



A seminar called “Crime Scene Investigator: The New Sherlock Holmes” at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching in Cullowhee demonstrates to teachers that simulated mysteries are a great way to get students of any age excited about science and math.

The seminar also demonstrates to teachers how topics such as deductive reasoning, the scientific method, and even DNA testing, all of which have gained notoriety through television hits like *CSI*, form the basis for promising future careers in forensic science for their students.

As Charlotte teacher Naomi Jameson discovered, mastering a few investigative techniques and taking an on-your-own approach can turn someone who is simply curious into an excited forensic investigator ready to apply the tools of science to a perplexing mystery. “From this seminar, I got ideas about hands-on, investigative learning, and how to find answers for yourself that I can definitely pass on to my students,” she said.

When they arrive in Cullowhee for their five-day learning adventure at NCCAT, teachers participating in the CSI seminar find that a simulated disaster scene has been created just for them. A fabricated crash in nearby woods is littered with the evidence of foul play. Forensic anthropologist Dr. Bill Bass, founder of the University of Tennessee’s Anthropological Research Facility, meets the teachers at the site to relate the sketchy details of the case. Soon after, the teachers-turned-investigators are dispatched to survey the wreckage, make detailed maps of the site, and collect the evidence. Then they begin the meticulous task of unraveling the mystery. Tattered shreds of clothing, shoes, a pearl necklace, bracelets, watches, a pocket knife, other personal effects, and long and short bones, vertebrae, and skulls are arranged to create the outline of humans. The teachers hypothesize about the imaginary victims before them. They also have an opportunity to practice an assortment of forensic procedures, including DNA profiling, used to solve real-life crimes on board the University of North Carolina’s Mobile DNA lab, which visits NCCAT in conjunction with the seminar. Recent advances in DNA and bone structure analysis were not part of the science curriculum when many of today’s career teachers were in college. The seminar experience gives them practical experience and working knowledge of the new science while providing them with ideas to increase student motivation for the study of science and math.



The CSI seminar is one of about ninety residential seminars up to five days in duration that NCCAT provides each year for teachers from all over the state. In addition to science and math, the seminar topics are relevant to the arts and humanities, social studies, technology, communication, and health and fitness. The center’s programs are designed to renew vitality and enthusiasm for the teaching profession and to provide new knowledge for the classroom. Special programs of support also are provided for beginning teachers and for teachers seeking certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Full-time teachers (kindergarten through grade twelve) who have been employed in North Carolina schools for at least three years are invited to apply. Information is available at [www.nccat.org](http://www.nccat.org) or by calling 800-922-0482.

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