

S_trat_egram

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The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning

Literacy Leadership

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and
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In developing the Strategic Instruction Model and, more recently, the Content Literacy Continuum, we have found our most successful work involves partnerships with strong administrative leaders within the school. When building administrators attend professional development sessions with teachers, regularly visit classrooms and encourage use of SIM interventions, and create a shared vision for school improvement, we see increased adoption of these methods in classrooms schoolwide. The ultimate winners are the students these schools serve.

As a result of our work, we believe that of all the things an administrator can do to promote improvement in learning and literacy skills, the most important is to maintain a relentless focus on high-quality instruction. Our Content Literacy Continuum is a framework that can help administrators maintain this focus. It helps administrators analyze the strengths and weaknesses of their existing literacy instruction, clearly define the important and unique roles each teacher on a secondary school staff plays in improving outcomes, and design comprehensive adolescent literacy programs spanning content areas and grade levels.

We have identified four key spheres of influence for administrators in rela-

tion to launching and leading successful whole-school improvement initiatives:

1. Clarifying that high-quality instruction is indeed the top priority
2. Ensuring that day-to-day activities reflect the commitment to instruction
3. Tailoring the school's organizational structures to match the instructional needs of students
4. Overseeing a coordinated professional development plan that supports instructional goals

Attention to each of these areas can significantly influence the outcomes of whole-school initiatives.

PRIORITIES AND FOUNDATIONS

The first sphere of influence for administrators is personal: They must be very clear in their own minds and in the examples they set that high-quality instruction and schoolwide improvement are their top priorities. It is fashionable for school administrators to proclaim that instruction is their top priority, but if their actions don't match their words, school improvement efforts will likely falter.

"You're starting a really significant school reform effort, and you have to make time for CLC, make it a priority," says Ken Geisick, principal of Riverbank High School in Riverbank, Calif.,



and a veteran CLC administrator who strongly believes in the power of CLC and SIM to change instruction for the better. “This isn’t managing a program. This is true instructional leadership, where you’re changing teacher behavior and administrators also change the way they do business.”

At Riverbank, Ken has demonstrated his commitment to a successful initiative through a thoughtful, systematic approach to introducing CLC to his staff. He laid the foundation by first bringing the entire administrative team on board. He and SIM Professional Developer Peggy Graving-Reyes organized several CLC professional development days for administrators starting the May before launching CLC schoolwide in August.

“It was important that the administrators had that time to wrap their heads around what was being trained,” Ken says.

The administrative team worked toward creating a common vision for the school, defining their expectations for the two to four years they would be working with the external CLC professional development team, and learning a common language.

“When you get into SIM and CLC, there’s so much vocabulary that’s foreign to people,” says Ken, noting that repeated sessions with the CLC professional development team helped administrators acquire the language they needed to discuss and support the initiative.

“I’ve been working on it for four or five years. Finally last

CONTENT LITERACY CONTINUUM

The Content Literacy Continuum describes five increasingly intensive levels of literacy support that should be in place in every school, underscoring that some students need increased intensity and explicitness of instruction to learn critical skills, strategies, and content in secondary classes.

The continuum calls for general education teachers to present content in learner-friendly ways at the first level and to embed strategy instruction into their core classes at the second level. At the third level, students receive specialized, intensive instruction from someone other than the general education teacher.

At the fourth level, reading specialists and special education teachers work together to provide specialized, direct, and intensive instruction in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The fifth level provides for speech-language pathologists to deliver curriculum-relevant language therapy to students with underlying language disorders and for other support personnel to teach literacy skills.

year, it sort of jelled and I really get it. I can talk about it, and I sort of am fluent in it,” he says.

Ken and his vice principals continue to build their knowledge of SIM and CLC and demonstrate their commitment to the change process by attending workshops alongside teachers, a highly visible difference from the days when administrators handled paperwork in their offices while teachers attended in-service sessions.

“It never struck me as odd at the time, but now I couldn’t imagine not being a part of those trainings,” he says.

Attending the workshops

gives him the knowledge he needs to support teachers as they implement new teaching methods, even though he may not be expert enough to teach a specific intervention to students.

“I know the strategies and routines fairly well,” he says. “I still would be hard pressed to teach DISSECT, but I know why we do it. It’s OK that I don’t know how to teach it.”

DAY-TO-DAY ACTION

In the second sphere of influence, administrators determine how their commitment to instruction is reflected in day-to-day activities. The complexity of

schools mean many legitimate, competing interests can distract and capture an administrator's attention. Riverbank administrators and faculty have developed tools to refocus meetings on literacy instruction and adopted SIM methods such as modeling in faculty meetings to keep SIM and CLC at the forefront. Department chair meetings, literacy team meetings, and faculty meetings follow agendas topped by specific literacy items. Reformed faculty meetings devote 40 of their 55 minutes to discussions of CLC, literacy, and what's happening in classrooms.

Administrators don't just talk the talk at Riverbank. They seize opportunities to model use of SIM interventions when they arise. They have developed a Course Organizer specifying eight to 10 essential questions related to the school's planned work scope for the year, and they revisit it during each faculty meeting. In this way, they subtly reinforce the idea of yearlong use of the Course Organizers teachers develop for their own courses.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

A third sphere of influence for administrators is to ensure that the school's organizational structures facilitate the instructional mission. Rather than grasping new structural ideas—such as block scheduling or small learning communities—and then altering instruction to accommodate them, administrators must first understand student needs. Once these instructional needs are identified, the school

can build the structures needed to support them.

The struggling student who needs extra support at the beginning of the year, for example, may be capable of joining a grade-level class at mid-semester once she or he masters the prerequisite skills. Administrators can encourage flexibility in scheduling to allow such movement among classes. They also can creatively build time into teachers' schedules to allow joint planning and collaboration.

Riverbank's collaborative approach in its CLC initiative begins with a site literacy team, which Ken views as vital to the school's long-term success.

"It's starting to change the culture of the campus, so that when I leave and my VPs leave and the CLC team leaves, everything will still run," he says. "It will change, it will morph, but it will certainly still be there."

The site literacy team evaluates professional development sessions, looks at student work, and makes determinations in conjunction with the CLC professional development team about what the school should do next.

Another structure that is critical to bringing about sustainable changes in the culture of the school is the identification and nurturing of teachers who have the potential to become on-site professional developers. Four Riverbank teachers began the process of becoming certified SIM professional developers last summer. In time, they will be the on-site experts in SIM and CLC, providing immediate

coaching and trouble shooting that will continue long after the CLC professional development team leaves.

A system of data collection is another organizational structure that informs instructional decision making at Riverbank. Teachers are expected to collect data on all students. Administrators periodically pull in students representative of all performance levels to hear their perspectives about classroom instruction, then report their qualitative findings to faculty and the site literacy team. During one three-week period, administrators dropped in during 80 class periods and recorded the instructional methods and interventions they observed. They saw a lot of teachers using Frames, for example, and some using Course Organizers, but fewer using Concept Diagrams. These observations helped determine what SIM refresher sessions might be beneficial to encourage increased use of interventions.

EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A fourth sphere of influence involves ensuring that precious professional development dollars are spent wisely: making sure all workshops and in-service programs are aligned with the school's vision and instructional goals, arranging for coordinated and coherent staff development programs, and building in an accountability system that ties the professional development investment to student outcomes.

"The one thing I like so much about the CLC is it's such a great

decision-making lens for administrators,” says Ken. “What CLC does for administrators is it puts out the decision-making process for everybody.”

Decisions about sending teachers to workshops or conferences are based on how the proposed topic or new skill fits within the CLC framework, whether it complements or competes with

current initiatives, and whether it supports key instructional goals.

CONCLUSION

Routinely reviewing these spheres of influence and evaluating how administrative actions and activities support the school’s goals will help ensure that instruction really

is central. Instruction, after all, gets to the very core of what we, as educators, are all about. As the instructional leaders in a school, administrators who keep all eyes focused on the importance of these issues nurture the kinds of long-lasting school improvements that will benefit all students.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES 2007

The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning invites you to explore effective instructional methods through our series of practical, hands-on institutes geared toward classroom teachers, higher education faculty, and instructional coaches.

STRATEGIC INSTRUCTION MODEL

For a description of the SIM Learning Strategies Curriculum and Content Enhancement Series, visit www.kucri.org/sim.



FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

SIM Institute: Writing Strategies \$600

June 27-30, 2007 (8 a.m. Wednesday to noon Saturday)

This institute will provide the tools necessary for teachers in both general education and special education settings to incorporate the SIM writing curriculum into courses. Participants will learn SIM strategies for writing sentences, paragraphs, and themes. Sessions are designed to be relevant for instructors at almost all levels (third grade to post-secondary). **Registration must be postmarked by May 7, 2007.**

SIM Reading and Writing Strategies \$525

June 19-22, 2007 (8 a.m. Tuesday to noon Friday)

This institute, formerly known as SIM Level 1, will introduce teachers to the foundations of SIM, then teach them to implement research-based interventions to help stu-

dents acquire the skills necessary to understand grade-level reading materials. Institute participants will be offered two reading strategies, one vocabulary strategy, and the two-level sentence writing strategy. **Registration must be postmarked by May 7, 2007.**

More SIM Strategies \$525

June 19-22, 2007 (8 a.m. Tuesday to 1 p.m. Friday)

This institute, formerly known as SIM Level 2, will offer instruction in additional SIM reading, writing, and other Learning Strategies. Participants who have attended an introductory SIM institute in the past and have implemented strategies will be able to select more strategies to support their literacy efforts. In addition to reading and writing strategies, selections may include strategies related to motivation, improving assignments, and studying and remembering information. **Registration must be postmarked by May 7, 2007.**

SIM Institute: Introduction to Content Enhancement \$600

More Content Enhancement \$600

June 27-30, 2007 (8 a.m. Wednesday to noon Saturday)

In these two institutes, teachers learn methods to teach large amounts of content to academically diverse classes in “learner-friendly” ways without diluting the content. Participants will plan how to use Content Enhancement (CE) Routines in their own courses to enhance the way they present subject-area content and improve students’ ability to organize, understand, and remember critical information. Individuals who have completed an introductory Content Enhancement institute may take More Content Enhancement, which will feature instruction in different routines. **Registration must be postmarked by May 7, 2007.**

FOR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY
FACULTY

**SIM Learning Strategies
Institute for Preservice
Educators \$800**

May 29-June 2, 2007 (noon Tuesday to noon Saturday)
This institute will enable preservice educators in teacher education programs to provide empirically validated SIM interventions to prospective teachers. This institute will focus on exploring strategies from the SIM Learning Strategies Curriculum. Sample syllabi, books, and teaching resources will be provided. **Registration must be postmarked by April 16, 2007.**

**Teaching Content to All:
Effective College
Teaching \$800**

May 29-June 2, 2007 (noon Tuesday to noon Saturday)
This institute, which is designed for college/university faculty who are engaged in teacher preparation, will enable participants to implement a variety of empirically validated teaching routines from the SIM Content Enhancement (CE) Series. Content will emphasize inclusive course planning and the implementation of a variety of explicit teaching

routines designed to ensure content-area mastery of critical ideas and concepts by all students. Information related to meeting additional SIM CE Professional Developer certification requirements for in-service professional development will be provided. **Registration must be postmarked by April 16, 2007.**

FOR POTENTIAL
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPERS

**Potential SIM Professional
Developers Institutes for
Learning Strategies and
Content Enhancement \$750**

July 30-Aug. 3, 2007 (8 a.m. Monday to 3 p.m. Friday)
These two, five-day SIM institutes will be conducted simultaneously, each using the Content Literacy Continuum as a unifying framework. Instruction in specific routines and strategies will not be offered during this week; *the focus will be on the professional development process.* Participants will be selected through an application process. For more information about eligibility requirements and the application process, visit www.kucri.org/institutes or contact crl@ku.edu. **Applications must be postmarked by April 14, 2007.**

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

Instructional Coaching \$450

Jan. 22-24, 2007 • Aug. 6-8, 2007
• Oct. 10-12, 2007
(8 a.m. Day 1 to 3 p.m. Day 3)

This institute will offer an opportunity for educators to learn the basics of instructional coaching. The methods that coaches can use to enable instructional improvements will be emphasized. This institute is provided for professional developers and other education professionals who want to accelerate professional learning in schools. Participants do not need a knowledge of SIM and specific SIM interventions will not be taught. The workshop will address *how* to coach, now *what*. **Registration must be postmarked by Dec. 11, 2006, for the January workshop, by June 25, 2007, for the August workshop, or by Sept. 10, 2007, for the October workshop.**

**Coaching Classroom
Management \$450**

Jan. 25-27, 2007 • Aug. 9-11, 2007
(8 a.m. Day 1 to 3 p.m. Day 3)

This institute provides an overview of the classroom management tools and teaching practices included in *Coaching Classroom Management* (2007) by Randy Sprick, Wendy Reinke, Tricia McKale, and Jim Knight. Participants will learn about important variables they should observe while coaching teachers as well as strategies they can use to support teachers in the creation of safe learning communities. All participants will learn how to integrate classroom management practices into the instructional coaching model. **Registration must be postmarked by Dec. 11, 2006, for the January workshop and by June 25, 2007, for the August workshop.**

Institute Fees

Institute fees cover the cost of materials and instruction provided during the institute. Participants will be responsible for their own transportation, housing, and meals.

Application & Registration Forms

Web: www.kucri.org/institutes

Phone: 785.864.0626

E-mail: crl@ku.edu

Late Registration, Refund & Cancellation Policy

An additional \$25 fee will be assessed for registrations postmarked after the deadline.

INDEX FOR STRATEGRAM VOLUME 18 (2005-2006)

Issue 1

In focus: A tale of two projects: CRL launches SIM reading class studies, by Julie Tollefson, KU-CRL. This article describes the Fusion Reading and Xtreme Reading research studies.

In the classroom: Students use SIM in fight against mosquitoes. This article describes a project in a Louisiana school, led by **Melynda Rodrigue**, **Val Waguespack**, and **Rachel Dugas**, in which students used the *THINK Strategy*, *SCORE Skills*, and *Framing Routine* while designing a service learning activity to reduce mosquito populations.

Index for Strategram Volume 17 (2004-2005)

Issue 2

In focus: Building vocabulary, background knowledge, by Julie Tollefson, KU-CRL. Doctoral fellow **Monica Harris** and SIM PD **Sue Woodruff** address the role of SIM interventions in building crucial vocabulary and background knowledge. Includes list of vocabulary resources.

New textbook focuses on math, struggling learners. Announcement of new text, *Designing and Implementing Mathematics Instruction for Students with Diverse Learning Needs*, by SIM PDs **Pam Hudson** and **Susan Miller**.

Issue 3

In focus: Bewitched by words, by Julie Tollefson, KU-CRL. This article continues the discussion of vocabulary instruction that began in Issue 2, using examples from a conference presentation by SIM PDs **Peggy Graving-Reyes** and **Jeff Reyes**. Includes sidebar, *Working with words*, highlighting ways to engage students in vocabulary instruction.

In the classroom: Dr. DISSECT. SIM PD **Joan Nejezchleb** shares activities, tips, and resources to make words come to life through *Word Identification Strategy* instruction. Includes resource list.

Issue 4

In focus: Language of literacy: Thinking about words & world views, by Julie Tollefson, KU-CRL. In this article, **Barbara Ehren** poses three questions to guide our discussions of the language of literacy. Includes two sidebars: *Photosynthe—huh?* addresses the fact that vocabulary becomes more subject-specific as students advance through school and may require different methods of instruction, and *Many meanings of literacy* reviews use of the term in different contexts. Also includes resource list.

In the classroom: Framing King Tut. SIM PD **Ginger Williams** lets history be her guide when modeling how she presents the *Framing Routine*.

Issue 5

In focus: Strong foundations: Elementary, middle school literacy, by Don Deshler, KU-CRL. This article makes the case for targeting upper-elementary and middle school grades for improving literacy levels of struggling adolescent learners. Includes sidebar, *Connecting the dots...to SIM*.

Issue 6

In focus: Essay Test-Taking, by Charles Hughes, Penn State University. This article reviews the new *Essay Test-Taking Strategy* and some of the research supporting its efficacy. Includes errata and tips.

Carnegie launches literacy web site. Announcement of new Advancing Literacy web site, www.carnegie.org/literacy.

A picture is worth... Some KU-CRL videos now available as DVD. Includes order form.

Introducing the SIM logo. Announcement.

Deshler to serve on board of National Institute for Literacy. Announcement of Don's Senate confirmation.

Rising Above the Gathering Storm. Link to report.

Are you a StrateReader? Announcement about KU-CRL's new virtual book club. Includes unit schedule.

KU-CRL CALENDAR

January 22-24, 2007

Instructional Coaching Institute
Contact: Kathy Schmidt or Mona Katz
(crl@ku.edu | 785.864.0626)

January 25-27, 2007

Coaching Classroom Management
Contact: Kathy Schmidt or Mona Katz
(crl@ku.edu | 785.864.0626)

June 19-22, 2007

SIM Reading and Writing Strategies
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(crl@ku.edu | 785.864.0626)

June 19-22, 2007

More SIM Strategies
Contact: Mona Katz or Kathy Schmidt
(crl@ku.edu | 785.864.0626)

August 6-8, 2007

Instructional Coaching Institute
Contact: Kathy Schmidt or Mona Katz
(crl@ku.edu | 785.864.0626)

August 9-11, 2007

Coaching Classroom Management
Contact: Kathy Schmidt or Mona Katz
(crl@ku.edu | 785.864.0626)

October 10-12, 2007

Instructional Coaching Institute
Contact: Kathy Schmidt or Mona Katz
(crl@ku.edu | 785.864.0626)

www.kucrl.org/institutes

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- KU-CRL's Associate Director, **Mike Hock**, served as a panelist for an online seminar on adolescent literacy in October. The *Reflections on Summer Literacy Strategies: What Can Summer Programs Do To Support Adolescents' Literacy Development?* seminar explored how out-of-school time programs can enhance adolescents' literacy skills. Mike joined panelists Donna Alvermann of the University of Georgia and Elizabeth Moje of the University of Michigan in presenting findings from their work. Moderator Richard Allington of the University of Tennessee led a discussion among these literacy experts. The Center for Summer Learning, which sponsored the seminar, recorded the presentations and discussion and expects to make the recording available on its web site: <http://www.summerlearning.org/>. Check the link for "Adolescent Literacy Online Seminar." Slides from the seminar are available on the site, and the organization plans to post panelists' responses to some of the questions posed during the discussion.

- With this issue, *Strategram* takes on a slightly new look and new content. The calendar and announcements sections will now be regular features of this newsletter. We hope the addition of the table of contents and "New online" features on page 8 will help you find the information of most interest to you, both inside *Strategram* and on www.kucrl.org.

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NEW ONLINE

Professional Development

Download information, registration, & application forms for our 2007 institutes.

StrateReaders

November/December reading selection: The New Division of Labor by Frank Levy & Richard J. Murnane

To order back issues of *Strategram*, download an order form from www.kucrl.org/sim.

WWW.KUCRL.ORG