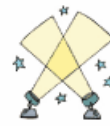




# Spotlight on Educators

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



Fall 2003

## News & Updates

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## Motivational Strategies That Work

**S**ometimes, borrowing ideas from successful game shows can make for some terrific motivational strategies. Cindy Grannell borrowed from the popular *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* television program using lifelines like 50/50, phone-a-friend, and polling the audience to get students excited about learning the Dewey Decimal System in a lesson for 3rd and 4th graders.

Don't underestimate the value of props. They are excellent at triggering curiosity, and a great at-



attention strategy. In a lesson appropriate for 3rd through 6th grade, Jean Maier handed students plastic eggs with a question in it. "Seeing the plastic egg and wondering what is in them immediately attracts student's attention. Their attention is on the lesson so they know

what to do with their egg and question. They cannot wait to see what question they have to answer."



**Sharon O'Connell**  
Library Media Specialist,  
Skaneateles Middle School

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

"I knew I'd never be bored as a media specialist. The challenges are so wonderful and everyday is different." These are the words of LMS Sharon O'Connell speaking about working in the Skaneateles School District. Helping teachers turn ideas into motivating information literacy (IL) assignments that are relevant to students' interests, is a career she embraces enthusiastically after seventeen years of teaching in the district.

**CONSUMERISM Lesson: A Student Favorite**  
As an S.O.S. for Information Literacy pioneer, Sharon has contributed three lesson plans which are featured on the S.O.S. website. Her lesson on consumerism, a plan she devel-



Sharon in her colorful LMC discusses the IL lesson with her students.

oped in conjunction with Skaneateles Home and Careers' teacher, Judy Hall, is a student favorite. "It's important to have an assignment that the children are really interested in. In middle school they are just starting to buy things and have some discretionary money, and they are also at a stage in their life where they enjoy helping their parents, and that's a good thing, too. Last year someone researched washing machines and their dad actually used that research to buy a washing machine, and that was rewarding for that student. This year a girl was evaluating chocolate candies, and she decided as part of her presentation to have kids in her class do a taste test. She cut up some expensive chocolates in small pieces along with other candies to see how her class responded in comparison to the professional taste test." Laptop computers, CD players and inline skates are other prod-

## Spotlight Feature...



### COLLABORATION Is Key

Collaboration between teachers and library media specialists is key to formulating the best lessons that have a rich mix of media to make them interesting for students. Sharon understands the demands placed on today's teacher, and for that reason she knows an important part of her job is being attentive to their ideas and needs.

ucts students researched while sharpening their literacy information skills in the process. "Bringing in inline skates was very motivating because that was something they were very interested in. I brought in several pair that I was able to borrow from a shop so we could look at the various aspects

that teachers often don't make."

The S.O.S. for Information Literacy website inspired Sharon to setup her own IL pages on the districts site. "This year my library is regularly scheduled with few breaks because teach-

the grant for three teachers and myself for two days this summer to cook something up, and we pioneered it this fall. Every eighth grader had to create a brochure on a character attribute. They used Publisher for the brochures and they each chose a characteristic like courage or determination. They went to online quotation sources to get quotations through various dictionaries on-line or traditional sources to get definitions, they searched for poetry online and in traditional indexes, as well as finding movies that were relevant. They got images and just created wonderful brochures that we displayed. In the final stage of this project they will interview people in the community that possess the attributes they worked on, and we're hoping to get a grant to compile these interviews in a kiosk for display at a local mall."



that went along with the article that I found."

### COLLABORATION Is Key

Collaboration between teachers and library media specialists is key to formulating the best lessons that have a rich mix of media to make them interesting for students. Sharon understands the demands placed on today's teacher, and for that reason she knows an important part of her job is being attentive to their ideas and needs. "Even if they have half of an idea, I'll pursue it. My website on the Skaneateles School District home page is an excellent tool to help teachers buy in. Having lessons already on the web in a credible form is comforting to them. You can take it to levels where they can't alone. For example, we did a women in sports unit that two wonderful teachers brought to me. I was able to bring in an author who also an athlete to help kick that off. In addition to getting the materials that are perfect, you can coordinate and make connections

ers have some pretty exciting lessons to do." In addition to motivating lessons, she also credits the inviting environment of the schools former jungle room, turned library tree house, for making it a great place to learn. "Creating a stimulating environment and a comfortable setting for kids really helps, and just being very accessible and letting them know that you are there to help them learn, makes a difference."

### SUMMER GRANTS Provide Time For Focus

Sharon cites grant writing for a summer brainstorming session as a powerful way to collaborate with teachers during a time when they can focus away from the hectic schedule of the school year. "In the summer we have the time to take a few days to do wonderful work and create dynamic lessons. I just guide a little and they take the ball. "One such grant project is a character education lesson in conjunction with the middle schools' Character Counts project. "I wrote

Sharon O'Connell's contributions to S.O.S. for Information Literacy, and her resulting web pages on the Skaneateles, New York, district site, will help teachers increase confidence in lesson skills so they are better equipped to train and motivate young learners to acquire and use IL skills at a time when these skills are crucial to successful learning beyond middle school.

### Check Out Sharon's Lessons Online

To review Sharon O'Connell's plans for the Consumerism lesson plus Women in Sports and a Storytelling Partnership, just put in her name under the Author/Submitter field in Step 1 on the Search Resources menu here at this site. You can also visit her school website at [www.scs.cnyric.org](http://www.scs.cnyric.org) and click on the middle school picture to navigate to the 'Information Literacy' section.

## Tips for Submitting Still Images

By Marilyn Arnone

To be sensitive to those viewing your photos on lower speed or dial-up connections, try reducing the overall size of your file so that it loads quickly. You can accomplish this with an image editing program such as Photoshop, PaintShop Pro, or the image editing software that came with your computer. Using your image editing program, you will need to do the following:

Re-size your photo or image to a maximum of 320 X 240 pixels. It doesn't have to be those exact dimensions but your photo size affects file size.

Format your photo for Web delivery. The two best formats for uploading images to S.O.S. are JPEG (for photos) and GIF (for clipart).

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](http://www.informationliteracy.org/training/Preparing_Photos_Images.htm)

## Spotlight Video Features!

Over time, the S.O.S. team will be producing brief videos and collecting video clips from pioneers to demonstrate "in action" lessons, "reflections" on successful teaching episodes or philosophies about teaching information literacy, and sometimes even "child perspectives" on doing research. Check out our beginning list of titles at:

<http://www.informationliteracy.org/spotlight/videos/VideoIndex.htm>

## News and Updates

Hundreds of people stopped by to visit S.O.S for Information Literacy at the Exploratorium and more than 200 requested information about becoming a pioneer in the project. The Exploratorium was held as part of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) National Conference in Kansas City in October. The Exploratorium showcased many excellent projects happening across the country.

Drs. Marilyn Arnone and Ruth Small presented S.O.S. for Information Literacy at the Treasure Mountain Research Retreat in Kansas City in October and at the Nevada Library Association/ Mountain Plains Library Association (NLA/MPLA) Conference in November.

The S.O.S. Award Competition deadline for submitting lesson plans with some form of media support has been extended to January 5th. Please submit your lesson plans soon. Two winners will receive a digital camera and several winners will receive an information-literacy related storybook and educator's guide for their LMC.



## Situation Outcome Strategies

**S.O.S. for Information Literacy**

<http://www.informationliteracy.org/>

## S.O.S. for Information Literacy

Questions or comments?  
Contact:  
[info@informationliteracy.org](mailto:info@informationliteracy.org)

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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