Tools for Busy Teachers

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As another semester gets under way, time-challenged teachers seeking streamlined approaches to completing their many daily tasks may find help in the technology-based tools developed by one KU-CRL division.

ALTEC, the Advanced Learning Technologies in Education Consortium, offers an extensive array of free, web-based tools to assist with such common tasks as developing rubrics or web-based worksheets.

"We know that you as teachers do not have a lot of free time. You get to school early. You leave late," says Erica Schaapveld, project coordinator for ALTEC's 4Teachers team.

Consequently, ALTEC strives to create a sense of collaboration and sharing on its web site. Many of its tools include search engines that allow you to review other teachers' work and adapt their products for use in your own classroom.

This issue of *Strategram* reviews some of the tools ALTEC's 4Teachers and 4Kids teams have developed. See www.altec.org for more information about individual tools.

4Kids
ALTEC's 4Kids web site, designed for younger grades, features child-safe search engines, technology advice columns, homework help, and educational games and activities. In addition to its web presence, 4Kids is syndicated in newspapers nationwide.

Kids' Vid
The Kids' Vid tool is designed to guide students to make polished, cross-curriculum, multimedia projects.

A storyboard tool allows students to plan movies with drag-and-drop ease: identifying scenes to include in the movie, possible dialog, settings, actors, and lighting. A scripting section provides examples of questions students should ask before they even start writing.

"Kids think they grab a camera and they make a wonderful masterpiece, and they don't," says Erica. "We're teaching them different shots, what's a pan left, what's zoom, what's tracking the subject. We have all the lesson plans for that."

The site includes lesson plans for those trying to teach students how to use film in the classroom, complete with QuickTime movie examples of finished products.

"The idea is to get the kids thinking about how they can use this kind of technology in the classroom," Erica says.

Kids' Vid is designed for lower grade

SIM
Strategic Instruction Model

levels. "As soon as you feel comfortable letting kids hold cameras, they can start using it," Erica says. An advanced tool for high school students is in the works.

PERSUADESTAR

PersuadeStar helps teach students the parts of persuasive essays and provides a tool for writing such essays.

"When you're doing persuasive essays, the first thing is to teach kids the different parts of persuasive essays," says Erica. "You need a main argument, a hook to grab attention, a topic, support for topics. It's not a bad idea to throw in the opposite opinion."

PersuadeStar allows you as the teacher to identify parts of an example essay using your own terminology, then scramble the parts. Students can log on to the tool and sort the pieces into the appropriate order.

"The idea is to give them some kind of fun way to learn the different pieces of the persuasive essay," Erica says.

After students understand the parts of a persuasive essay, they use PersuadeStar's planning tool to brainstorm their own. The tool includes a bibliography tool in which students can note author and title of their resources. The results will be output in proper style. It also includes a spell-check that highlights in red the words that may not be spelled correctly.

You can download your students' completed papers into Word.

RUBISTAR

RubiStar helps you make rubrics in English and Spanish. An inspiration page lists many rubrics that other teachers have made. Erica searched the tool's database looking for titles that sounded interesting. When she

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found one, she e-mailed the teacher that created the rubric asking for more information. The responses to her e-mail are included on the inspiration page: project description, grade level, school, subject, sometimes a contact e-mail address, lessons learned, and advice.

If you don't see a rubric that fits your needs, they are all completely customizable. You can choose the categories you want to include and the type of scale (numeric or descriptive or something specific to your students' projects). You can build on available descriptions or type your own from scratch. Once you have completed your rubric, you can print or download it as an Excel spreadsheet. It also can be made available on line for your students to review or for further customization at a later time.

THINKTANK

ThinkTank promotes higher-level thinking by prompting students to consider a series of questions as they develop topics and subtopics for writing and other projects. The tool includes a random topic generator that presents sentence starters and encourages students to fill in the blank. For students who also have NoteStar accounts, the ThinkTank results can be exported to NoteStar.

NOTESTAR

This tool allows students to take notes online. When students visit web sites, for example, and select the Note-Card button on their browser, NoteStar automatically grabs any bibliographic information it can find on the page and records the web address. Students add notes and select a button to indicate whether they have paraphrased or directly quoted material from the site. Students also can use NoteStar with hard copy resource material by typing the required bibliographic information as well as their notes.

TRACKSTAR AND QUIZSTAR

TrackStar helps you create online, interactive lessons and activities. You can search through thousands of tracks created by other teachers and gather ideas from a listing of top tracks.

QuizStar allows you to create quizzes that students take and review online. It includes useful report management tools.

ASSIGN-A-DAY

This calendar tool allows you to specify assignments and activities for your students. A brief description appears in the calendar, and a fuller description pops up when browsers move a mouse over it. Students who have been out sick can log in to see what assignments they missed, and parents can use the tool to keep up on what their children are doing in your class.

ARCADEMIC SKILL BUILDERS

The name of this project is a play on arcade and academic. Available from the 4Teachers web site (www.4teachers.org), Arcademic Skill Builders offer math and word games to make learning fun.

PRISM

University of Kansas scientists and engineers are studying ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica in the Polar Radar for Ice Sheet Measurement project. In conjunction, ALTEC coordinates K-12 outreach activities that include "Bears on Ice," a web-based photographic "journal" kept by two stuffed bears as they accompany PRISM scientists and engineers. Students can follow the progress of the bears and learn about scientific experiments and equipment.

"You see them doing all different things. It's a good way to get kids to learn about science without them realizing they're learning about science," says Erica.

The PRISM site also includes primary resources about his-

torical events in the form of scanned documents that you can use in your classrooms; lesson plan builders; and a template to help students write letters to congressmen regarding global issues.

TEACHER TACKLEBOX

This tool allows you to search multiple ALTEC databases at one time. When you specify a subject, theme, and topic, this hierarchical search index returns results from TrackStar, WebQuests, and ThinkQuest

databases as well as outside educational sites.

LEARNING ASSOCIATES NETWORK

In addition to the many technology tools available to you and your students, ALTEC supports a Learning Associates Network where you can connect with other teachers who use these tools. In addition, ALTEC offers both on site and online professional development opportunities. For a complete listing of offerings, visit http://pd.altec.org.

Erica Schaapveld, project coordinator for ALTEC's 4Teachers team, demonstrated many free, web-based tools for teachers during the 2006 International SIM Conference. You may purchase a DVD of her presentation. Complete this form and send it with your payment information to KU-CRL, 1122 West Campus Rd, Room 517, Joseph R. Pearson Hall, Lawrence, KS 66045-3101.

Name: _____

Address: _____

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❍   ALTEC Tools DVD $10 (includes shipping & handling)

Total enclosed: $_____

❍   Check (payable to KU-CRL; enclosed)
❍   Purchase Order #: _____
❍   Credit Card # (VISA or MasterCard):_____
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Aligning SIM & Marzano

The SIM Professional Developers of the El Paso Independent School District in Texas developed the following chart to align all of our Strategic Instruction Model interventions with the work of Robert J. Marzano. Using Marzano's 2003 book *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action* as a starting point, the professional developers matched SIM interventions to the behaviors identified by Marzano. Thanks to these professional developers, including Lee Schwartz, for sharing the results of their efforts.

Marzano's Nine Instructional Categories Divided Into Specific Behaviors & Aligned with SIM

General Instructional Category	Specific Behaviors	SIM Strategy/Routine
1. Identifying similarities and differences (45 percentile gain)	• assigning in-class homework tasks that involve comparison and classification. • assigning in-class homework tasks that involve metaphors and analogies	• Concept Mastery Routine • Concept Comparison Routine • Unit Organizer Routine (Unit Relationships) • "Rationale for Strategy Use" discussions comparing past practices to new learning • "Cue-Do-Review" processes in comparing how the routines help learning
2. Summarizing and note taking (34 percentile gain)	• asking students to generate verbal summaries • asking students to generate written summaries • asking students to take notes • asking students to revise their notes, correcting errors and adding information	• Paraphrasing Strategy • ORDER Routine • FRAMING Routine • TOWER (idea diagram) (Theme Writing Strategy) • Taking Notes Together • Survey Routine • Multipass • Organizer routines • Question Exploration Routine
3. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition (29 percentile gain)	• recognizing and celebrating progress toward learning goals throughout a unit • recognizing and reinforcing the importance of effort • recognizing and celebrating progress toward learning goals at the end of a unit	• Unit Organizer Routine • <u>Verbal Practice</u> stage of strategy instruction • <u>Controlled Practice and Feedback</u> stage of strategy instruction • Elaborated feedback process • Making commitments to learn and to generalize in strategy instruction • Success formulas in strategy instruction • Possible Selves • Use of strategy progress charts • Cue-Do-Review process in routines • Co-construction of Content Enhancement devices

General Instructional Category	Specific Behaviors	SIM Strategy/Routine
4. Homework and practice (28 percentile gain)	• providing specific feedback on all assigned homework • assigning homework for the purpose of students practicing skills and procedures that have been the focus of instruction	• <u>Verbal Practice</u> stage of strategy instruction • <u>Controlled Practice and Feedback</u> stage of strategy instruction • <u>Advanced Practice</u> stage of strategy instruction • <u>Generalization</u> stage of strategy instruction • Co-construction of organizer graphics • "E"step in FRAMING Routine • Extension activity in concept routines • Assignment Completion Strategy • Quality Assignment Routine • Question Exploration Routine
5. Nonlinguistic representations (27 percentile gain)	• asking students to generate mental images representing content • asking students to draw pictures or pictographs representing content • asking students to construct graphic organizers representing content • asking students to act out content • asking students to make physical models of content • asking students to make revisions in their mental images, pictures, pictographs, graphic organizers and physical models	• LINCS and LINCing pictures • ORDER Routine • Idea Diagram (Theme Writing Strategy) • Paragraph Writing diagram • Recall Enhancement Routine • Visual Imagery Strategy • Organizer routines • Graphic organizers • Question Exploration Guides • Concept graphic organizers • Paired Associates Strategy • Mnemonics
6. Cooperative learning (27 percentile gain)	• organizing students in cooperative groups • organizing students in ability groups when appropriate	• Collaborative Problem Solving • Community Building Series • Cooperative Thinking Strategies • Co-constructing the "So What" statements in the FRAMING Routine • Individual, group and cooperative practices in <u>Controlled Practice</u> stage of strategies
7. Setting objectives and providing feedback (23 percentile gain)	• setting specific learning goals at the beginning of a unit • asking students to set their own learning goals at the beginning of a unit • providing feedback on learning goals throughout the unit • asking students to keep track of their progress on learning goals • providing summative feedback at the end of a unit • asking students to assess themselves at the end of a unit	• Organizer routines • Advance organizers in every strategy instructional stage • Learning strategy progress charts • Self-test in LINCS Vocabulary Strategy • <u>Pretest and Make Commitments</u> stage of strategy instruction • Explicit feedback in <u>Controlled Practice and Feedback</u> and <u>Advanced Practice</u> stages of strategy instruction. • <u>Posttest and Make Commitments</u> stage of strategy instruction • Cue-Do-Review Process • Idea Diagram for pre-writing feedback (Theme Writing Strategy)

General Instructional Category	Specific Behaviors	SIM Strategy/Routine
8. Generating and testing hypothesis (23 percentile gain)	• engaging students in projects that involve generating and testing hypotheses through problem-solving tasks • engaging students in projects that involve generating and testing hypotheses through decision-making tasks • engaging students in projects that involve generating and testing hypotheses through investigation tasks • engaging students in projects that involve generating and testing hypotheses through experimental-inquiry tasks • engaging students in projects that involve generating and testing hypotheses through systems-analysis tasks • engaging students in projects that involve generating and testing hypotheses through invention tasks	• Describe stage of all strategy instruction • Self-test step in LINCS Vocabulary Strategy • Self-Questioning Strategy • Recall Enhancement Routine • Completion of any of the graphic organizers that the student completes in a group or independently.
9. Questions, cues, and advance organizers (22 percentile gain)	• Prior to presenting new content, asking questions that help students recall what they might already know about the content • Prior to presenting new content, providing students direct links with what they have studied previously • Prior to presenting new content, providing ways for students to organize or think about the content	• Organizer routines • FRAMING Routine • Survey Routine • Multipass • Cue-Do-Review Process • Advance organizers in every strategy instructional stage • Question Exploration Routine
Chart reproduced (without SIM alignment) from pp 82-83 of Robert J. Marzano (2003) *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action.* Some SIM alignment from Virginia CLC Sites 2006		

KU-CRL Calendar

June 19-22, 2007
SIM Reading and Writing Strategies
Contact: Mona Katz or Kathy Schmidt
(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)

October 14-17, 2007
Instructional Coaching Conference
Contact: Kathy Schmidt or Mona Katz
(crl@ku.edu | 785.864.0626)
for the Alumni Association)

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The third book selection for our virtual book club, *School Reform from the Inside Out,* is a series of essays touching on school reform. The essays address issues such as "Getting to Scale with Good Educational Practice," "Building a New Structure for School Leadership," "Bridging the Gap between Standards and Achievement," "When Accountability Knocks, Will Anyone Answer?" and "Doing the Right Thing, Knowing the Right Thing To Do."

As I opened this book and began scanning the introduction, my eye was caught by the following "…the ebb and flow of policy issues—what political scientists call the issue attention cycle—typically proceeds in 3 to 5 year intervals….Education reform seems to have defied this principle." Seems we can't bury our heads in the sand and hope all this AYP, NCLB, etc., goes away. I look forward to reading what Mr. Elmore has to say on these issues. And, I look forward to reading what you have to say also.

—Jean Piazza

StrateReaders is an interactive, virtual book club focusing on the current literature addressing our changing world and the implications for education, professional development, leadership, and educational reform. Membership is open to SIM Professional Developers, SIM educators, and anyone interested in joining and contributing.

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January/February reading selection: School Reform from the Inside Out by Richard Elmore

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