

What's new under the SIM Sun?

Two-level program offers instructional flexibility

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What's new under the SIM sun is a two-level *Sentence Writing Strategy* program! Over the years, many teachers provided feedback that their students just were not prepared to begin instruction in the *Sentence Writing Strategy*. They said that their students did not know how to find subjects and verbs in sentences, were identifying the verb within an infinitive as the verb of the sentence, and were identifying the noun in a prepositional phrase as the subject of the sentence. They pleaded for a program that would give their students these prerequisite skills. Elementary teachers also asked for a program they could use that would be less complex but that would teach younger students how to write simple sentences.

The first level of the two-level *Sentence Writing Strategy* program, called *Fundamentals in the Sentence Writing Strategy*, does just that. It can be used at the elementary, secondary, or post-secondary level to teach students the basic concepts, vocabulary, and skills involved in sentence writing. In a nutshell, through this program, students learn how to identify subjects and verbs and other parts of speech (see Figure 1 on page 2 for a list of the concepts taught), the steps of the *Sentence Writing Strategy* (PENS), and how to write simple sentences. Once students learn these skills, they are prepared to enter the second level of the program, called *Proficiency in the Sentence Writing Strategy*, in the compound sentences section. Teachers who use the

two-level program in this way find that students learn the skills quickly and easily, they make a smooth transition into learning the more complicated types of sentences, and they become fluent writers with less stress.

The two-level program can be used in other ways as well. Older students who have a basic grasp of the concepts of subjects and verbs might begin instruction in the *Proficiency* program in the simple sentences part. Then, when they have difficulties, selected lessons from the *Fundamentals* program can be used. For example, if the student has difficulties identifying helping verbs, the lesson on helping verbs in the *Fundamentals* program can be used. If the student identifies the verb within an infinitive as the verb of the sentence, the lesson on infinitives in the *Fundamentals* program can be used.

Another way the two-level program is being used involves sequencing the instruction in the *Sentence Writing Strategy* across the grades in general education language arts classes. In some schools, children in the second and third grades are learning to write sentences using the *Fundamentals* program, and children in the fourth and fifth grades are learning to write compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences in the *Proficiency* program. Other creative writing activities can be woven into language arts instruction to provide a rounded writing program. Students with disabilities receive additional instruction

Anyone who has received professional development instruction in the *Sentence Writing Strategy* is eligible to purchase the new programs.

Concepts in the Fundamentals Program

- Capital letter
- End punctuation
- Subject
- Action verb
- Linking verb
- Simple sentence
- Infinitive
- Prepositional phrase
- Adjective
- Main subject
- Complete subject
- Helping verb
- Adverb

Figure 1

in their special education class so that they can keep up with their general education class. Thus, the two-level program can be used as a developmental curriculum at the elementary level.

The *Fundamentals* program is different from the *Proficiency* program in several ways. First, and most importantly, the instructor's manual has a new format. The manual is divided into lessons (Lesson 1, Lesson 2, Lesson 3, etc.) instead of instructional stages (Stage 1: Pretest, Stage 2: Describe, Stage 3:

Model, etc.). Each lesson focuses on a major concept; for example, Lesson 1 focuses on the five requirements of a complete sentence, and Lesson 2 focuses on the "PENS" Steps. (See Figure 2 for a list of the lessons.)

Each lesson is short, but it contains a review of mastered concepts, an advance organizer for the lesson, a description of the new concept, models, verbal practice, guided practice, and independent practice. Associated with each lesson are several worksheets. Students work

through the worksheets in a way similar to the way they work through the worksheets in the *Proficiency* program. That is, they advance to the next level of difficulty if they have reached mastery, or they continue on the same level of difficulty if they have not reached mastery. The worksheets are short, too; they require students to work with or write only five sentences.

Another way in which the *Fundamentals* program is different from the *Proficiency* program is that it contains a substrategy called "MARK." This substrategy is used during the new "S" step in "PENS," called "Search and Check." (See Figure 3 on page 3 for the new "PENS" Steps and Figure 4 on page 3 for the "MARK" Steps.) Students learn the "MARK" substrategy as they work through the different lessons so that they can search through each sentence to check it for completeness.

The *Proficiency* program is made up of the old *Sentence Writing Strategy* program, which has been extensively revised to correspond to the new *Fundamentals* program so that students' transitions from one program to the other will be seamless and smooth. Revisions have been made to both the instructor's manual and the student lessons manual for this purpose. Additionally, the new *Proficiency* instructor's manual now corresponds to the "stages" of acquisition and generalization instead of the old "steps."

Anyone who has received professional development instruction in the *Sentence Writing Strategy* is eligible to purchase the new programs. The instructor's manuals are available through the Center for Research

Fundamentals in the Sentence Writing Strategy List of Lessons

- Lesson 1: Requirements of a Complete Sentence
- Lesson 2: The "PENS" Steps
- Lesson 3: Linking Verbs
- Lesson 4: Infinitives
- Lesson 5: Prepositional Phrases
- Lesson 6: SS V Sentences
- Lesson 7: S VV Sentences
- Lesson 8: SS VV Sentences
- Lesson 9: Adjectives and Main Subjects
- Lesson 10: Helping Verbs and Complete Verbs
- Optional Lesson 11: Adverbs

Figure 2

The PENS Strategy

Pick a formula

Explore words to fit the formula

Note the words

Search and check

Figure 3

Search and Check Step

Mark out imposters

- infinitives
- prepositional phrases

Ask "Is there a verb?"

Root out the subject ("Who or what ____?")

Key in on the

- beginning
- ending
- meaning

Figure 4

on Learning, and the student lessons manuals are available through Edge Enterprises. See the order forms at right and on page 4.

Strategram Special Order Form

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Strategy notebooks

Victoria Cotsworth, resource teacher at Blue Valley High School in Stilwell, Kansas, helps her students stay organized by asking them to build a strategy notebook/portfolio.

Purpose

To provide students a method of organizing and storing work accomplished based on their IEPs.

Process

Students create separate sections for each strategy or topic studied. It is the student's responsibility to accurately file paperwork regularly.

Contents

Pretests, IPLAN/SHARE, IEP goals and objectives, career/transition, specific strategies as mentioned on IEP. Each student's notebook is unique.

Benefits

1. Encourages organization.
2. Provides cumulative storage of documents.
3. Serves as a reference of work last completed.
4. Allows students to function independently with regard to strategy completion.
5. Serves as post-secondary reference material.

Community service

Rosemary Tralli, former resource teacher at Wethersfield (Connecticut) High School and former coordinator of special education in Enfield, Connecticut, became intrigued by the idea of older students reading to younger students.

Rosemary and her students worked toward generalizing DISSECT by taping general education textbook stories for elementary students who have reading difficulties. They made DISSECT worksheets indicating words that are difficult and sent them and the tapes to schools upon request. "It is our way of providing a community service," Rosemary said, "and my students serve as great role models for other local children with special needs."

Commitments to students

Sue Woodruff, teacher consultant at Muskegon (Michigan) High School, puts her commitment to students in writing. The following are examples of the commitment templates she uses.

Word ID Strategy

Dear _____,

I am making a commitment to you to teach you the *Word Identification Strategy*. I know that this is a very powerful strategy that has helped many, many students to become good readers. With your hard work and perseverance and my commitment to you to teach you this strategy, I know you will be successful. I guarantee you that during this process, not only will you become a better learner, but I will become a better teacher.

Sincerely,

Sentence Writing Strategy

Dear _____,

I am making this commitment to you to teach you the *Sentence Writing Strategy*. I know that this strategy works very well in teaching students how to write good sentences. Together, I know that you can become a better writer, and I can become a better teacher.

Sincerely,

Strategy study guides

Terry Slockett Freese, a SIM Trainer and teacher in the Neosho (Missouri) Public Schools, has developed a series of “study guides” for her students.

Terry makes overheads of the guides, and students complete them together as they move through the Describe Stage of each strategy she teaches. “I find they help keep students involved (I always graded mine),” Terry said, “and they also help teachers feel more confident teaching at this stage.” The following is Terry’s *Visual Imagery* study guide.

Visual Imagery

Describe Stage Study Guide

1. Define “visual” and “imagery.”
2. Movie/TV show analogy
3. Expectations
 1. Listen
 2. Answer questions
 3. Take notes
4. Define reading
5. What is the purpose of reading? (Why do we read?)
6. Rationales for using the Visual Imagery Strategy
 - Benefits in school.
 - Benefits outside of school.
7. General characteristics of situations and example situations where the *Visual Imagery Strategy* can be applied.
 - Examples of reading materials.
8. Results students can expect. (Grade-Level Materials)

Before Mastery	After Mastery
-----------------------	----------------------
9. Affective results. (How might you feel?)

Steps for the Visual Imagery Strategy

(Cue Card #1)

Step 1: Search for Picture Words

Number of sentences to read.

How to read for meaning.

Definition of “picture words.” (Cue Card #2)

(continued on page 7)

Which of these words can you turn into a picture in your mind?

What do we call these words that can be turned into pictures?

Practice finding picture words. (Cue Card #3)

Step 2: Create the Scene

What is a “scene”?

How do you create a scene? (Example: kitchen)

Scene Picture Words

(park)

How do you use pictures in the book?

Practice creating scenes. (Cue Card #3)

Step 3: Enter Lots of Details

Define “details.”

How do you enter lots of details? (Example: “children”)

Practice how to “Enter lots of details.” (Cue Card #3)

Step 4: Name the Parts

Define “Name the parts.”

What do you name? (Cue Card #4)

What are the requirements for good image statements? (Cue Card #6)

Step 5: Evaluate Your Picture

Define “evaluate.”

How do you “evaluate your picture”?

What do you do if you find that you have left something out of your picture or if you find that your picture doesn’t really match what you read?

Simultaneous use of the steps.

Recycling the steps.

What to do in Step 2. (Cue Card #7)

What to do in the remaining steps.

Practice recycling the steps of the strategy. (Cue Card #8)

Describe the mnemonic device “SCENE.”

What does the word “SCENE” mean?

What do you know about the *Visual Imagery Strategy* so far?

Set Goals

(continued on page 8)

Strategram
Vol. 11: Issue number 5. Published six times per year by The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, Dole Human Development Center-Room 3061, Lawrence, Kansas, 66045-2342. Subscription rate: \$13 per year. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher, unless otherwise stated.
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Stage 3: Model	1 day	Stage 6: Advanced Practice	2-10 days
Stage 4: Verbal Practice	1 to 2 days	Stage 7: Post-Test	2 days
Stage 5: Controlled Practice	2-10 days	Stage 8: Generalization	10-15 days

How does using the *Visual Imagery Strategy* compare to your previous reading habits.

Emphasize speed.

Check understanding and expectations.

1. What was the main idea of today's lesson?
2. What did you learn today?
3. What confused you about the lesson?
4. What do you still need to know?
5. How will this lesson help you in your future life?

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