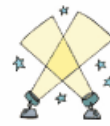




Spotlight on Educators

An S.O.S. for Information Literacy Online Publication



Spring 2004

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Motivational Strategies That Work

If you're looking for a strategy to help students learn the important areas of the media center, you should check out Jean Maier's lesson plan in the S.O.S. database. It's called "Library Maps" and she teaches it in conjunction with a map unit. Here's her strategy in a nutshell . . . Tell students that they are explorers and their territory is the library. Give students an outline map of the library and have them use their skills to record the different areas of the library.

Another strategy (this one is for helping students learn internet evaluation skills) is to create a learning aid for them. Linda Zuber did just that



when she created "Let's FACE It" – a two-sided (laminated) learning aid that helps kids decide whether a Web site is one they can trust. FACE stands for Factual?-Author?-Current?-Easy? - with questions students should ask about each aspect. April Myers uses it in her creative lesson plan entitled "DNN: Decade Network News." You can

download it and laminate it for yourself by accessing her lesson plan and looking under the Related Media section. Click on Search Resources on the main site and write April Myers in the Author/Submitter field.

Elements of a Winning Lesson

Cynthia Tidd, School Library Media Specialist for Indian River Middle School, Philadelphia, New York

**Written by
MariRae Dopke-Wilson
Spotlight Feature Producer**

"I love working in the library media center because every day is different, and I'm always learning something new from students and teachers." Cynthia Tidd exudes enthusiasm when she speaks of the diversity she enjoys as a School Library Media Specialist for Indian River Middle School in Philadelphia, New York. Cynthia took the position as an assistant LMS seven years ago thinking it would be a good way to pay tuition for her Master's Degree in elementary education. "I fell in love with the job immediately, and I was working with two dynamic Library Media Specialists who encouraged me to pursue that degree instead. The administration was encouraging me as well, so in 2001 I started



SLMS Cynthia Tidd works with a student in Indian River Middle School's library media center.

working on my master's in library science." Last August, Tidd received her degree from Syracuse University, and while in the process she worked diligently submitting numerous lesson plans to the S.O.S. for Information Literacy database. Yoko's Paper Cranes, one of her favorites, recently tied for first place in the S.O.S. for Information Literacy Lesson Plan Contest.

Elements of a Winning Lesson

Cynthia believes lessons that are 'winners' in the classroom utilize a variety of components. Her lesson on Yoko's Paper Cranes is based on a picture book of the same name where a child writes and receives letters from her grandmother in Japan. "I have incorporated science, geography and art and also compo-

Spotlight Feature...



Cynthia's Tips for Success

- **Stay in-tune with School Happenings**
- **Make Lessons Interdisciplinary**
- **Use Graphic Organizers**
- **Be Collaborative**
- **Be Organized and Prepared**
- **Be Adaptable and Enthusiastic**
- **Be Creative and Committed**

nents of language arts, including speaking, writing and reading skills. There's a lot that's very interdisciplinary which makes the most of a lesson. There are motivational activities, a craft, research, group work, brainstorming, and shared read-aloud of the picture book. It just reinforces everything that they're learning when they can interact with each other." In addition, Tidd recognizes that topics and activities that are relevant to students' interests are the most successful. "Activities that get kids moving and talking and creating make things more meaningful. I think it's important for students to relate learning to their own lives in some way. A lot of times you can connect what you're teaching to things in their own lives to make it more relevant and meaningful." Her lesson is rich in activities while featuring the topic of letter writing that is relevant to most elementary students. "One of the activities was that students each had to write a friendly letter to a relative or friend that lives a distance away. And before we did that we talked about if they had ever received a letter, or ever written a letter, and if so to whom. We discussed the process of receiving letters from people that are far away and how letter writing lets us keep in touch with them. So the lesson had more meaning by first discussing it before starting the activities."

Use Graphic Organizers

Being well-organized aids in any learning process and Cynthia uses a 'graphic organizer' to help her students manage information. "It helps kids organize their information and it helps them stay focused on finding information that they need. When they are doing research sometimes, they are just overwhelmed before they have an encyclopedia in front of

them and a graphic organizer keeps them focused."

Cynthia suggests creating your own personalized graphic organizer by simply making table like boxes or columns with titles that students use for organized note taking. While not necessary, you may wish to customize an organizer by embellishing it with pertinent clip art or stickers. "For example, one of my graphic organizers for an animal research project featured boxes for various questions such as where does your animal live, what does your animal eat, and what does your animal look like. It just separates and organizes their information. It's actually a form of note taking, because students can take a completed graphic organizer and then turn it into their final project. They can use it if they are going to do a writing piece, or if they are doing a research project. I think of it as a kind of visual map that helps kids organize their thinking."

Keys for Fostering Collaboration

Being in-tune with what's happening in your school is an important part of building good collaborative relationships. Cynthia pays close attention to little things that help clue her into what teachers are doing. She notices what they check out of the library, what they have on their bulletin boards, and is a careful listener at lunch time. "I think a lot of teachers just feel it's going to be more work for them with planning, and then coming to the library is just going to take more time. I'm always trying to come up with ideas to try and familiarize myself with their curriculum so I know what they're doing. And I familiarize

myself with the resources that we have in the library that can fit into their curriculum, and then I'm always reading professional journals. One of my favorites is called Mailbox Book Bag. I get ideas that I might file away so when the time comes a teacher might be doing a unit on rain forests or something and I know I have a great idea and I'll go and approach them."

When working toward her degree in Library Science, an instructor of Cynthia's assigned reading, 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player, by John C. Maxwell. She says this read is a great resource identifying qualities that are essential for being a successful library media specialist. "Collaborative is one, you have to be willing to work with other teachers, because the reason we collaborate in the first place is to increase student achievement. Remember, that the focus of what we're doing is to see kids succeed. As long as we remember that and are willing to collaborate, I think we'll be successful. The media specialists that have been successful that I've worked with before are enthusiastic, and very personable. I think we have to be adaptable because of the teachers' busy schedules. Teachers aren't going to want to work with you if you aren't organized and prepared because they don't have time to wait. I try to be creative in coming up with different and fun activities to make the kids successful in their learning, and be committed to the instructional role."

Cynthia's Tips for Success

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Cynthia Tidd is an S.O.S Information Literacy Pioneer contributing eleven lessons to the S.O.S. for Information Literacy database. For a look at her winning lesson 'Yoko's Paper Cranes,' and other lesson plans, just enter her name in the database search for lessons. Thanks, Cynthia, for contributing a wealth of wonderful lessons, and for sharing your insight with others!

Virtual Explorers: Tips on Creating Virtual Field Trips for Your Students

By Marilyn Arnone

Have you thought of including virtual field trips in your lessons but needed more advice on getting started? Recently, Sue Rothwell and Pat Westgate presented a motivational and information-rich lesson to students in a school media program. The topic was using virtual field trips and expeditions to engage high-school science students but would be applicable to younger students as well.

Virtual field trips can be used as a starting point for research projects or to address specific information literacy skills. Sue and Pat also pointed out the important motivational aspects of virtual field trips. For example, Sue writes: "Novel, interactive online experiences can create an atmosphere of curiosity and interest by mentally taking the student out of the classroom and stimulating imagination." Take a peek at their PowerPoint presentation at

<http://www.informationliteracy.org/spotlight/videos/Virtual.ppt>

(large file so expect to wait at least a minute or so for it to open) or download the PDF file at:

<http://www.informationliteracy.org/spotlight/videos/VirtualFieldInformationSheet.pdf>

which is the information handout they provided. It contains their suggested "best of the best" links to sites that include virtual field trips. It also includes their tips for successful virtual field trips or expeditions.

For more information, visit the training module for preparing photos and images for the Web

at: http://www.informationliteracy.org/training/Preparing_Photos_Images.htm

News and Updates

S.O.S. for Information Literacy has been proving to be a great way to practice the skills of lesson planning. Students from a number of universities have been submitting lesson plans in conjunction with their school media program including as far east as Rutgers and as far west as the University of Hawaii (under the direction of Dr. Ross Todd and Dr. Violet Harada, respectively). Students receive detailed feedback from the S.O.S. evaluators on every aspect of their lesson plan. If anything needs clarification or re-working, the submitter can simply make the changes and re-submit. Students also love the feedback on what looks great about their lesson plans.

Paula Montgomery, publisher of School Library Media Activities Monthly, has authorized S.O.S. to input more than 100 lesson plans published in the journal. These are top-notch lesson plans that integrate library and information skills into a range of subject matter content. Thank you to Paula for her generous contribution to building a great resource for current and future library media specialists!

A group of principals from the Syracuse, NY City School District will learn all about S.O.S. for Information Literacy during a half-day event /workshop on July 15th. The event called "Librarians as Instructional Partners" will feature a presentation and demonstration of S.O.S. by Dr. Ruth V. Small with graduate students Kori Gerbig and Jennifer Nace from Syracuse University's School of Information Studies. The word about this resource is spreading!

S.O.S. for Information Literacy

Questions or comments?
Contact:
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S.O.S. for Information Literacy is a dynamic web-based multimedia resource for educators, that promises to make a significant contribution to enhancing the teaching of information literacy skills to children. At no time in history has the ability to locate, organize, evaluate, manage and use information been more critical for today's learners. These skills, collectively referred to as information literacy, lay the groundwork for success in every phase of a student's life both in and out of school.

<http://www.informationliteracy.org>



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