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Photographs of Hampi, India

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The students have to prepare their evidence and present a hypothetical version of what happened on the evening the scientist disappeared.

CLASSROOM VISITATIONS

All of our modules, be it for week-long programs like Whale of a Mystery and Thread of Evidence or for one-day experiences for local schools, are based on a case or mystery that students have to solve. The modules that are offered in one-day experiences include a pre-laboratory exercise that is done in the classroom to provide the background and the mystery that needs to be solved. As with the summer program, the storylines are designed to be open-ended to help the students “discover” the best way to solve the problem. The only way to solve these mysteries is to use modern biotechnology.

The lab equipment is only there to help find an answer, not the other way around.

The most popular module is The Mystery of the Crooked Cell that was originally developed at BUSM CityLab. This module for middle school-aged students explores sickle cell syndrome with the progression-of-inquiry approach. Students begin with a description of a patient with symptoms of some sort of malady. Through a series of inquiry-based and hands-on steps, they can determine that the disorder is indeed sickle cell syndrome. After obtaining a “sample” of the patient’s blood, they perform a series of tests to definitively prove their hypothesis—case solved!

For high school students, BSC CityLab has developed “Chances Are?,” a follow-up to the middle-school module based on sickle cell syndrome described above. In this module, high school students play the role of genetic counselors and learn how to correctly develop and analyze a pedigree, decide which family member(s) should be tested, and use polyacrylamide electrophoresis to run the diagnostic test. In addition to the biotechnology needed for this module, students must also face and discuss some of the ethical dilemmas people face surrounding the knowledge that can be garnered from knowing your genetic makeup.

TEACHER TRAINING & LENDING LAB

BSC CityLab has historically been very involved in providing opportunities for pre- and in-service teachers through courses in support of the Masters of Art in Teaching program and workshops throughout southeastern Massachusetts. The courses that the faculty offer serve two major functions. The first is to provide area teachers with content knowledge in the area of Biomedicine and Biotechnology that they can take back to their classroom and expand the teachers’ knowledge base. The second major function is to provide teachers with alternative pedagogical strategies that they can use in their classrooms and the training to become proficient in the techniques associated with the modules.

Once teachers are trained, they will be able to borrow equipment, supplies, and reagents to take back to their classroom through BSC CityLab’s Lending Lab program. Efforts are currently being put forth by BSC CityLab to expand the Lending Lab program. Although we recognize the intrinsic value of having area students come to Bridgewater State College and BSC CityLab, we also realize that many school districts are facing financial difficulties and cannot absorb the cost of a substitute teacher and busing required for a BSC CityLab visit. Many of the modules that are run in BSC CityLab have been modified to work in a classroom with the time and space constraints that teachers face.

FUTURE OF BSC CITYLAB

Unfortunately, federal and grant money are sparse for programs that are designed for children and the programs and grants that do support such activities are very highly competitive. BSC CityLab was fortunate to receive the seed money from the SEPA grant. However, for BSC CityLab to continue, we must get BSC CityLab institutionalized and create an endowment for the continued development and running of our modules and programs. To this end, BSC CityLab is continuing to pursue granting opportunities and has begun a campaign to raise the finances to keep this outstanding program going. Additionally, BSC CityLab is working to become formalized as an established center on campus that would provide the basic infrastructure and necessities to run the programs. If you are interested and would like to help BSC CityLab educate our children in the uses and applications of science, especially biotechnology, please feel free to contact us at CITYLAB@bridgew.edu or you may contact the director of BSC CityLab, Dr. Michael Carson (mjcarron@bridgew.edu).

—Jeffrey Bowen is Associate Professor of Biology.

Intricately carved sculptural imagery covers and fills many of the architectural works, which survive in great number.
A shrine at the top of one of the hills of Hampi.

A view of a large temple complex with smaller shrines in the foreground.

An open air shrine is dominated by a statue of Narasima, a lion-headed incarnation of the god Vishnu, who destroyed an evil tyrant.

The tower rising up from a temple complex marks the location of the sanctuary, the most holy place. This temple continues in use today.
Within the Royal Quarters, this deep stepped pool was supplied with water by an aqueduct.

Arches from the Queen’s summer pavilion, called the Lotus Mahal. A water system within the foundations kept the stones cool in the hot summer.

Do Women Change Politics?
Tracy L. Osborn

No sooner was the ink on the 2004 post-mortem election analysis dry did the pundits of American politics turn their attention to who would vie for the Democratic and Republican presidential nominations in the 2008 race. Among the names mentioned so far are two prominent political women—Hillary Clinton and Condoleezza Rice. In fact, a February 2005 public opinion poll conducted by Siena College and Hearst Newspapers found that 53% of those polled thought Hillary Clinton should run, and 42% of those polled thought Condoleezza Rice should run. Moreover, 62% of those polled agreed that the US is “ready” for a woman president in 2008.

For a nation who has never seen a woman assume its highest office, this is interesting food for thought. In this same poll, 24% of respondents reported they thought a woman president would be a better foreign policy-maker than a man, 11% thought a man president would be better. 18% of those polled thought a woman would be a better commander-in-chief, though 23% thought a man would be better in this role. On domestic issues, however, a full 67% thought a woman president would be better than a man, and only 9% thought the opposite was true. Clearly, those polled thought that electing a woman president would not only be a symbolic change in who represents our nation, but would lead to substantive policy changes as well.

Interestingly, though, we know that Hillary Clinton and Condi Rice come from considerably different sides of the table on a lot of policy debates. Knowing this, how do we believe categorically that electing any woman to an office like the presidency would lead to changes in policy from her male predecessor? How do we expect political change based on gender within the context of politics that seems increasingly divided by political parties? It is this puzzle that drove me to examine the impact that women have on the policy process at a different level of government, in the 50 US state legislatures.

The state legislatures are one of the first places women made inroads in becoming part of the political elite in American politics, making them a great place to understand if women change politics, and how they might do so. Currently, according to the Center for Women in American Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University, 22.5% of state legislators in the US are women, up from only 8% in 1975. The proportion of women in the state legislature varies dramatically by state, however. Maryland has the largest percentage of women in the state legislature at 34%, South Carolina has the smallest proportion at just 8.8%. Massachusetts ranks near the middle in the proportion of women in their legislature (20th out of 50 states), but still above the national average, with 24.5% women in the 184th General Court. Across the US, about 63% of the women legislators are Democrats and 37% are Republicans.

These women legislators operate in an increasingly partisan universe. According to the National Council of State Legislatures, 11 of the 50 state legislatures have one house controlled by the Republicans and one house controlled by the Democrats. Even where one party does control both houses of the legislature, many of the parties are neck and neck in the number of seats they hold, and therefore the majority’s hold on legislative control can be tenuous. For example, in the Colorado