



### **D40 Andragogical CSI: Strengthening the Education and Mentorship Into the Future**

*Kevin J. Parmelee, MPA\*, Somerset Co Prosecutor's Office, Forensic Lab, 40 N Bridge Street, Somerville, NJ 08876*

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After attending this presentation, attendees will be provided with the constructs and development of a comprehensive training institute that takes crime scene practitioners from basic training modules, through more specialized training, and into more professional development opportunities that promote continued advancement throughout an individual's career. Most significantly, this presentation will contribute to the recommended changes to the field of crime scene investigators, which are outlined in the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Report, *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*.<sup>1</sup> The presentation details many additional areas within the fields of criminal justice and forensic science training that need to be addressed, studied, and corrected, such as cost-effective continuing education, mentorship, and certification options for crime scene investigators. Effective leadership is crucial toward successfully aligning current policy, education, and practices with the NAS recommendations.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by highlighting the development of a cost-effective continuing education institute that can be duplicated in other regions of the country, which will regionally foster growth of Crime Scene Investigators (CSIs) throughout their career, while also offering mentorship opportunities, areas of specialization, and professional growth into the future.

The Northeast Crime Scene Institute (NCSI) is a comprehensive continuing education program hosted by the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office Forensic Laboratory in Hillsborough, New Jersey. Created in October of 2011, the institute establishes its duties as providing crime scene investigation, analysis and forensic training programs for criminal justice personnel, and providing technical assistance to criminal justice agencies and aiding them in the discharge of their responsibilities. The institute offers three distinct modules that coincide with practitioner experience and development.

The first module consists of the Crime Scene Investigation course. Drawing together the many fields of study in the forensic sciences, this course provides the standardization of basic skills and practices needed by crime scene investigators to successfully fulfill their duties and responsibilities. The course is provided annually, four weeks in length, with each week spaced intermittently throughout the year. The student's skills and abilities are assessed with lab performance evaluations, knowledge assessments (tests), and work experiences while establishing a mentorship with instructors that lasts approximately eight months.

The second module consists of various specialty courses that are designed to advance upon the basic skills and abilities of investigators gained from the first module. The course offerings at this level are geared to hone those abilities toward a content-specific field of analysis. A variety of courses that will be offered may include, but is not limited to, latent fingerprint analysis, bloodstain pattern analysis, medicolegal death investigation, and shooting reconstruction. These courses will normally consist of approximately one week of specialized training pre-scheduled annually.

The third module seeks to continue the advancement of practitioners toward professional contributions in the field of crime scene investigation. More specifically, the third module will assist interested participants in taking part in more advanced practices that will contribute to the advancement of instruction, research, publication, and administrative activities that are necessary for the NCSI to remain at the forefront of CSI continuing education. This module will offer courses and opportunities for members to hone their skills at instructing classes, publishing articles, conducting research experiments, and taking on voluntary roles within the administration of the NCSI.

#### **Reference:**

National Academy of Sciences. *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*. The National Academies Press, 2009. Washington, D.C.

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#### **Education, Training, Mentorship**