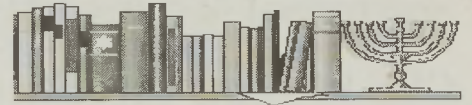


What's New in the Library?



Why I Became a Judaica Librarian

By *Amalia Warshenbrot, Librarian, Speizman Jewish Library*

A few weeks ago as Rabbi Judy Schindler was gathering children to listen to her Torah reading and her commentary, she asked the children to name a person that can make a difference in other peoples lives. The first child said "God." While the rabbi asked about a person, she was pleased with the child who feels God's presence. The second child said "a doctor." Very nice, said the rabbi. The doctor can save life, heal and help in creating life. The third child said "My School Librarian." I did not hear the rabbi's reply because I was whispering to my husband, half smiling: "Putting a school librarian between God and a doctor is not too bad." I have not met this girl again. She was an out of town guest but, I wished I could

meet her school librarian. It made me think about my profession. First, I looked up the definition



Reading and having fun at the Speizman Jewish Library.

library is a place in which literary, musical, artistic or reference materials such as books, manuscripts, recordings of films are kept for use but not for sale).

As I went from my 1973 dictionary (making a mental note to myself to order a new one, yet the online dictionary uses the same text), I went to Microsoft Encarta Book of Knowledge and here is the definition: The central mission of a library is to collect, organize, preserve and provide access to knowledge and information. In fulfilling this mission, libraries preserve valuable records of a culture that can be passed down to succeeding generations.

Libraries are an essential link in communication between past, present and future.

The definition of the profession changes with time. The 1973

in some dictionaries.

Webster New 1973 College Dictionary: A specialist in the care or management of a library (a



number three: "one who uses the services of a library and especially a public library"), but we all think of a "patron" as the one who supports an institution financially. Each one of my colleagues sees the "user" as a contributor.

When I chose to become a librarian I was a High School teacher. In the process of teaching I found myself gaining a significant amount of knowledge. I enjoyed sharing it with my students. I loved even more the research aspect of learning. I was drawn to libraries, but it is a very

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Students Benefit When Teachers Take Classes

JSkyway's Online Professional Development Courses for Educators at Jewish Schools Begin January 22 - 20% Discount for Early Registration

Newton, MA — Long-time educator Alan Weisner now gives almost no regular tests and quizzes in his Bible classes at Cohen-Hillel Academy, and the results have been nothing short of astounding.

"There are no more disputes with kids about how they got a grade, and almost no phone calls from parents about grades," he says.

And his students are learning more and retaining their knowledge.

His secret? Better ways to gauge student learning that are taught in Models of Assessment, one of several online classes offered by JSkyway (www.jskyway.com), a premier source for professional development geared for educators at Jewish schools.

The courses combine education theory with tools immediately applicable in the classroom. "Other courses I've taken have looked at theory, theory and more theory," says Shira Raviv Schwartz, a Judaic studies and Hebrew teacher at a RAVSAK-affiliated Jewish day school in Chicago. "The JSkyway course I took not only taught theory, but also how to apply that theory in the classroom. It really hit the mark."

As a result, she has shifted to a yearlong spiraling curriculum that builds on the knowledge gained by her students.

After taking the JSkyway classes herself, an administrator at a Miami, FL day school began recommending them to teachers at all levels of experience. "I encourage all my teachers to take them, especially Skills for Effective

Teaching. I thought the syllabus was brilliant. It was practical, personalized yet academic," she says.

Stephanie Tuckman, a teacher at Temple Israel's Religious School in Charlotte, NC, took the Skills for Effective Teaching class at the recommendation of her religious school director, Debbie Block. "It was really easy," she says of the course. "The curriculum dealt with all kinds of learning types and all behavioral styles. It taught me how to be more aware of how each kid learns. The course also provided different lesson plans with a variety of twists."

The best part according to Stephanie was the on-line support group. "If you're having a specific problem or have a question, you just post it, and suggestions and answers come back from other members of the group. You can use the suggestions, try things out in the classroom and come back to the support group to report on what you did."

As a teacher of both first and third graders, Stephanie had only one other thing to say about the JSkyway online courses. "I recommend them to all teachers."

"Jewish education really needed to enter the 21st century," Debbie Block says. "For those of us who are outside the New York metropolitan area, the opportunities for continuing education and training of our teachers is rare. JSkyway gives Jewish educators across the country the chance to participate, expand and improve their skills on a continuing basis."

Winter Semester Classes Begin January 22

JSkyway's winter semester courses, taught by master educa-

tors and accredited by Hebrew College and the National Board of License, run from January 22-March 25, 2004:

- * Skills for Effective Teaching
- * New Technologies for Jewish

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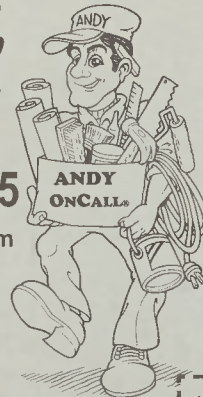
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