

StrategramTM

Strategic Instruction Model

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Deep impact

Groups honored for widescale SIM efforts

Visit our web site for information about individuals honored during the 2005 International SIM Conference:

• **Jerry Bailey,**
Gordon R. Alley
Partnership Award

• **Joan Fletcher**
and **Ginger**
Williams, SIM
Leadership Award

• **Doris**
Williams, SIM
Administrative
Leadership Award

• **Janet Roth,**
inaugural Janet
Roth Spirit Award

Congratulations
to all!



KU-CRL presents the SIM Impact Award to schools or school systems that have incorporated many components of the Strategic Instruction Model throughout major segments of their school or school system. This year, we honor two groups: the Science Department at Turlock (Calif.) Junior High School and Cobb Middle School in Tallahassee, Fla.

Turlock Science Department

Through a collaborative effort to infuse SIM throughout their classes, the highly innovative and committed teachers of the Science Department at Turlock Junior High School are leading the school in the area of literacy. They care not only about the science that the students are learning but also about the literacy and social skills their students possess. SIM Professional Developer Cathy Spriggs began working with the content teachers in the 1990s. Since then, teachers have aligned their content with the state curriculum and with each other and continue to develop a strategic science program. Recently, the Science Department led the entire school in the area of writing. After learning about the *Paragraph Writing Strategy*, teachers designed a Frame to be used for writing good paragraphs and taught the process to their students. They decided to have students write paragraphs at least once a week. Students now use Frames to organize their projects and writing assignments.

The departments' efforts have resulted in great increases in students' ideation, details, and paragraph coherence.

Cobb Middle School

Cobb Middle School is a model of schoolwide SIM implementation. Cobb's SIM adventure began in the 1980s, when it included instruction in the *Sentence Writing, Paraphrasing* and *Word Identification* strategies in its exceptional student education classes. Additional strategies and Content Enhancement Routines were introduced beginning in 1996. The school's early efforts laid the foundation for the exciting SIM instruction taking place throughout the school today. For the past four years, all of Cobb's teachers have used Content Enhancement Routines—including *Clarifying, Concept Mastery, Unit Organizer, Course Organizer, Vocabulary LINCing, and Framing*—in their classes. All teachers also use the *Framing Routine* to teach social skills expectations. A reading class features instruction in the *Test-Taking, Sentence Writing, Word Identification, InSPECT, Paraphrasing, and LINC'S Vocabulary* strategies, and all classes encourage generalization of these strategies. Because of its focused efforts, Cobb has seen reading comprehension rates improve, writing skills infused throughout the curriculum, and research-based programs and strategies offered throughout the school.

Focus on adolescent literacy

Intensive classes, integrating strategies address needs of struggling readers

In recent years, the federal government has placed new priority on adolescent literacy, as evidenced by legislation calling for funds to be appropriated in this area. This new emphasis on a subject dear to KU-CRL is exciting. In this issue of *Strategram*, we describe some of the projects we've undertaken and relationships we've cultivated in our efforts to find ways to improve the reading and writing skills of struggling secondary students.

Several new and continuing projects are investigating ways to combine instruction in several SIM components in innovative ways as well as ways to integrate technology in our work. We believe we will learn much from these projects.

- *Fusion Reading*. Mike Hock and Irma Brasseur are heading this project in Kansas City, Kan., schools. Fusion Reading is an intensive reading class for high school students that combines instruction in multiple strategies and *Possible Selves*.
- *Strategic Advantage*. Jan Bulgren leads this work with ninth-grade students at Topeka (Kan.) High School. The project is designed to enable high school students with disabilities or others at risk for school failure to respond successfully to the demands of the rigorous general education curriculum and to prevent them from drop-

ping out of school. It involves, among other things, tutoring, support for teachers as they use Content Enhancements, use of the *Possible Selves* program, and direct contacts with incoming freshmen and their parents to facilitate their transition to high school.

- *Computer Adapted Testing*. Funding from the Carnegie Corp. has enabled us to investigate the use of computer adapted testing as an efficient means of measuring reading comprehension and facilitating data-based decision making. We are starting field tests.
- *Xtreme Reading*. This intensive, one-year course is designed for struggling students who read two to four years below grade level. It is part of a national, randomized study to test two reading curriculums—ours and WestEd's Reading Apprenticeship. A federal competition selected 17 school districts to participate in this study. (CRL did *not* have a role in selecting these schools.) Xtreme Reading classes begin in the selected districts this fall.
- *Pathways to Success*. KU-CRL has just received a new, \$9.3

million grant to build on previous work in this area. See page 7 for more information about this project.

In addition to these specific projects, KU-CRL has forged close relationships with a couple of private organizations that KU-CRL's Director, Don Deshler, refers to as the "straws that are stirring the drink" in regard to leadership on adolescent literacy issues.

The Carnegie Corp. in New York City brings together federal agencies, private foundations, and key researchers and schools.

The Alliance for Excellent Education is a five-year-old organization established with private funds to lobby on behalf of adolescents.

"These two organizations are heading up and pushing several agendas," Don said. "We've been invited to sit at the table. Just to be able to have a voice, we think, is important."

Affiliation with these two organizations already has resulted in our ability to contribute to new reports on adolescent literacy as well as in invitations to KU-CRL staff to join advisory boards studying these issues.

Visit our instructional coaching web site, www.instructionalcoach.org, to learn more about Jim Knight's work in this area.

If you build it...

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end. The next
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Jean Piazza, a special education teacher and SIM Professional Developer at Cody (Wyo.) High School, likens Cody's school improvement process to the tribulations and ultimate success of Kevin Costner's character in the movie "Field of Dreams."

"We have had a bottom-up grassroots effort at Cody High to embed SIM in our school, and it has been powerful," Jean said during a presentation at the 2005 International SIM Conference.

"We're just now ending our five-year school improvement plan. When it started, our goal was to improve reading comprehension across curriculum," she said. At the suggestion of staff, the school adopted SIM's reading strategies as the centerpiece of its plan.

In the chart on page 4, Jean draws parallels between the Cody High School process and events in "Field of Dreams." In her presentation, she emphasized several points:

- Although nothing is free, "You're never too broke. You're never too poor, if it's that important," she said. "We found ways to make things work." The school had some grant money available, and school improvement funds covered the cost of bringing in SIM Professional Developer Sue Woodruff, Muskegon, Mich., to help with the process. The school also made use of

its on-site professional developer—Jean—for follow-up support.

- There will always be rocks in the road, "and they can be big, ugly, nasty, craggy things," she said. She recommended viewing the rocks as a fun challenge and looking for ways to successfully overcome the challenges. One of Cody's rocks involved a complete turnover in the high school's administration in the middle of the process. Staff accepted the challenge of educating the new administration about the benefits of SIM.
 - Recognition is a powerful part of Cody's success. Jean e-mailed an invitation to school board members to tour the school and see how individual teachers use SIM in their classrooms. Then she listed the many applications: students in business classes won't consider outlining without a Frame; the math department teaches LINCS to all freshmen; students in the ag shop paraphrase on a regular basis.
- "Grassroot efforts are tough, but powerful," Jean says. "If you plant the seed, stick with the facts, use what you have, see obstacles as challenges, laugh, and bring people together, you will open new educational stadiums.
- "If you build it, they truly will come."

In the Classroom

“If you build it, they will come”: Implementing SIM Reading Strategies across the Curriculum at Cody High School

Field of Dreams		Cody High School
Connection between father and baseball, unfulfilled need	The Seeds	Connection between use of SIM strategies and student success. School-wide belief in SIM strategies. Taught strategies to whole classes as a means of wetting a teacher’s whistle. Showed teachers how SIM strategies help their students—all of their students.
Field dimensions, regulations, construction blueprint	A Plan	Used student data, school goals. SIM is part of school improvement plan.
Used his land, money from savings, “sweat” labor	Expenses	Professional development held on inservice days. School improvement funds covered outside consultant. Used on-staff professional developer (Jean) and planning period meetings for further professional development and follow-up.
Doubters, neighbors thought he was nuts, bank tried to foreclose	Rocks in the Road	All new high school administrators. Lots of verbal support but often not “informed” support. Special education teachers reluctant to be involved. Politics.
Wife believed in him. Terrance Mann saw and believed. Players believed.	Staying the Course	Built on teachers who “ran” with the strategies. Supported and acknowledged teachers’ efforts. Had fun with strategy implementation. Focused on what was going well.
The “Black Sox” players didn’t invite Ty Cobb because he was arrogant, so they played without him.	Building a Team	Teachers shared what they were doing. Advertised that even the resident naysayer was implementing SIM. Held the door open for teachers emerging as SIM leaders and cheerleaders.

Active reading

Pam Leitzell, a SIM Professional Developer from Holland Public Schools in Holland, Mich., offers this activity, which can be used to support *Paraphrasing Strategy* instruction. Pam presented this and other activities during the 2005 International SIM Conference in July. She suggests supporting strategy instruction by including activities that encourage students to become actively involved with the text; ask questions that will lead to connections, predictions, and conclusions; and put the text in their own words.

Think Alouds

(Help students become actively involved with text)

How it works

- Helps students understand the kind of thinking required for different types of reading
- Allows students to observe what skilled readers think about while reading

Modeling

The teacher illustrates his or her thinking process while reading a piece of text.

- Select a passage to read. Have copies for students to follow along silently as you read aloud.
- As you begin, pause to share your thoughts verbally, including connections you make, questions you have, and ways you clear up comprehension difficulties.
- Alter your voice so that students can distinguish your reading voice from your think-aloud voice.
- Model such strategies as making predictions, describing what you visualize, making connections to prior knowledge and experiences, creating analogies, and verbalizing obstacles and fix-up strategies.
- Have students practice Think Alouds with a partner. Revisit Think Alouds occasionally until they become second nature for students.

Student practice

- Have students work in groups of three with a text selection pertinent to their study. Each individual will model a Think Aloud for each step of the reading process.
- Think Aloud #1: Before Reading: Use Think Alouds to set a purpose, preview, and plan your reading.
- Think Aloud #2: During Reading: Use Think Alouds to make meaning by making connections, visualizing, and asking questions.
- Think Aloud #3: After Reading: Use Think Alouds to reflect, reread, and remember. What are your thoughts on what you read? What was confusing? What part would you reread and why? What would you do now to help you remember the important points of what you read?

Examples of Phrases to Use in Think Alouds

Connections

- “This reminds me of...”
- “I remember something like this that happened to me when...”
- “I read another book where the character...”
- “Our country doesn’t have that holiday, but we have...”

Predict/Anticipate

- “I wonder if...”
- “I wonder who...”
- “I think I know what is coming next...”
- “I think we will learn how...”

Summarize/Conclude

- “The most important idea I’ve learned so far is...”
- “It didn’t say why, but I bet that...”
- “He must be feeling...”
- “So far, I’ve learned that...”

Question/Monitor

- “I wonder what it means when...”
- “I don’t understand...”
- “It didn’t make sense when...”
- “I’m going to reread that, because I didn’t get it when...”

Image/Infer

- “Even though it isn’t in the picture, I can see the...”
- “It sent chills down my spine when...”
- “I could almost hear the...”
- “I can picture the...”

Evaluate/Apply

- “My favorite part was...”
- “I really like how the author...”
- “It was interesting to learn that...”
- “If I were her, I would...”

KU-CRL wins \$9.3 million grant to build more Pathways to Success

The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning has received a grant worth nearly \$9.3 million over six years to help students in Topeka (Kan.) Public Schools prepare to continue their educations after high school.

The grant, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP) program, will provide more than \$1.5 million a year for the Pathways to Success project. Jim Knight is the project's director.

Beginning this fall, Pathways to Success staff will work with sixth- and seventh-grade students in all six Topeka middle schools. The project will include one instructional coach per school, who will work with classroom teachers to improve the quality of instruction; a telementoring coordinator for the district, who will use e-mail and the Internet to connect students to mentors around the world; and additional teachers, who will work directly with students on their reading skills.

"The grant allows us to hire a reading teacher for each middle school to provide support for students who are behind in their reading ability," Knight said.

The reading program will be based on teaching methods and materials developed by KU-CRL over the past 27 years. Teachers' specific responsibilities will be determined in partnership with district administration. The part-

nership with the district and the support of Superintendent Tony Sawyer are key features of the Pathways to Success work.

"We get to work with a superintendent who really supports the project and who is committed

'The grant allows us to hire a reading teacher for each middle school to provide support for students who are behind in their reading ability'

to collaboration, and that really enhances our ability to make a difference," Knight said.

The Pathways to Success project also includes a new family-school coordinator and 20 tutors for each school.

Knight describes the role of the family-school coordinator as a connection with the community.

"If students are falling behind, the family coordinator invites parents into the school to discuss ways to help students be more successful," Knight said. "When a student starts to falter, parents know right away, and together with the coordinator they can start to problem-solve to ensure that the student turns things around right away."

The 120 Pathways to Success tutors will work with students after school in tutoring centers

set up in each middle school. The centers will follow KU-CRL's "strategic tutoring" model, in which tutors help students with their immediate needs—completing a homework assignment, for example—while at the same time teaching students the skills they need to complete similar assignments independently.

The new project builds on the success of two previous GEAR-UP grants directed by Knight. The first began in 1999 and supported the Pathways to Success project in three Topeka middle schools. The second, which began in 2000, added support for another middle school. All three of the grants follow groups of students through their middle school and high school years, so the sixth- and seventh-grade students involved in the new Pathways to Success project will continue to receive support from the project until they graduate from high school.

Stratagem

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