Strategram

The Framing Routine

Framing the big picture with essential details

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Several years ago, late one night after a long day of "workshop-ping," Don Deshler and I discussed the need for some simple, easy-to-learn, yet powerful strategies that had immediate impact. We believed that if students experienced quick success with these kinds of strategies, it would be a lot easier to motivate them to learn some of those that require more effort, time, and practice. Also, we thought it would be easier to attain teachers' commitment to implement the Strategic Instruction Model if we started with something simple that would not be too difficult to teach. This discussion led to the development of a couple of "starter" strategies–the SLANT Class Participation Strategy and the LINCS Vocabulary Strategy.

The Framing Routine provides a similar opportunity in regard to Content Enhancement Routines. In fact, it might be considered an excellent "starter" enhancement device because it is easy to learn and has immediate appeal for most teachers and students. Most of all, it has almost immediate impact on students' success in BOTH content learning and in the development of literacy skills and strategies.

The Frame graphic organizer can be particularly beneficial to many students with learning disabilities, as well as most individuals, because it shows the organization or structure of concepts as well as relationships among concepts. The device makes more clear what it is students are expected to learn. Information depicted on the graphic usually represents essential knowledge that all students are expected to learn; thus, Frames allow students to focus on what is important. Each item on the graphic can serve as a link to remembering related information discussed in class but not noted on the graphic. Thus, the information students remember when graphic organizers are used when teaching is often much more than the sum of the items depicted on the graphic.

Frames can be powerful teaching tools because they also reduce the cognitive demands on the learner. In the absence of visual aids like graphic organizers, the learner has to both comprehend the information and determine how it is organized. By showing (as opposed to just telling) students how the information is structured, you can often teach information at much more sophisticated and complex levels than you may have anticipated. Graphic organizers clearly show how the information is organized, so the learner does not have to process as much semantic data to understand the information.

After the information has been effectively organized on graphics, very powerful higher- order thinking instructional activities can follow. Organizing information onto the Frame allows you to implement a variety of robust activities that otherwise might not be possible. For example, when the information is clearly organized, a wide array of instructional activities can be employed to extend students' understanding of important concepts. These include engaging in in-depth discussions,

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debating the importance of various points; drawing conclusions; making connections to other ideas; forming inferences, predictions, or forecasts; and creating generative statements.

Use of Frames can contribute to increasing classroom test scores for several reasons. First, the graphics help students understand and learn the subject. Second, they help students focus their energies on studying the essential information. Third, they serve as effective devices for helping students focus on the relationships between main ideas and details, main ideas and other main ideas, and so forth. Thus, the focus of study is on how it all fits together rather than on just memorizing isolated, decon-textualized bits of information.

In content-area classes, Frame graphics are co-constructed by the teacher and students, who simultaneously fill in information on blank copies of the form. Later, after students have become familiar with use of the Frame, they can use them to facilitate notetaking when independently listening or reading. To develop literacy skills and strategies, Frames can be used as note-taking devices as students identify main ideas and essential details they glean from texts as they are reading. They also serve as excellent organizational devices that can be used during the planning phase of the writing process.

Frames also can be used when teaching specific learning strategies. Examples of these applications are discussed below.

The Frame Graphic

A Frame graphic has five major sections. Four of the sections provide spaces for recording key information necessary for understanding the meaning of the key topic. The fifth component is the small circles, or bubbles, that appear next to many of the boxes on the graphic (see Figure 1).

The Frame graphic provides a space at the top of the figure for noting the title of the key topic and a brief explanation of what the topic is about. Below this section are places to note each of the main ideas of the lesson. Sometimes, a key topic may have only two significant main ideas, whereas at other times, there may be four or more (in cases where there are more than three main ideas, you may want to combine two Frame graphics so that all of the main ideas can be depicted). Most key topics, however, usually have only three main ideas that are really important.

The Frame graphic also provides spaces under each main idea for noting essential details. Information about only one detail is noted in each space. Nonessential or peripheral information related to a main idea might be discussed in class, but it should not be noted on the graphic. Important to note is that there are spaces for recording only four essential details for each main idea. There may be times when

The FRAME Routine

Spiders-evil or useful?

is about...

whether spiders are more harmful or helpful to humans

1 Main idea	2 Main idea	3 Main idea
Myths about spiders	The truth about spiders	Useful features

Essential details		Essential details		Essential details	
giant spiders can trap and eat humans	4	giant spiders came from the imagination of movie-makers	4	spiders eat more than 10 times their weight in insects a day	2
tarantulas can be used to murder people	3	tarantulas are big ugly spiders that don't bite	3	spiders are nature's way of controlling insects	1
all spiders bite or sting people	2	99% of all types of spiders don't bite humans	1	mild winters=extra insects=more spiders to reduce their numbers	3
spiders should be killed	1	only 4 out of 10,000 species are potentially dangerous	2	farmers can culture spiders & use them instead of insecticides	4

So What? (What's important to understand about this?)

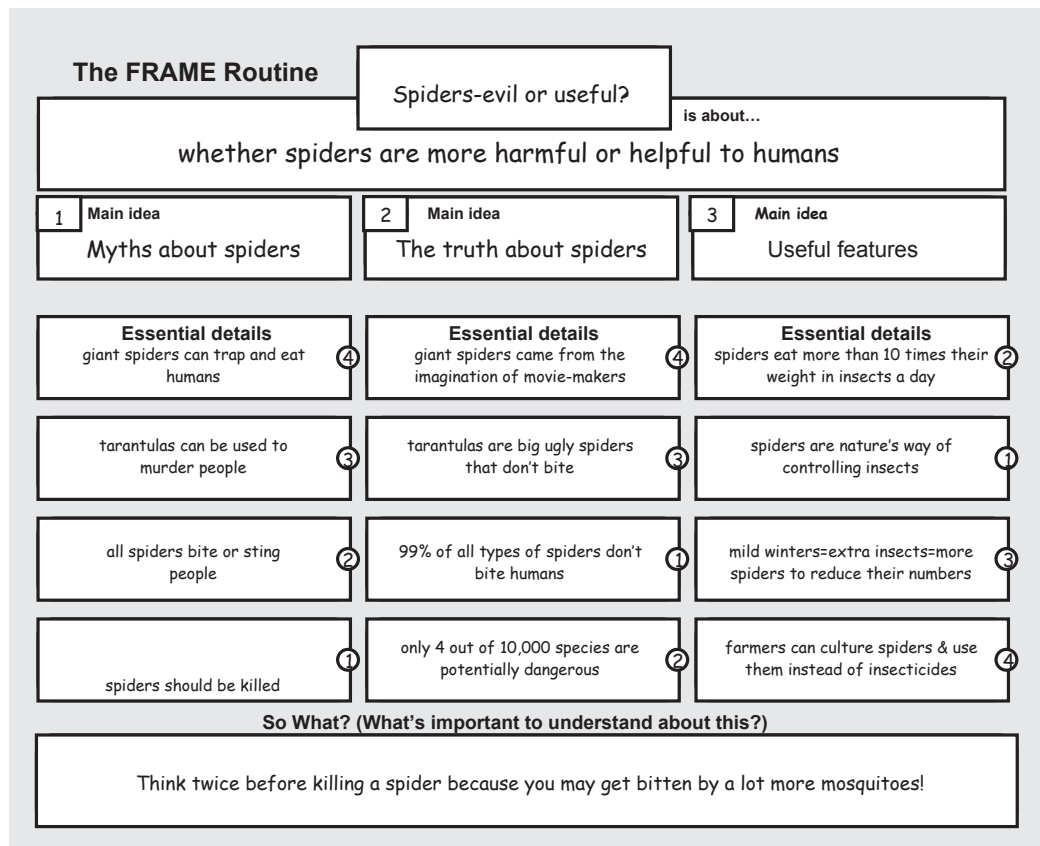Think twice before killing a spider because you may get bitten by a lot more mosquitoes!

Figure 1

you believe there are more than four details for a specific main idea you are addressing, and you can always adapt the Frame graphic to accommodate more details. However, it is **often better to limit the breadth** of what you are teaching (i.e., teach fewer specific details), and **focus more on facilitating depth of understanding**. The result will be that students understand the content better and remember more of it. Thus, it is often important to resist the temptation to add more than four essential details per main idea.

The bottom of the graphic provides a place to note "So What?" (or what is important to understand about the topic) and is reserved for recording information designed to extend students' understanding of the topic. This information might reflect an overall summary of the graphic, connections to a real-world context or problem to be understood or solved, connections to other key topics in the unit or applications, or implications of the topic.

The last component of the Frame graphic is the set of bubbles attached to each of the Main Idea and Essential Detail boxes. These bubbles are used in conjunction with a variety of activities designed to promote students' reflection about the content being explored. For example, students can consider the various main ideas presented and then indicate in the bubbles a ranking that they feel shows the relative importance of each main idea. Similar "reflective rankings" can be performed on each set of essential details.

Using the FRAME Steps when teaching content

There are five basic steps for using the Frame graphic when teaching content-area subjects.

Step 1: Focus on the Topic

The teacher introduces the lesson topic by briefly explaining it and

> It is often better to limit the **breadth** of what you are teaching and focus more on facilitating **depth** of understanding.

providing an advance organizer. For example, to activate prior knowledge and interest at the beginning of an upcoming lesson about Spiders' impact on our lives, the teacher might ask students to share a few of their experiences with spiders as well as identify specific facts they believe to be true about them. These facts might be listed on the board for later use. A blank Frame is provided students, who then note the topic ("Spiders–evil or useful?") and an "Is about" statement ("Is about whether spiders are more harmful or helpful to humans") in the appropriate spaces on the graphic.

Step 2: Reveal Main Ideas

In the second step, the teacher introduces each main idea that will be examined during the lesson and models listing them on the Frame

graphic. For example, the teacher might list three main ideas on the Frame: "Myths about spiders," "The truth about spiders," and "Useful features.'"

Step 3: Analyze Details

In the third step, specific information about each separate main idea is explored. Specific details that are considered essential for students to learn and remember are recorded on the Frame graphic. Nonessential details might be discussed but should not be listed on the graphic. For example, the fact that some spiders can bite and sting might be listed as a "spider negative" because this is essential to know, whereas the fact that spiders look scary to some people, though true, might not be listed because it is nonessential information.

Step 4: Make a 'So What?' Statement

In the fourth step, the Big Idea statement is generated either by the teacher or by the class as a whole. The Big Idea statement is designed to help students understand how the current topic ties within the context of the overall unit of study or how knowledge of the topic can be used to understand or solve a real-world problem.

Step 5: Extend understanding

In the fifth step, the teacher facilitates evaluation of the new information and extends students' understanding of it by employing various activities designed to help students explore its significance and connectedness to other ideas. For example, the discussion about spiders

might be connected to issues related to attempts to reduce the amount of insecticides used on farms by switching to more natural, ecologically friendly, forms of insect control, such as spiders.

Using the Frame Graphic to develop literacy skills and strategies

The Frame graphic can be particularly useful for students with learning disabilities because it can be an effective tool for developing literacy and thinking skills. For example, when students identify main ideas and supporting details while reading texts and list them on a Frame graphic, comprehension of the written material tends to dramatically increase. Research shows that reading assignments that require students to complete graphic organizers in lieu of answering traditional study guide questions can significantly increase reading comprehension as well. Such assignments increase students' awareness of information structures and the semantic cues associated with them.

Framed Reading

The Frame graphic can be an excellent device for promoting reading comprehension, and there are a variety of ways it can be used. Specific examples are noted below.

Class-Wide Mediated Reading

Many content-area teachers either read a short passage from the text to students (or call on individual students to read short passages out loud) and then ask questions to promote discussion or understanding of the text. An alternative class-wide reading activity is to provide students with blank copies of the Frame organizer and then, as specific passages are read by the teacher or individual students, promote a discussion regarding what ideas, if any, presented in the passage should be noted on the Frame organizer. Here, the teacher's role is to co-construct the graphic with students as the passages are being read and discussed.

Team-topic reading

Team-topic reading is another way to promote reading comprehension. Here, the class is divided into groups of about four students each. Each group is then assigned one of the main idea topics that appear on a Frame organizer. Since you will likely have more groups than main ideas, different groups may be assigned the same main idea. Each group then reads a passage from text while searching for essential information or details related only to the main idea they were assigned.

One approach is to assign each group the same reading passage, but also assign each group a different main idea from the same passage for which they search for essential details. Thus, the whole class is engaged in reading the same passage, but groups within the class are searching for different types of information. (Naturally, the text passage should contain information about all of the main ideas in these situations.)

After the teams have read the passage and listed what they believed to be the essential information related to the main idea they were assigned, each team then reports to the class what they found. The role of the teacher is to facilitate this reporting,

clarify information and ensure that it is accurate as needed, and add any essential information about the main idea that the group may have overlooked. As each group reports its findings, the teacher also models note-taking on the Frame organizer using an overhead projector, and the rest of the class takes notes about the main idea the group is discussing. Once the first main idea has been thoroughly discussed, the groups who searched for essential information about each of the subsequent main ideas report their findings, and the teacher facilitates in like manner.

Reading the news

A number of adult news magazines publish children's versions (for example, Sports Illustrated For Kids, Time for Kids). To help students learn to identify main ideas and essential information, the multiple-main idea version of Frame can be used. As individual students read each article, they record interesting facts they learned or important information. The example depicted in Figure 2 on page 5 illustrates a fifth-grade student's responses to Time For Kids published during the week of September 19, 1997.

Individual-topic reading

This activity is very similar to team-topic reading. Here, the teacher first provides students with a copy of the Frame graphic containing the main ideas. Next, the class is divided into groups. The number of students in each group should match the number of main ideas on the Frame graphic. Next, each student in the group selects one of the main idea topics. Each member of the group then reads the same passage searching for essential information about his or her main idea topic.
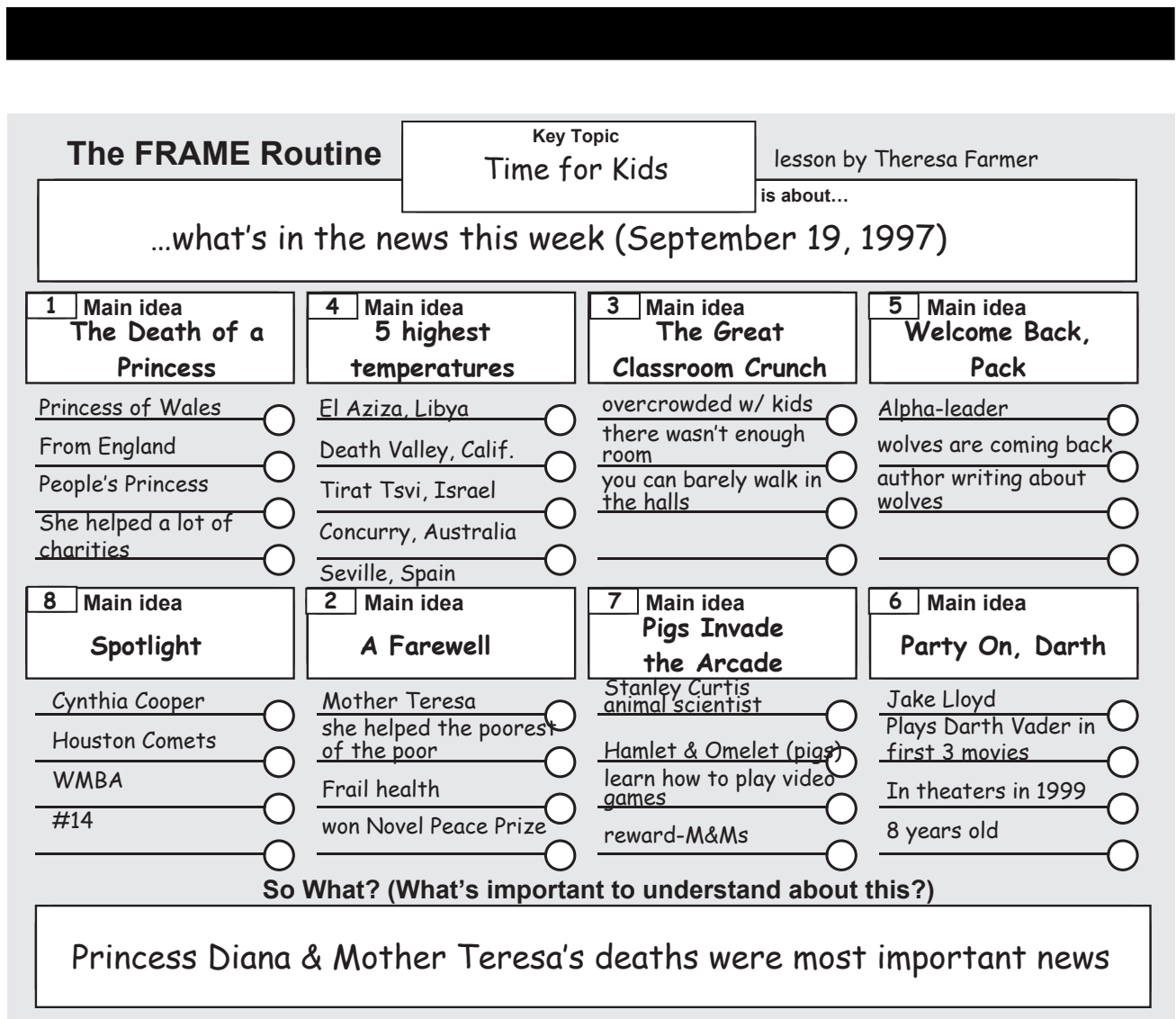
The FRAME Routine

Key Topic
Time for Kids

lesson by Theresa Farmer

is about…

…what's in the news this week (September 19, 1997)

1 | **Main idea**
The Death of a Princess

- Princess of Wales ○
- From England ○
- People's Princess ○
- She helped a lot of charities ○

4 | **Main idea**
5 highest temperatures

- El Aziza, Libya ○
- Death Valley, Calif. ○
- Tirat Tsvi, Israel ○
- Concurry, Australia ○
- Seville, Spain ○

3 | **Main idea**
The Great Classroom Crunch

- overcrowded w/ kids ○
- there wasn't enough room ○
- you can barely walk in the halls ○
- ○

5 | **Main idea**
Welcome Back, Pack

- Alpha-leader ○
- wolves are coming back ○
- author writing about wolves ○
- ○

8 | **Main idea**
Spotlight

- Cynthia Cooper ○
- Houston Comets ○
- WMBA ○
- #14 ○

2 | **Main idea**
A Farewell

- Mother Teresa ○
- she helped the poorest of the poor ○
- Frail health ○
- won Novel Peace Prize ○

7 | **Main idea**
Pigs Invade the Arcade

- Stanley Curtis animal scientist ○
- Hamlet & Omelet (pigs) learn how to play video games ○
- reward-M&Ms ○

6 | **Main idea**
Party On, Darth

- Jake Lloyd ○
- Plays Darth Vader in first 3 movies ○
- In theaters in 1999 ○
- 8 years old ○

So What? (What's important to understand about this?)

Princess Diana & Mother Teresa's deaths were most important news

Figure 2

Next, all students from all groups who were searching for information about the first main idea then convene to share their findings, those that addressed the second main idea convene, and so forth. This allows students to discuss among themselves what they learned about the main idea they were assigned and fill in any gaps they personally may have missed.

The students then return to their original teams and share with their team the essential information about the main idea they were exploring. Individual team members then copy onto their own Frames the essential information about each of the main ideas.

Homework reading

In lieu of the traditional homework assignments in which students are expected to form written responses to study guide questions, a reading passage can be assigned, and students can be asked to complete a Frame organizer about the main ideas of the passage. For novice readers, the teacher can list for students the main ideas in the passage, so that they are only searching for essential details related to each. More sophisticated readers, however, can be expected to identify for themselves the main ideas as well as essential details for each when reading the passage. Thus, the homework assignment would be to read a particular passage, and then to develop a Frame graphic that depicts what the passage was about.

The Paraphrasing Strategy and Frame organizers

For students who are just beginning to develop reading comprehension skills or for those who struggle in this area, use of the Paraphrasing Strategy (Schumaker, Denton, & Deshler, 1984) can be combined with use of the Frame organizer. Steps to the Paraphrasing Strategy are:

- **R**ead a paragraph.
- **A**sk yourself what was the main idea and two important details?

- Put the main idea and details into your own words.

As students are reading and paraphrasing each paragraph, they can also take notes showing main ideas and details on the Frame organizer. The multiple-main ideas Frame organizer may be the most appropriate for use in this context.

Framed Writing

When students use the Frame graphic organizer as a "Think Sheet" for planning their writing, the quality of the students' writing tends to improve not only in organization of ideas, but also in fluency and in other areas such as writing mechanics (punctuation, spelling, capitalization, etc.). In one study, middle school students with LD wrote an average of 97 words more on their posttest writing samples after they had learned to use the Frame graphic when planning their writing. In contrast, the control group wrote an average of five words less!

The Frame graphic can be used in conjunction with the PLANS[1] writing strategy to produce well-organized prose (Figure 3). The strategy is most appropriate for students with poorly developed composition skills or those students who seem to have difficulty "thinking what to say and how to say it" when writing. It is also particularly useful for those students with poor idea-organizational skills. Thus, many students with learning disabilities benefit from instruction

[1] The PLANS writing strategy was adapted from the TOWER Theme Writing Strategy (in preparation) developed by Jean Schumaker. For information about teaching theme writing strategies, contact the Center for Research on Learning at (785) 864-4780.

in the PLANS writing strategy.

The writing sample in Figure 4 on page 7 shows how the Frame illustrated in Figure 1 was used as a guide when writing a short essay about spiders. Notice how the author indicated the order for expressing ideas in the bubbles in Figure 1, and then followed this order when developing

the essay.

In sum, the Frame graphic can be used to help students develop in-depth understanding of main ideas and essential details of the curriculum. The graphic organizer is particularly versatile because it can be used both to organize important to-be-learned information as well as

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The PLANS Writing Strategy

Preview
- Preview a specific topic–gather information about it (don't worry about organizing the ideas).
- Preview audience and goals–think about who the audience will be and what you hope will happen when they read your work.

List main ideas and details on the Frame Think Sheet.
- List the title, what it will be about, main ideas, essential details, and the ending "big idea."

Assign numbers to indicate the best order for writing ideas
- Decide which main ideas to write about first, second, third, etc.
- For each main idea, decide on the order for presenting details.
- Make sure the order makes sense.
- In the bubbles on the Frame, note numbers to indicate the order of ideas.

Note ideas in complete sentences.
- Begin with a sentence or two that activates the reader's background knowledge about your subject.
- Next, introduce the topic of your essay and what it will be about.
- Follow your planned order for writing. Each new main idea and its supporting details should be in a new paragraph.
- Write at least two sentences about each detail.
- Tell yourself positive statements about yourself and tell yourself to write more.

Search for errors and correct.
- Read your paper aloud to find and fix...
    ...sentences that do not make sense.
    ...incomplete or run-on sentences.
- Read your paper silently to find and fix...
    ...spelling & punctuation errors.
    ...switching-tense errors.
    ...mixing singular/plural subjects/verbs.

Figure 3

a tool for facilitating use of reading comprehension strategies and use of effective writing and thinking strategies. When students learn to organize information using the Frame graphic, they are developing basic information processing skills as well as analytical thinking skills. To construct a Frame graphic organizer, students have to engage in powerful information processing and higher-order thinking skills. They learn to use cues to recognize important information, make decisions about what is important or essential, consolidate information and identify main ideas and supporting details, and make decisions about the best way to structure the information. The real beauty of the Frame, however, is its simplicity, versatility, and immediacy in which it affects success.

References

Schumaker, J.B., Denton, P., & Deshler, D.D. (1984). The Paraphrasing Strategy. Lawrence, KS: The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning.

The Framing Routine is available, after training, from Edge Enterprises. (785) 749-1473. The cost is $8.

Spiders–evil or useful?

Everbody knows that spiders are dangerous and should be killed at every opportunity. Obviously, all spiders can cause a lot of pain when they bite you. Tarantulas are really deadly and some people even use them to commit murder. Worst of all, giant African spiders can trap and eat people!....Guess what? These are all myths about spiders.

In reality, 99% of all spiders do not bite humans. Only 4 out of 10,000 varieties of spiders are potentially dangerous. Tarantulas are big and ugly, but they are harmless. In fact, they make great pets. As for giant spiders, there is no such thing. They came from the imagination of Tarzan movie-makers.

Farmers use insecticides to control insects, but spiders are nature's way of doing the job. They eat more than 10 times their weight in insects every day. The number of insects increase after a mild winter, so nature just makes more spiders to eat them. Some farmers are experimenting with ways to use spiders instead of pesticides to control insects.

In conclusion, although spiders are often thought of as dangerous pests that should be killed, few really are. You should think twice before killing one because if you do, you may be swatting more mosquitoes!

Figure 4

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Grading procedure for teachers.

Number 3
• *Games, activities, handouts, and song: Strategic teachers share classroom ideas.* An issue devoted to ideas shared by classroom teaches:
• Bonita Cox, Sanford, North Carolina: handouts developed for the *Sentence Writing Strategy*.
• Karen Koskovich, Maquoketa, Iowa: Bag It, a rapid-fire verbal rehearsal game, and ideas for teaching the *Word Identification Strategy*.
• Margaret Schnecke, Dundee, Illinois: "20 Questions" prepositions game.
• Linda Estes and Alberta Roth, Klein, Texas: integrating technology and strategies.
• Pat Parrott, Chesterfield, Virginia: reciprocal teaching and jigsaw activities.
• Linda Kremers, Waite Park, Minnesota: "Dear Teacher" song reminding teachers to include memory techniques in daily lesson plans.

Number 4
• *Preparing for an online future: High-tech instruction moves toward mainstream.* Julie Tollefson, KU-CRL. Summary of conference on "Creating Effective Online Instruction." Includes preview of SIM online

initiatives and list of resources.

Number 5
• *What's new under the SIM Sun? Two-level program offers instructional flexibility.* Jean Schumaker, KU-CRL. Description of *Fundamentals* and *Proficiency in the Sentence Writing Strategy* programs.
• **For the Classroom:** *Strategy notebooks.* Victoria Cotsworth, Stilwell, Kansas. Strategy portfolios to help students stay organized.
• **For the Classroom:** *Community service.* Rosemary Tralli, Enfield, Connecticut. Generalizing DISSECT by taping textbooks and developing DISSECT worksheets.
• **For the Classroom:** *Commitments to students.* Sue Woodruff, Muskegon, Michigan. Written commitment to students.
• **For the Classroom:** *Strategy study guides.* Terry Slockett Freese, Neosho, Missouri. Sample study guide for students.

Number 6
• *Putting the special in special education: Zigmond challenges teachers to examine practices.* Julie Tollefson, KU-CRL. Summary of Dr. Naomi Zigmond's keynote address during

the 1999 International SIM Trainers' Conference.
• *Successful co-teaching arrangements require preparation, communication.* Summary of Dr. Zigmond's discussion of co-teaching issues.

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