

Calendar

Week of May 30, 2000
Pedagogies for Academic
Diversity in Secondary
Schools Workshop
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

July 6-8, 2000
International SIM Trainers'
Conference
Lawrence, Kansas

July 10-12, 2000
Advanced Trainers'
Workshop: Teacher-
Guided Professional
Development
Lawrence, Kansas

July 17-19, 2000
Strategic Instruction Model
(SIM) Workshop Level I
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

July 20-22, 2000
Strategic Instruction Model
(SIM) Workshop Level II
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

July 17-21, 2000
Strategic Instruction Model
(SIM) Workshop Content
Enhancement
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

July 25-28, 2000
Strategic Instruction Model
(SIM) Writing Strategies
Workshop
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

July 31-August 4, 2000
Workshop for Potential
SIM Content
Enhancement Trainers
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

(Continued on page 2)

"Interviewing my participants was one of the best things I did all year for staff development. I learned more about their needs, and even more important, I developed a personal relationship with the staff. I had been providing training at the same school for a year and a half, but I had never really connected with the teachers before. After the interviews, for the first time, the teachers treated me like someone they wanted to be with, someone they wanted to listen to." —Janice Buselt, Campus Support Teacher, Wichita School District.

A relationship, a friendship, or a partnership is often nourished more by listening than by telling. As Dr. Stephen Covey has concisely observed, our opinions will be better respected by others if we "seek first to understand" through "empathic listening." "Empathic (from empathy) listening gets inside another person's frame of reference. You look out through it, you see the world the way they see the world, you understand their paradigm, you understand how they feel" (Covey, 1989, p. 241).

Most of us know through experience that listening is the best way to open up or strengthen a personal relationship, and we likely practice that approach with varying degrees of success each day. We may not, however, have structured listening into our approach to professional development. Recently, Strategic Instruction Model professional developers from the St. Louis Special School District and the Wichita School District have done just that: They have made listening the point of departure for the sessions they lead by conducting interviews with participants before workshops. This short paper will explain how they have made "seeking first to understand" an integral part of their approach to professional development. The paper answers two questions:

1. What are the rationales and goals of pre-workshop interviews?
2. How should pre-workshop interviews be conducted?

The next edition of *Stratenotes* will contain a follow-up article that explains how information gathered during pre-workshop interviews can be integrated into professional development sessions.

Seeking first to understand

Using interviews to make professional development sessions more successful

*Jim Knight, Research Associate
KU-Center for Research on Learning*

More calendar

July 31-Aug. 4, 2000
Workshop for Potential SIM
Learning Strategy Trainers
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

New on the Web

- **SIMville**, resources especially for SIM Trainers (see page 7)
- Photos from the **South-east Regional Update** meeting.
- **March Spotlight**. *The Framing Routine*.
- International Conference information, including registration forms to be downloaded.

www.ku-crl.org

STRATENOTES is published eight times from September through May and once every summer as part of Strateworks of the International Training Network by the Center for Research on Learning, 1999-2000, cost \$35.00. Permission to reproduce any or all parts of *Stratenotes* to support training activities is hereby given.

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Editor:

Rationales and goals of pre-workshop interviews

Professional developers who have experimented with pre-workshop interviews report that interviews remarkably alter the culture of their sessions. Irma Brasseur, a doctoral student and SIM Trainer at the Center for Research on Learning, comments that because interviews enable her participants to get to know her at the individual level, the participants are much more receptive to the material she presents during her workshops. Irma observes that "when I interview teachers, they come to see me as one of them, as opposed to someone being forced on them. They come into my sessions knowing I'm there for them, not against them, and that makes all the difference in the world."

Interviews help professional developers achieve three goals. First, they enable the gathering of specific information about teacher challenges, student needs, and cultural norms specific to a school district. Second, they provide an opportunity to educate participants about the content and process of a coming workshop. Third, they provide an opportunity to develop one-to-one relationships with teachers before the group presentations. This third point is especially important in schools where the cultural norms are opposed to professional development.

How should pre-workshop interviews be conducted?

Interviews are most effective when they are at least 30 minutes long, and more effective when they are 45 minutes to one hour (generally, one planning period per interview). However, a great deal of information can be gathered from 10- to 15-minute interviews, and if a facilitator wants to meet 20 teachers in one day, 15-minute interviews make the most sense. Whenever possible, interviews should be conducted one-to-one. A 10-minute one-to-one interview, generally, is more valuable than a two-hour focus group meeting with a school

team. During one-to-one conversations, people generally speak much more openly than they do even when there are two people participating in the interview. Since effective professional development often involves overcoming negative cultural norms, creating a setting where teachers can speak frankly is especially important.

During interviews

During the interview, you should take detailed notes and record teachers' real comments as much as possible. You might want to tape-record interviews so that you can revisit what has been said

If you "seek first to understand," you may find that participants are much more willing to make the effort to understand the ideas that you want to share

during sessions. Some professional developers play their tapes in their car tape deck a day or two before their sessions, to stay in touch with the issues teachers are facing. In general, teachers accept the tape recorder as a tool you need, so long as you are clear that the interview is confidential. As your interviews proceed, common themes will naturally surface, and your questioning might become more focused.

Your goals during an interview in most cases will be the same regardless of the amount of time you have available. Professional developers report that it is most valuable to seek answers to three general questions:

1. What are the rewards you experience as a teacher?
2. What obstacles interfere with you achieving your professional goals with your students and personally?
3. What is your school like?

When you have more time to conduct interviews, you can broaden ►

or focus the scope of your questions depending on the nature of the professional development session you are planning to lead. (A fairly extensive list of interview questions from which you might draw to structure your interview is included below.)

Of course, gathering interview data is only the beginning. Once you have interviewed all the teachers who will be attending your session, you will need to organize and synthesize the data so that it can be used in your

workshops. Just how you can accomplish that goal will be explained in the next issue of *Stratenotes* to be published in April. Most importantly, though, by interviewing teachers you can mark your session as one that will be characterized by an authentic attempt to practically respond to the everyday realities experienced in each individual's classroom. If you "seek first to understand," you may find that participants are much more willing to make the effort to

understand the ideas that you want to share during your session. As Dr. Covey has observed, "to have influence, you have to be influenced. That means you have to really understand" (Covey, 1989, p. 243).

References

Covey, S. (1989). *The seven habits of highly effective people: Restoring the character ethic*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Some possible interview questions

Questions about *teachers'* current reality

1. Describe a typical day on the job.
2. What do you really like about your job?
3. What kinds of pressures are you facing?
4. What challenges are you facing?
5. What kinds of changes are you experiencing?

Questions about *students'* current reality

1. Tell me about your students.
2. What are the major needs of your students?
3. What would most help your students?
4. What are the outcomes you are striving for with your students?
5. How many students are you teaching each day?
6. Please estimate the number of students with various disabilities.
7. What could have a significant influence on the happiness and success of your students?

Questions about the *school's* current reality

1. How would you describe the relationship between special education teachers and general education teachers in your school?
2. How would you describe the relationship between senior high school teachers and junior high school teachers in this district?

Questions about changes being experienced

1. How has your job changed over the last five years?
2. How has your philosophy changed over the last five years?

Questions about instructional practices

1. Are you teaching (name of intervention) at this point?
2. If yes, which (intervention) are you teaching?
3. What modifications, if any, have you made in your teaching of (the intervention)?

Questions about everyone's desired future

1. What changes in your school do you think could have the greatest influence on your students' success?
2. Describe the ideal school for me.
3. What would you like to change about your job?

Questions about professional development

1. Tell us a bit about the kinds of professional development you've attended in the past few years.
2. What have you liked about professional development?
3. What have you not liked about professional development?
4. How can the coming session be structured to best meet your needs?
5. What topics would you like to see covered in the coming session?

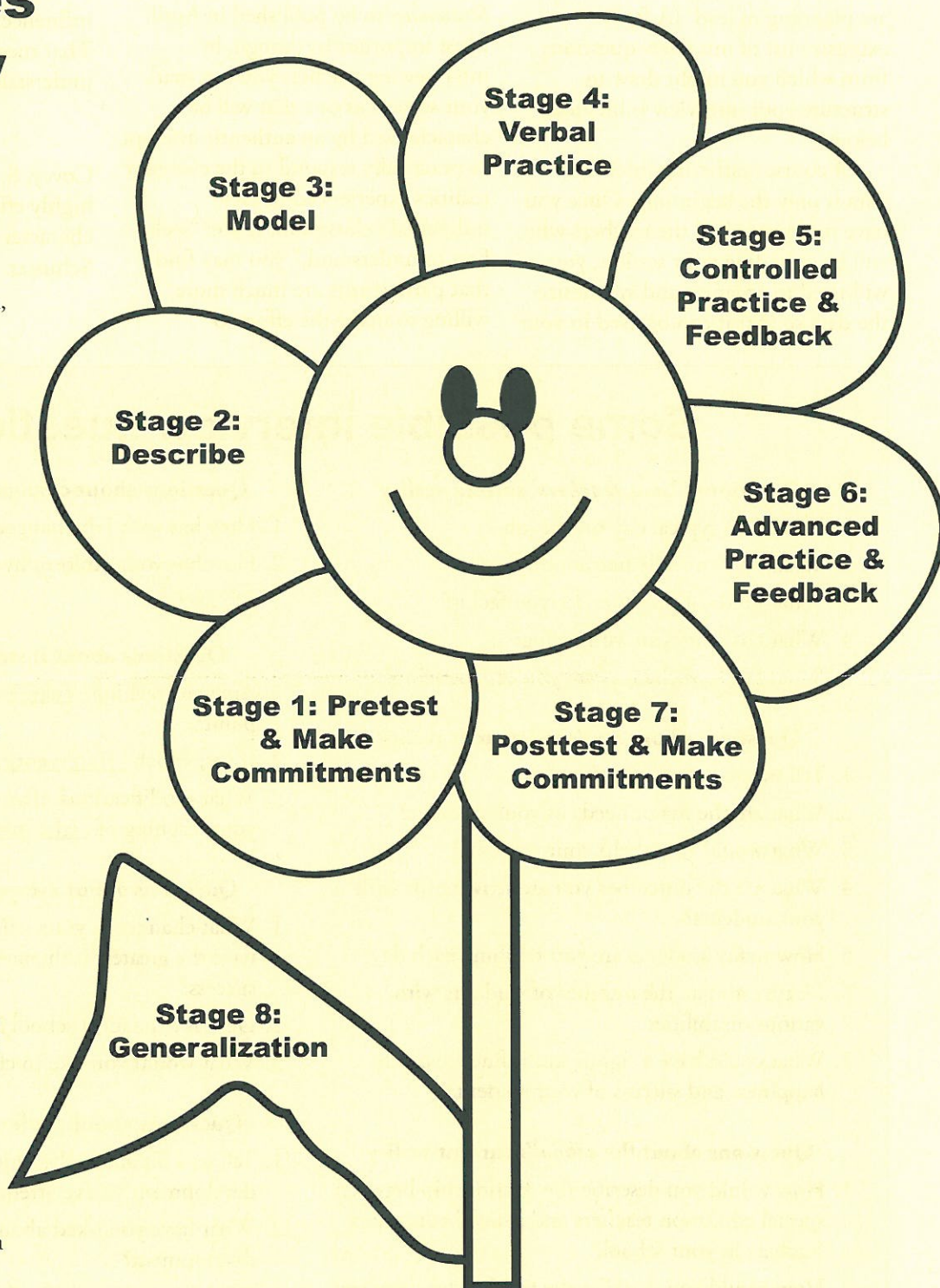
Learning Strategies Overview ideas

SIM Trainer Karen Koskovich of Maquoketa, Iowa, presented the following Overview ideas during the 1999 International SIM Trainers' Conference.

Karen uses the large flower figure on this page to introduce the stages of Strategy Acquisition and Generalization:

1. Copy the flower onto a clear overhead projector sheet.
2. On the reverse side of the sheet, color in the flower, stem, and leaf.
3. Cover the flower with a second clear sheet.
4. Cut out a paper copy of the petals and leaf.
5. Using Plasti-Tak or another form of adhesive, attach each petal and leaf to the second clear sheet, leaving only the smile in the center of the flower showing for the start of the Overview session.
6. As Karen talks about each stage, she removes the corresponding petal or leaf to reveal what comes next during SIM instruction.

Karen's overview ideas are continued on page 6.



Conference to focus on "how" and "why"

And now for the rest of the story.

This year's International SIM Trainers' Conference will delve into the story behind the story of the Strategic Instruction Model. Presenters will address the "how" and "why" questions related to strategic instruction: How does SIM fit into whole-school reform efforts? How do you develop course questions based on state standards? How do you organize a learning community? Why should you do these things?

Other topics tentatively scheduled include how to be an independent trainer, how to bring content literacy to life, how to package SIM pieces from a site perspective, and how to succeed with strategy instruction in a specific content class.

In addition, sessions will introduce new manuals and review manuals first presented during the 1999 conference. The new manuals most likely to be presented are *Community Building*, *Strategic Tutoring*, and possibly *Theme Writing*. Last year's manuals are the *THINK Strategy*, *LEARN Strategy*, *BUILD Strategy*, *InSPECT Strategy*, and *Proficiency in the Sentence Writing Strategy*.

Make plans now to join us in exploring "The Rest of the Story."

Keynote speakers

- **Dr. Sharon Vaughn**, Endowed Professor at the University of Texas at Austin, will deliver her address, "Powerful Factors that are Associated with Improved Outcomes for Students with Learning Disabilities,"

The Rest of the Story

What

International SIM Trainers' Conference

When

July 6-8, 2000

Where

Holidome
Lawrence, Kansas

on July 6. She also will present a break-out session focusing on fluency and comprehension strategies that improve outcomes for students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

- On July 7, **Dr. Jeanne Bauwens**, Professor in the College of Education at Boise

State University in Idaho, will deliver her address, "The Key is We!" She also will present a break-out session, "Tools and Techniques to Accommodate All Learners," describing six universal tools to accommodate all learners and numerous techniques for planning for and teaching a diverse group of learners within general education classrooms.

Post-conference workshop

A three-day post-conference workshop will provide advanced skills that certified trainers can use to become forces for improvement in schools. The historic Eldridge Hotel in downtown Lawrence will be the setting for the **Advanced Trainers' Workshop: Teacher-Guided Professional Development**. This workshop, facilitated by Jim Knight, will adopt a problem-solving and highly interactive format, enabling participants to work on real problems as they learn. Participants will

- build presentations shaped around partnership principles and learning structures
- learn and practice skills required for

Conference hotel reservations

Rooms are available at the Lawrence Holidome for \$65 per night plus 10.9 percent tax. Reservations may be made with the hotel by calling (785) 841-7077, ext. 8902. Please specify that you are with the **National SIM Trainers' Conference** to ensure special group rates. A block of rooms will be held for SIM Trainers until June 6, 2000. After that, reservations will be taken on a space-available basis only, and the hotel cannot guarantee the special rate.

Registration and call for papers

More information about the conference, including a call for presentations and registration forms for the conference and the post-conference workshop, appeared in the January issue of *Stratenotes*. The forms also are available for download from the Center's Web site, www.ku-crl.org.

Potential trainers

Now is the time to be thinking about the Strategic Instruction Model teachers you know who would make excellent SIM Trainers. For information and applications, contact Janet Roth at CRL, (785) 864-4780, jroth@ukans.edu

(Continued on page 6)

StrateDirectory

By now, you should have received your 2000 StrateDirectory and StratePubs. These items were mailed to *Strateworks* members at the end of February/beginning of March.

Included in the directory mailing was a survey about whether we should continue to offer an update meeting in St. John, Virgin Islands. If you haven't had the opportunity to respond yet, take a moment to send us a message.

1. If you think you will be able to attend a conference in the next school year, please let us know immediately. Please mark all dates that you will be able to attend a St. John Conference. Indicate your first, second, and third choices.

___ December 27-29, 2000
___ January 3-5, 2001
___ March 21-23, 2001

2. Please check the appropriate statement:

___ I am certain that I will attend if the conference is scheduled on the dates I have selected.

___ I hope to attend but am dependent on being funded.

Send your answers and any other comments, along with your name, address, e-mail address, and phone number, to Janet Roth by U.S. mail to 3061 Dole Center, Lawrence, KS 66045 or by e-mail to jroth@ukans.edu.

Conference

(Continued from page 5)

- successful one-to-one professional development
- learn and practice process structures that they can use with groups who need to solve problems or create a plan for implementation during training

Teacher-Guided Professional Development is a democratic approach now being used in the Pathways to Success project recently undertaken at the Center and directed by Jim. Trainers who are interested in a more teacher-centered, partnership-based approach to professional development should benefit from these sessions.

Poster, kaleidoscope sessions

Thinking of presenting during the poster or kaleidoscope sessions at the conference, but need a little inspiration? Let this year's theme, "The Rest of the Story," help. The experience, knowledge, and skills of all members of the SIM International Training Network—the rest of the story—are essential to the growth and vitality of the network. These two conference sessions are valuable opportunities for you to share.

We will be happy to work with you to develop your posters for the traditional poster session. Our poster session coordinator will work directly with you to ensure you have the materials you need for a polished poster presentation. The most important thing for you to supply is the idea!

The kaleidoscope session allows presenters to give short talks about specific topics. Participants will rotate through stations to hear each of the presenters talk during this session.

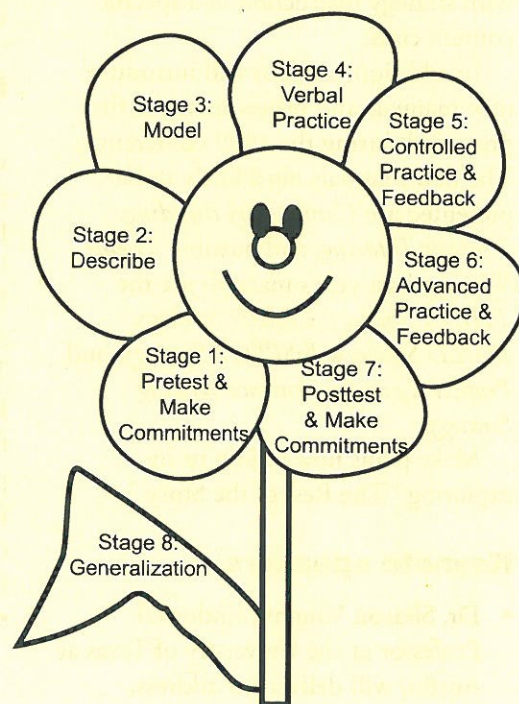
Be thinking of ideas you can present during these sessions, and we'll look forward to hearing "The Rest of the Story."

Overview ideas

(Continued from page 4)

1. Make miniature flowers (you may copy the smaller flower on this page), and attach them to craft sticks.
2. Place the sticks in foam blocks in small flower pots.
3. Decorate the rims of the flower pots with "University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning" and "Learning Strategies" written in rainbow colors.
4. Cover the foam with individually wrapped Lifesavers candies, leaving more Lifesavers on the tables around the flower pots.

"Not only does this give those being trained something to snack on," Karen said, "but it also gives the positive impression that KU-CRL strategies are lifesavers!"



Welcome to SIMville!

Where SIM Trainers meet, share, learn

The Center for Research on Learning's Web site is sporting a brand new area just for SIM Trainers.

SIMville, the SIM Trainers' resource area, is the first place to look for old *Strategram* articles, ideas for training, examples for classroom use, and activities. SIMville is still under construction, and we plan to continue to add much more information in the coming months. For now, SIMville features the following:

- Many back issues of *Strategram* (volumes 4 through 10). You can read the text of each article online or you can download a copy of the article plus graphics in a format that can be viewed or printed using Adobe Acrobat Reader. Acrobat Reader is available free from www.adobe.com. The articles are indexed by volume and by subject.
- Content Enhancement graphic devices in PowerPoint format that you can download and modify to meet your needs.
- New Trainer Resources, a collection of resources of special interest to new SIM Trainers. Veteran SIM Trainer Rosemary Tralli has put a considerable amount of thought into the kinds of information that will be valuable to new trainers. Look for this area to grow significantly under her expert guidance.

- Maybe we'll even have time to add a few surprises before this newsletter reaches you.

In the next few months, we expect to add selected *Stratenotes* articles, sample concept diagrams, sample study guides, and much, much more. We are also in the process of setting up a SIM Trainer listserv to make communication among trainers as easy as sending e-mail.

SIMville is your site. Tell us what you'd like to see there, what would be most useful, what would be most fun. If you have resources you'd like to share with other trainers, send it to us either by e-mail (jtollefson@ukans.edu) or U.S. mail (KU-CRL, 3061 Dole, Lawrence, KS 66045 Attn: Julie Tollefson).

The road to SIMville

Here is one of the several paths you can take to SIMville. Regardless of the path you take, you must use the special password established for active SIM Trainers to access all of the features of this area.

1. Point your browser to the Center's Web site: www.ku-crl.org.
2. From the first screen (splash screen), click on "More about KU-CRL" to move to the site's table of contents page.

Hint: Bookmark this page for easy access in the future.

3. Scroll down the page until you see the "Popular Picks" listing. Click on "SIM Trainer Resources."
4. Click where indicated to log on to SIM Trainer Resources.
5. At this point, you will be asked for a password. Type "**strategic**" in the box (do not type the quotation marks). The password is case-sensitive, so you must use all lowercase letters. Click on the "OK" button.
6. You should see the SIMville page listing resources available to SIM Trainers. If you did not type the password correctly or if your Web browser does not support JavaScript, an alternate page will appear telling you access to SIM Trainer Resources has been denied. In that case,
 - Use the "Back" button on your browser to return to the Login page, check the password, and try again.
 - If you continue to have trouble accessing this part of the site, e-mail jtollefson@ukans.edu. Describe your problems as specifically as possible, including the exact wording of any error messages you have received.

To bypass the password screen in the future, bookmark the first SIMville page. You will be able to go directly to that page any time you select that bookmark in the future.

Reports from regional meetings

We want to thank all of the people responsible for the regional meetings this year. From conversations, evaluations, and the CRL representatives who attended, we learned that the meetings were absolutely fantastic. Each of the conferences featured sessions on the new Cooperative Thinking Series (*Think, Learn, Build*) and the strategy for checking spelling, *InSPECT*.

Alice Henley and the Connecticut trainers provided a first-class experience for the 36 people who attended the "Reaching the New Millennium" Conference at Avon Old Farms Inn in Avon, Connecticut, on October 15 and 16, 1999. Sessions were presented by Keith Lenz, Alice Henley, Kc Nelson-Oliveria, Ed Pieper,

Rosemary Tralli, Jim Knight, Marg Stewart, and Sonya Kunkel.

In Las Vegas on February 4 and 5, 2000, the Sixth Annual West Conference was superbly led by Barbara Millikan and Susan Peterson Miller at the Tropicana Hotel with 65 people in attendance. SIM personnel providing sessions were Keith Lenz, Jean Schumaker, Susan Miller, Gail Cheever, Sue Woodruff, Steve Carlson, Petrea Hagen-Gilden, Susan Carlile, and Barb Millikan.

Some very fortunate SIM trainers attended the St. John Conference led by Ed Pieper at Maho Bay Camps. The learning environment was so exciting that everyone became a "presenter" at the "Think Tank." Those attending were Jim Knight, Ed Ellis, Juliana Taymans, Ed Pieper, and Janice Seabrooks. Teachers from

schools in the Caribbean were invited to attend and receive SIM training on the last two days of the conference.

Jerri Neduchal with the help of Marykay Johnson, Sheri Fiskum, and Connie Gentle, enthusiastically produced the sixth wonderful "SIM in the Southeast" conference in Charleston, South Carolina. Jerri, Sheri, Connie, and Don Deshler presented the program sessions for the 30 people in attendance.

If you were not able to attend this year, we hope you will make plans for next year. At this time, we are planning the sites for next year's conferences. Please contact Janet Roth at KU-CRL if you would like to volunteer to host and coordinate a conference.

FIRST CLASS

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STRATENOTES Volume 8-Issue #
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