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The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning

Part 2: Pacing Guides and Content Enhancement

Julie Tollefson
KU-CRL

**Peggy
Graving-Reyes**
SIM Professional
Developer,
Stockton, Calif.

The last issue of *Stratogram* (Vol. 19, No. 5, August 2007) began the story of how Lodi High School in California integrated pacing guides developed by a textbook publisher and Content Enhancement Routines to develop standards-based units of instruction. When teams of teachers worked with SIM Professional Developer **Peggy Graving-Reyes** to identify the state language arts standards to be taught in each unit, they discovered the pacing guides did not address all state standards, nor did they address all of the district's priority standards.

To remedy the situation, the teams created their own Course Organizer maps for the coming year, ensuring that their plans included teaching the district's priority standards before state assessments were administered.

With the big picture before them, the teams returned to their original goals of developing standards-based Unit Organizers to guide instruction throughout the year. Although they could have used the pacing guides supplied by their textbook publisher, their principal, **Bill Atterberry**, wanted them to have a solid understanding of how to develop units of instruction based on standards. Peggy shared his concerns about relying too heavily on pacing guides.

"I do believe pacing guides created

by textbook publishers hinder the educational process because most teachers using them either blindly follow them, not seeing the importance of the underlying structure (a focus on stan-

Professional Development Goals at Lodi High School

- Learn how to design standards-based units and map the curriculum
- Agree (by grade level) on a common curriculum, but have individual choice about "How" to teach the standards using agreed-upon vehicles (adopted text and supplemental materials such as novels)
- Learn how to implement the *Unit Organizer Routine* with students with fidelity
- Learn how to use novels as a vehicle to teach standards, not as a unit in and of itself
- Design common assessments aligned to curriculum taught
- Identify or create instructional activities that support mastery of the standards

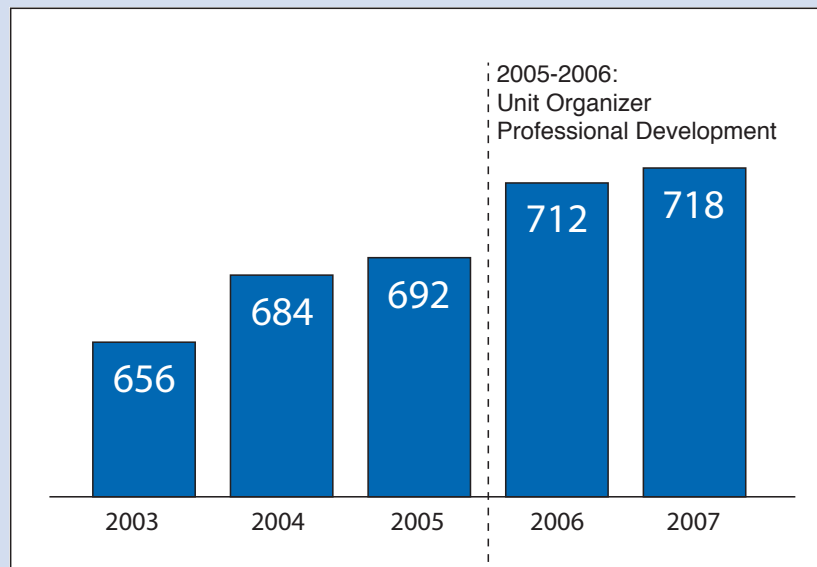
About Lodi High School

Lodi Unified School District encompasses 350 square miles and serves the cities of Lodi and North Stockton and the communities of Acampo, Clements, Lockeford, Victor, and Woodbridge in the Central Valley of Northern California.

- 29,800 students (K-12)
- 33 elementary schools
- 7 middle schools
- 4 comprehensive high schools
- 2 continuation high schools
- Top 5 primary languages (other than English): Spanish, Hmong, Urdu, Cambodian, and Vietnamese

For 2006-2007, Lodi High School was the only one of the four comprehensive high schools to be part of the "700 Club"—scoring above 700 on the Academic Performance

Figure 1: Academic Performance Index At Lodi High School



Index (API). All schools aim to have a score above 800 and maintain growth every year.

The figure above shows Lodi's growth in Academic Performance Index scores since

2003. The professional development related to the *Unit Organizer Routine* occurred during the 2005-2006 school year.

dards), or they resist using them but do not have a structure for organization that can give them the power of Course and Unit Organizers for themselves or students," she says.

Throughout the year, three criteria guided their discussions and final Unit Organizers:

- Each Unit Organizer had to identify the critical standards to be taught in that unit.
- Each Unit Organizer had to build upon the critical content and standards of previous units.
- Each Unit Organizer had to lay the groundwork for future units.

Because of time and cost constraints, teams were not able to bring all members together for planning meetings. Instead, they devised flexible and creative ways to continue the work, using release days or meeting individually or in pairs with Peggy every two weeks during their planning periods.

During these meetings, Peggy reviewed the Unit Organizer under development that day. The teachers offered feedback and ideas for further development, and the Unit Organizers took shape.

Between Peggy's visits, team members kept conversations

going by sharing ideas and successes that helped shape the final device. As they finished the Unit Organizers, the entire team reviewed them—and the process—during department meetings.

"The teachers shared that they really enjoyed having a voice and not getting mired down in discussions that went on and on forever," Peggy says. "When they came together, they all felt like they really had a voice and choice in designing their units."

Although the process of mapping the standards and developing the big-picture Course

Organizer took about two days to complete, developing the Unit Organizers consumed the entire year.

“By the end of the year, we had almost fully developed all of the Unit Organizers for their year’s work. They had had a chance to review them as staff,” Peggy says.

Another aspect of the process allowed the teachers to ensure that the standards they taught were the standards they assessed. They analyzed each unit assessment to determine whether it aligned with the critical content they had identified, revising the assessments as necessary when they found discrepancies.

At the beginning of the year, the principal’s goal had been for these teachers to understand standards-based unit planning. The year spent working so closely together to develop

the Course and Unit Organizers clearly met that goal and more. “They not only developed ownership for it, but deepened their knowledge of what to teach, how to organize units for student understanding, how to teach them for student mastery, and how to align their assessments,” Peggy says.

In late spring of that year, the English language arts department reviewed and accepted, with administrative approval, the collection of Unit Organizers as the school’s own unique pacing guide.

Then, they looked to the future.

They established as goals for the coming year to refine the Unit Organizers; to create grade-level, digital “binders” on their school server of instructional activities and resources to support each lesson in each unit;

and to develop common assessments for each unit. One teacher pursued additional professional development in the *Lesson Organizer Routine*, and other teachers expressed interest in learning the routine in the future.

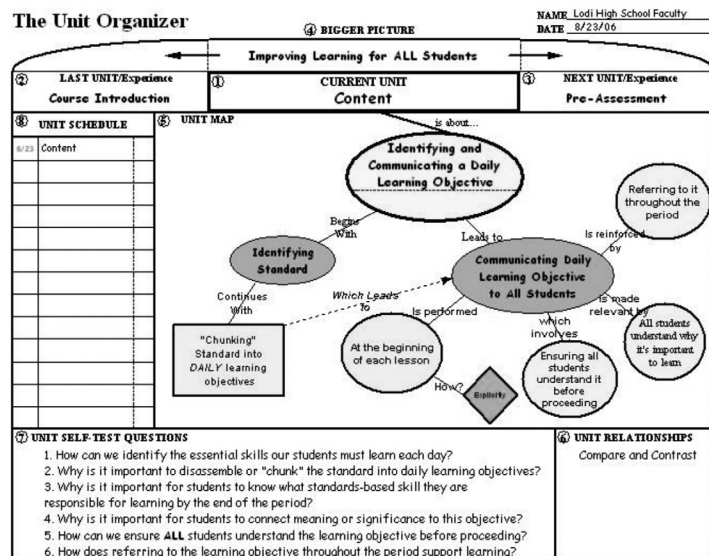
“They still had a lot of work to do, but they were empowered to do it because they saw the value in the process,” Peggy says.

Overall, teachers thought the Unit Organizer gave them a tool to be more effective instructors and to organize learning in a way that would be more powerful for students. Also, assessment questions that focused on standards instead of on the vehicles to teach the standards became a concrete indication that these educators were mastering the abstraction of standards-based teaching.

Administrative Support at Lodi High School

Bill Atterberry, principal of Lodi High School, launched the process toward standards-based unit planning and then ensured its success through his explicit support of the work the teachers were involved in. He continually reiterated that the focus of their energies should be on standards. His expectations included that teachers would work together to identify priority standards; develop frequent, standards-based assessments; and collaboratively decide which resources they would use to support teaching the standards. He allowed room for teachers to include

Figure 2: Course Map For English Language Arts



novels in their resources—a passion for some of the teachers—as long as instruction related to those novels was based in and reinforced priority standards.

Both Bill and the district's director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment were pleased with the shift in teachers' understanding of unit planning, Peggy says. They also were pleased by the future goals of the department.

The work even influenced Bill's own methods. When introducing the program of professional development for the following school year, he incorporated the language and devices of SIM into his presentation to faculty (see *Figure 2: Unit Organizer for Improving Learning for ALL Students* on page 3 and *Elements of Effective Daily Instruction* in the box at right.)

In an e-mail to Peggy and district officials, his praise was enthusiastic: "This should not be optional," he wrote. "I mean, just the piece about developing the critical questions your students should be able to answer puts the course in perspective for everyone."

Elements of Effective Daily Instruction

- Teachers communicate a standards-based learning objective to students at the beginning and throughout each period — "What should ALL students be able to do as a result of each day's instruction?" — and ensure ALL students know why the learning is important.
- Before beginning the lesson, teachers ensure ALL students know and understand what new skill(s) they should be prepared to demonstrate by the end of the period.
- Before beginning instruction, teachers assess what their students already know.
- Teachers guide ALL students through the learning process — Cue, Do, Review — to help them organize and to create contexts for learning.
- Teachers use questioning strategies that engage ALL students in learning.
- To ensure ALL students understand what they're being asked to do independently or in groups, the teacher models the instructions explicitly — "I do," "We do," "You do."
- Teachers check to ensure ALL students have learned the objective at the end of each instructional period.
- Teachers plan for what to do for those who did not learn the new skill.

Gordon R. Alley Partnership Award

Randy Sprick, Safe and Civil Schools

Gordon R. Alley, one of the founders of the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning in 1978 when it was known as the Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities, was a master at mentoring the young and inexperienced assistant professors who were assembled to conduct the institute's first research studies. He generously shared his expertise and time to enable others to reach their goals and taught that partnership is vital to successfully conducting large-scale research and development efforts. Dr. Alley passed away in 1997 as a result of a tragic accident several years earlier. To honor his legacy and ensure that the trail he blazed never be forgotten, we give the Gordon R. Alley Partnership Award to other professionals who contribute to the work of the Center in the same spirit. This year's recipient, Randy Sprick, embodies the generosity and collaborative nature the award is intended to honor.

Julie Tollefson
KU-CRL

Early in the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning's Pathways to Success project, instructional coaches found that teachers who struggled with classroom management issues also struggled to achieve results. While Pathways director **Jim Knight** considered the implications of that realization, a mutual friend brought the work of **Randy Sprick** to his attention. Thus began a loose partnership that has benefited not only the Pathways project but the Center as a whole.

Sprick's Safe and Civil Schools series has shaped how the Center looks at classroom management issues. "I think we already have a lot of good things for classroom management—the Community Building materials are great—but we needed more basic nuts and bolts and needed a big picture," Knight says. Sprick's CHAMPs: A Proactive and Posi-

tive Approach to Classroom Management lays a foundation for teaching students how to behave responsibly and attend to tasks, making it possible for teachers to focus more of their energy on content instruction and, in the Pathways project, on teaching and using Strategic Instruction Model™ components. "Without the classroom piece, we weren't getting anywhere with the teachers who were trying to instruct [students] using Content Enhancement or Learning Strategies because too many kids were off task," says Lynn Barnes, instructional coach. Since forming the partnership with Sprick—an "awesome asset" to the project—and adopting his classroom management techniques as part of the Pathways project, coaches have seen classrooms move from 70 percent on task to an exceptional 92 percent on task.

Sprick calls behavior and academics "the ultimate chicken



Randy Sprick

and egg question." If students experience academic frustration despite a classroom's good behavioral strategies, they will rebel or shut down. If teachers don't have good behavioral strategies, academic achievement will suffer. "If expectations are not clear or the overarching tone of the classroom is not

He's turned what previously had probably frightened me a little—the idea of classroom management—into what I really want to do with my life,

—Tricia McKale, instructional coach and co-author (with Sprick, Knight, and Wendy Reinke) of the new *Coaching Classroom Management*. The book offers practical tools for establishing effective classroom management and student behavior expectations.

invitational, welcoming, and respectful, then you won't be able to engage kids with that great curriculum," Sprick says.

The instructional coaches of the Pathways project use words such as generous, gracious, compassionate, funny, humble, and warm-hearted in describing Sprick and the value of his work to their own. "Even when I know he's a busy man, and he has a million other things going on, he'll take time to listen to a situation that I'm having with a teacher and give me feedback and give me suggestions and comments, which I think is amazing," says **Stacy Cohen**, instructional coach.

Sprick has met with Center staff members numerous times in the last few years, both in Kansas and on his home turf in Oregon. He set aside time to meet with the Pathways instructional coaches in Portland, he's attended instructional coaching institutes and conferences sponsored by the Center, and he's brainstormed

with Center staff on topics relevant to both his work and that of the Center. Sprick describes this collaboration in yin-yang terms. "It is so stimulating to be bouncing ideas off of people that are already doing such incredibly impressive work and to have a synergism between some areas that they maybe have not thought about quite as much as I have had the opportunity to do," he says.

Call it synergism or profound good fortune for the Center, our collaboration with Sprick has complemented the effective practices of SIM and raised our professional development work to a new level. "I've never been as welcomed in schools as I have been when I've come to talk to them about classroom management using the tools that have been provided by both he and the Center," says Tricia McKale, instructional coach. "The work that Randy and the Center have done has made professional development something to look forward to."

Stratopedia: An online resource

Stratopedia, a new addition to the Center's online presence, engages SIM professional developers, teachers, and students in collaborative, interactive learning. Stratopedia is organized into "learning labs" that foster discussions focused on specific topics.

FEATURED LEARNING LAB: VIDEO IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This lab is devoted to sharing information, questions, comments, and ideas about the use of video in professional development.

To become a member of the Video in Professional Development learning lab, you must be registered to use the Stratopedia site. Registration is free and easy.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Go to www.stratopedia.org
- Click on "Stratopedia Learning Labs"
- Scroll down to "Video in Professional Development" under Workgroups and click on that option

If you haven't yet signed in, you will be asked to do that here. If you haven't registered to use the Stratopedia site, you will have the opportunity to do that.

Share this site with your colleagues. The more people who join and share, the richer we will all be!

www.stratopedia.org

Instructional Coaching Conference

The second annual Instructional Coaching Conference brought more than 120 participants to downtown Lawrence to hear the insights of some of the top names in the field.

After a welcome address by the Center's own instructional coaching expert, **Jim Knight, Joellen Killion** of the National Staff Development Council explored the 10 roles for instructional coaches. Killion also described some of the fundamental beliefs essential to coaches' work in a Tuesday



Joellen Killion, director of special projects for the National Staff Development Council, addressed many key topics, including roles of instructional coaches and fundamental beliefs.



Sonya Kunkel presents competencies for inclusion coaches.

morning keynote address. Other topics presented during the conference:

- The importance of the administrator to coaching success
- The "Big Four" framework for focusing on practices that hold the most potential to improve teaching and increase student achievement
- Content-focused coaching and differentiated coaching
- The nature of resistance and strategies for overcoming obstacles

Other presenters included **Susan Keck**, assistant to the superintendent for staff development in the Boyertown Area School District in Pennsylvania; educational consultant **Jane Kise**; and consultant **Lucy West**, author of *Content-Focused Coaching: Transforming Mathematics Lessons*.

Video from the conference will be available on the Instructional Coaching web site soon.

www.instructionalcoach.org



Devona Dunekack, describes tools for monitoring teachers' use of time.

KU-CRL CALENDAR

November 2-3, 2007

SIM NE Conference
Mystic Hilton, Mystic Seaport, Conn.
800 HILTONS by October 12, 2007
Contact: Alice Henley
(Henley@ctserc.org)

January 17-18, 2008

Florida PD Update
Alamonte Springs, Fla.
Contact: Mary Little
(projcentral@mail.ucf.edu)

February 21-23, 2008

SIM SE Conference
Francis Marion Hotel, Historic District,
Charleston, SC
Reservations: 843.722.0600 or
877.756.2121 by January 20, 2008
Contact: Jerri Neduchal
(jerrinsinc@aol.com)

July 14-15, 2008

SIM Preconference

July 16-18, 2008

International SIM Conference
30th Anniversary Celebration
Kansas City Marriott on the Plaza,
Kansas City, MO
Reservations: 816.531.3000 or
800.531.3000
Contact: Mona Tipton (mkatz@ku.edu)

www.kucrl.org/institutes

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Editor

Julie Tollefson

Consulting Editor

Don Deshler

Contributors

Patty Graner

Mona Katz

Graphic Designers

David Gnojek

Ali Abrams

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NEW ONLINE

Stratepedia

Join "learning lab" discussions focused on SIM, CLC, and Professional Development topics. See page 6 for more information or visit www.stratepedia.org.

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