Multicultural studies and staff of related cultural institutions, teachers would help their students put together this mosaic of New York City cul-

ture. Sheila introduced a variant of this idea to students in a graduate course. To see what groups of students produced go to <http://culturequest.us/culturequiltny.htm>.

We invite you to explore this idea especially when you think about working with students to look at their own culture. Let us know what you think.



Award Winning Projects

## THE IDEAL QUEST: *More than Text or Web Site Research*

We believe that an ideal CultureQuest project does more than simply review the relevant web sites on the Internet. Rather than only preparing web sites based solely on researching the Web, teachers, who can devote the time, need to encourage students to learn from their peers and knowledgeable adults (via in-person

interviews, e-mail and/or Skype), take trips to museums, conduct surveys and collect data. There should be a place to include such information on the web site. Whenever possible, the web site could also have interactive components such as a quiz or word search puzzle (see <http://www.puzzlemaker.com>)

or a blog where readers can be active and contribute. Two fine example of projects containing some of these elements can be found at <http://library.thinkquest.org/06aug/01036> (*Marine Debris*)

<http://library.thinkquest.org/06aug/01220> (*Go Organic*)

## INTRODUCING THREE NEW CULTUREQUESTERS

**Eiko Ujitani** is a Professor of English from Nagoya University of Foreign Studies has done CultureQuest Chile and CultureQuest India with her students. They created a blog for the question and answer research portion of the project. (<http://culturequestchile.blogspot.com> and <http://culturequestindia.blogspot.com>)

**Jennifer Hall**, the Learning and Teaching Resource Coordinator at the Bendigo Senior Secondary College in Australia has been doing CultureQuest with her classes and offers professional development to teachers in various areas of Australia. She hopes to obtain sufficient resources to implement CQ throughout Australia. She is also writing an art-

icle for the School Librarian Association of Victoria to promote CultureQuest.

**Maria Ramos**, a 1st and 2nd grade teacher in a bilingual School in Seville, Spain (San Francisco de Paula School") has done a bilingual CultureQuest India! project with her students. ([http://www.sfpaula.com/proyectoindia/ui\\_documento.asp?id=1170](http://www.sfpaula.com/proyectoindia/ui_documento.asp?id=1170))

*We encourage our CultureQuest Consortium partners to continue recruiting educators from other countries into our Consortium.*

## EUROPEAN SCHOOLS PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

The European Schools Project Association (ESP Association) (<http://www.espnnet.eu/>) was founded in 2005. The Association is a collaborative open network organization for educators and researchers in Europe and beyond. It builds on the European Schools Project that started in 1988. It attempts to achieve aims by:

- \* Promoting collaboration

and cooperation between pupils, students, educators and researchers,

- \* Availing access to international networks
- \* Promoting and supporting professional development of teachers and educators,
- \* Developing innovative concepts, instruments and content,
- \* Performing research,
- \* Generating ideas to make and keep our schools good

places for children and adults to be in.

CultureQuest recently formed a partnership with the European Schools Project. This partnership will introduce many more teachers in the EU to the CultureQuest project. Further discussions will be held about the partnership at the next ESP conference in the Spring. Sheila is the US Coordinator for the European Schools Project.



European Schools Project Association

## CULTUREQUEST India!: Seeking a Country for the 2008 Competition

This past year CULTUREQUEST INDIA! encouraged a number of classes to explore the culture of India. Thanks to the knowledgeable adults and teachers who served as CQ Ambassadors to India. These include: **Ravi Kalia, Amita Gupta, Shankar Venkateswaran, Chandad Nallal, Anshu Sharma, Naveena Bedi, Snehlata Gupta, Bharat Thakur, Aruna Berry, Mehta Angu, Jyotsna Davar**

The competition ended as of

December 15, 2007 and the projects are being evaluated by a panel of judges at City College. Teachers and students will be notified in February.

We would like to renew the idea for an annual competition in 2008 and focus on the culture of another member country of the CultureQuest Consortium. If you would like to volunteer your country, send an e-mail to [nshapiro@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:nshapiro@ccny.cuny.edu). We will ask you to recruit knowledgeable adults that can mentor students as well as teachers and their classes in the country we

select who will also volunteer to help students find answers to their questions. We would also request that you identify classes in your country that would be willing to do CultureQuest projects based upon the culture of your own country.

As the number of CultureQuest countries and classrooms grow we anticipate an increasing number of classes participating in the competition each year.



The Nano  
India's New Small Car

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)

**DO YOU WANT TO HOST  
CULTUREQUEST COMPETITION  
in 2008?**

**WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO HOST  
A SMALL INTERNATIONAL  
CULTUREQUEST CONFERENCE  
IN MAY or JUNE OF 2009?**

Contact [nshapiro@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:nshapiro@ccny.cuny.edu)



Sabu International School in  
Conakry, Guinea

## GOOGLE RESOURCES FOR CULTUREQUEST see especially Page Creator below

**\*\*note:** You will need to get a gmail account at <http://mail.google.com> just to log into the resources below.

**Google Docs** –(<http://docs.google.com>) is an online word processor, spreadsheet and presentation editor that allows you and your students to create, store and collaborate online in real time. You don't have to download software and since your work is stored online, you can access it from any computer. It's a great tool to use for the groups preparing the content for their CQ project. Each group member can share his/her work with other members and it's a nice way to edit and do peer review.

**Page Creator** – (<http://pages.google.com>) is a wonderful tool that helps you create attractive web pages in just minutes. This tool al-

lows you to design your pages using a variety of styles, fonts, and background colors. You can also include images and links on your web page. Best of all, Google hosts your pages for free. A tutorial is found at <http://www.culturequest.us/PageCreatorTutorial.html>

**Google Earth** [http://www.google.com/educators/google\\_earth.html](http://www.google.com/educators/google_earth.html) Google's satellite imagery-based mapping product, represents the whole world on a student's computer. It enables users to explore places around the world. Google Earth is more like a video game than a search engine. It is basically a 3D model of the entire planet that lets you grab, spin and zoom down into any place on Earth. An example of how one teacher has used Google is found at

- <http://www.googleittrips.com/>
- Users guide – <http://earth.google.com/userguide/v4/>

Other resources to help you use Google Tools may be found at:

<http://www.govandlaw.org/teacherinnovations/>

<http://groups.google.com/group/googlealmanac>

<http://guerrillaed.pbwiki.com/Picasa+>

We have begun to use **Page Creator** in our CultureQuest and ScienceQuest programs because it provides a simple way for teachers to create and publish their web sites. Our experience has been that teachers can learn to use Page Creator in less than an hour. While it is not as sophisticated as other web editors it seems to do the job.

If there is other software that you find valuable and would like to share with others, please let us know and we will be happy to disseminate information about it.