The WebQuest I am evaluating is “Bones and the Badge” created by Clarissa Labor of the San Diego Unified School District as part of a federally funded Technology Innovation Challenge Grant. I chose this WebQuest for evaluation because in my opinion it represents excellence and as such will serve to inspire me to think of ways to adapt this to a bibliographic instruction teaching environment. As of November 16, 2012 this WebQuest is located online at: http://projects.edtech.sandi.net/kearny/forensic/index.htm

This WebQuest is oriented around principles germane to forensic science. Content is organized into fictionalized case studies of crimes which need to be solved. An audience of 9-12 grade students investigates the crime scene using the content of the WebQuest. As they proceed through the content using the principles of forensic science they also naturally meet any number of educational standards across many possible subject areas.

While the content of the WebQuest has a somewhat scientific fact based premise of specific interest to me are the humanities oriented standards which underlie the content. In order to meet with success students conducting this WebQuest need to decide how to answer the questions associated with their choice of content. As there are no right and wrong answers this requires individuals to work as a group whose tasks is to use critical thinking skills in the interpretation of facts and to offer conclusions which help solve the crime.

Standards addressed in the “Bones and the Badge” WebQuest relate to both scientific Investigation and reading and writing standards. From the perspective of an information science based educator the standards related to comprehension, analysis, and the synthesis of content from multiple sources and extending ideas from primary and secondary sources are of interest. If there is a single reason I chose this WebQuest for evaluation it is because the aforementioned standards are essential to successful bibliographic instruction. Also noteworthy in an information science context are standards related to communication such as writing, speaking, organization, presentation, and making arguments. These standards closely relate to bibliographic instruction in that success will yield better results related to the standards. All of the standards addressed are clearly listed in the “teacher page” of the WebQuest with an invitation for other educators to consider their own state specific standards and list them when they use the WebQuest.

The “Bones and the Badge” WebQuest integrates deductive and inductive learning modes. At the outset this WebQuest functions in a largely deductive way. The text of the site introduces and thoughtfully explains the concepts which students will be using and then carefully presents students with a series of
tasks organized in a clear progressive narrative which elucidates the concepts. Content is presented in clearly labeled sections. Each section is relatively short and is well written.

As the WebQuest develops it progressively shifts balance from an initially deductive predisposition to a mostly inductive state. Evidence of this is found in the progressive levels of assessment which are necessary for the learner to pass in order to proceed. After a certain amount of a deductive approach to the content the learner is required to function inductively and “solve” part of the “mystery” in order to continue. This can only be done by the student noticing the necessary details, reporting them properly,
and thus moving on to the next task. This provides excellent structure to the content and naturally incorporates some sense of reward for the learner as the learning narrative builds.

The WebQuest ends with students making group presentations on the content they chose to study. At this point the learning is inductive. Students have become “experts” with regard to their chosen content and present what they believe is important about their work to fellow students. It is important to note that each choice of crime case study content is unique and requires interpretation.

The technology used to present this WebQuest seems typical as a premise but in my opinion far exceeds the other example WebQuests which a librarian teaching bibliographic instruction might make use of. While the other WebQuests I came across which dealt specifically with bibliographic instruction were a task based presentation of concepts this WebQuest compels learners to apply critical thinking as they engage in decision making. The visual content found throughout the WebQuest is outstanding including dramatic “crime scene” photos and other “evidence.” This use of technology is essential to the content and guaranteed to appeal to a majority of 9-12 learners.

The content of the “Bones and the Badge” WebQuest is somewhat timeless and as such continues to be naturally current. All of the content is presented clearly and is generally free of both technical and typographic errors. An exception is pictured in the screenshot below: Windows based users are required to install a QuickTime browser plug-in in order to view the panoramas created expressly for the WebQuest. Honestly this is about the only change I would recommend for this WebQuest. Stretching for other suggestions would be, in my opinion, a matter of taste.

The creator of this WebQuest collaborated with Media Specialists and students from the School Library Media Center to create visual content. Guest speakers are used to complement this online content. Suggested speakers range from law enforcement professionals to other kinds of scientists and researchers. Credit is given to other WebQuest collaborators at every appropriate point.
Pedagogically this WebQuest is inspiring with its integration of deductive and inductive learning modes and the degree to which it articulates and stays focused on educational standards. There are narrative threads and content elements for every learning style. Noteworthy content related to pedagogy includes specific instructions for teachers about how best to plan and implement the WebQuest in their specific learning environments.

Assessment is conducted in the short term in real time in an objective way in the form of “quizzes.” Assessment also takes place in a more long term subjective way in the form of a concluding group presentation with a variation of a WebQuest rubric originally created by Bernie Dodge incorporated at this point.

I enjoyed and was impressed by the “Bones and the Badge” WebQuest and have already looked at the San Diego State University online resource for adapting WebQuests which as of November 16, 2012 is located at: [http://webquest.sdsu.edu/adapting/index.html](http://webquest.sdsu.edu/adapting/index.html) It would take effort but I could easily see pulling a “primary vs. secondary source” bibliographic instruction lesson narrative out of this WebQuest content. I feel like it also deserves mention that the idea of basing this learning around forensic science could be a potential risk for some. For others it will guarantee a rapt audience.