



Spring/Summer 2005

Inside Features

➤ **Nipping a Common Fear in the Bud**

➤ **News and Updates**

Motivational Strategies That Work

What strategies can you use to gain and sustain students' attention during your information skills lessons? The use of thought-provoking questions to stimulate discussion is one strategy. Creating uncertainty is another. Uncertainty can be triggered by a statement that provokes a conceptual conflict or introduces incongruity. Jean Maier creates incongruity during a lesson on Web evaluation skills by first



introducing students to a bogus Web site! It may take a little time to sink in but students soon realize that something is just not right. From there, she addresses the important evaluation issues such as accuracy, credibility, reliability, currency, and so on. Not only does she gain and sustain attention, but she increases the relevance of learning evaluation skills since students now realize that "You can't believe everything you find on the Internet!"

School-Wide Project Excites Students and Teachers

If you're looking for a project this fall to get students and teachers alike excited, look to the book *The Journey of Oliver K. Woodman*.

**Written by
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Spotlight Feature Producer**

If you're looking for a project this fall to get students and teachers alike excited, look to the book *The Journey of Oliver K. Woodman*. This charming children's story, written by Darcy Pattison and illustrated by Joe Cepeda, inspired a school-wide project at Syracuse's McKinley Brighton Magnet School that was such a success, it may continue for years to come. The popular storybook chronicles the journey of a wooden man who travels from South Carolina to California through the kindness of strangers. People who help him travel send postcards back to the owner reporting his whereabouts.



Students give Mick a big send-off!

Project Start-up

Dan Lounsbery, the schools' special education teacher read the story to his class and was inspired by the excitement it generated. "My class loved it!" Their enthusiasm sparked his idea of building the school's own wooden man to send on a journey. His thoughts were well received by other McKinley Brighton teachers and Lounsbery went to work.

"I had some extra lumber sitting around my house so I had no problem using that to build him. I had to go to the store to get some hinges and hardware for him. I went to the Oliver K. Woodman site and got a little cut out of him that kids could make and I worked with one

Spotlight Feature...

of the students to do the math to make him bigger than the paper one that they had on the site." Science teacher Jackie Pitt suggested her sister's third grade classroom in California as a destination for their Oliver. "We needed some school spirit and we thought it would be a really good project for the kids to get involved designing this guy." In the meantime, Library Media Specialist Bonnie French made sure the entire student body read *The Journey of Oliver K. Woodman*. Next, she helped facilitate a variety of ELA projects based on the story. Children wrote summaries of the story in addition to prediction papers about what might happen to the wooden man during his travels. Bonnie then incorporated a presentation skills component into the lesson. A student in her camera club video taped classmates reading their summaries and predictions. To make the lesson more engaging, they used wooden man props made in art as pointers when reading their assignments from poster paper.

Naming Their "Oliver"

In addition to designing what the wooden man would look like, Lounsbery says the student body voted to decide on his name. "The kids decided to call him Mick Bright for McKinley Brighton." Next, arrangements were made to launch "Mick" on the first leg of his journey. "We contacted a trucking company that agreed to come by and pick him up and they said they would take him as far as Scranton, PA and then he was on his own." With a backpack attached to his wooden torso, Mick Bright left school on November 19th with a festive, parade send-off. His backpack contained a letter about his intended journey, final destination address, blank postcards for kind travelers to report back on his whereabouts,

and a CD with traveling music!
Mick's Incredible Journey

Are you wondering if Mick ever made it to his final destination? Of course, you are, and so were all the students and teachers at McKinley Brighton. This kind of ongoing excitement is what makes this school-wide project a real winner.

Mick arrived safely in Scranton from Syracuse where he shared Thanksgiving dinner with a kind family that later sent him on his way via a Pennsylvania truck-stop. He was picked up by a cross-country driver who sent post cards from every state Mick traveled though. Lounsbery says Mick's progress was updated regularly in the morning announcements. "One of the things that the kids got a lot out of was learning about the different states where he traveled. I don't think any of the kids made the prediction that he was actually going to make it. Most of them predicted that he was going to get chopped up and used as fire wood. Most of the teachers didn't think he'd make it either, so we had plans to make another wooden man to send after him. We were very surprised that he made it there in just 32 days. Everyone loved hearing it. It was like a huge sigh of relief. And I think everyone really appreciated that there are nice people out there that took the time to help get a wooden man to where he needed to go. So the kids also learned that people are generally good and they will help out when others need things." Jackie Pitt cites that the children at her sister's school in Simi Valley, California, were equally excited to have Mick Bright arrive at their school. This provided yet another learning experience. The schools

exchanged pictures and the children learned about the differences of living and going to school in New York State versus California. "It's up to us as teachers to make learning fun and to make school a fun place to come. This project did that in generating a lot of excitement."

Steps for Creating the Project

1. **Get Teacher's on Board for their Support**
2. **Assign tasks:**
3. **Read & Discuss Book School-wide**
4. **Create Language Arts Lessons**
5. **Incorporate with Art Projects**
6. **Have a Name Contest**
7. **Build your Wooden Man**
8. **Assemble Backpack Materials**
9. **Setup Destination School**
10. **Coordinate Travel start-up**
11. **Plan a Send-off Parade**
12. **Establish a Back-up Man Recovery Plan**
13. **Read Postcards in Morning Announcements**
14. **Create a Journey Progress Bulletin Board**
15. **Create a Project e-mail Address and/or Website**

The "Mick Bright" project was so successful that McKinley Brighton teachers are planning to do it again next year with a few new twists! Dan Lounsbery credits Librarian Bonnie French, for her hard work in planning and preparing to get teachers on-board for this unique & exciting project!



Mick enjoyed a tasty Thanksgiving dinner in Scranton, PA, thanks to the kindness of strangers.

Nipping a Common Fear in the Bud

By Marilyn Arnone

This TIP column complements the feature story in this issue. One of the biggest fears of all is public speaking! Unfortunately, it starts early. Presenting information, however, is an important information literacy skill and sometimes that information is presented orally. Bonnie French offers this TIP for improving children's presentation skills: Add a video component to a library-based ELA lesson. Bonnie videotaped each student reading a selection from the book *The Journey of Oliver K. Woodman* by Darcy Pattison. Students watched the videotape, reflected on their performance, and chose one presentation skill they would like to improve. Next, they practiced and videotaped again. What a difference! Don't take my word for it. Watch the brand new video that explains the whole lesson in only four minutes and gives Bonnie's recipe for success. You can link to it from the Video Index on this page or simply go to:

http://www.informationliteracy.org/spotlight/videos/Art_of_Presentation.htm

News and Updates

This is important news for all S.O.S. users, both those who will be searching S.O.S. for ideas for their lesson plans and those who will be submitting their lesson plans and teaching strategies for all to share. We are very proud to announce that the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), is now a collaborator with S.O.S. for Information Literacy. AASL will be the site of S.O.S.'s official national launch in October 2005!

Before the launch, however, you will start seeing signs of our collaboration. Soon, we will devote one section in each issue of S.O.S. for Information Literacy: Spotlight on Educators to AASL. We will also provide a link to the AASL Resource Guides which are bibliographies of resources on a variety of school library media and education topics.

S.O.S. for Information Literacy will also be featured in the Exploratorium at the AASL national conference in Pittsburgh, PA in October. We'll update you on this exciting conference and S.O.S. launch in September. If you are reading this now, then you have been a part of the S.O.S. development over the past couple of years and we thank you. It is exciting to think that soon this resource will be shared with educators nationally and even internationally.



Situation Outcome Strategies

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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.

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