

Instructional Outcomes

— Long Term Outcomes from Strategy Instruction —

Don Deshler
Director

Increasingly in education, attention is being turned to the issue of the outcomes of the schooling experience. In essence, the questions being asked are concerned with what students know and what they are able to do at the end of their twelve years in school. Just last month, for example, President Bush presented a new education agenda that included numerous references to the need to focus on "outcome measures" in order to insure that students leave school well prepared. One of the educational movements gaining momentum today is that of "outcomes-based education." Within this context, it would be productive for those involved in teaching strategies to students to give careful consideration to issues related to long term outcomes. From a strategies perspective there are at least three domains that should be considered when measuring the outcomes of the educational experience for at-risk students: (a) the student's overall knowledge base, (b) the student's ability to process information effectively, and (c) the student's demonstration of appropriate social/academic citizenship skills.

information covered in content classes. Their ability to obtain a standard high school diploma as well as to be competitive for post-secondary education or work experiences is dependent on their ability to master the content contained within the secondary school curriculum. Central to the process of becoming educated is the notion of becoming *culturally* literate and not merely *functionally* literate, which has historically been the most frequently cited and heavily emphasized goal of special education. Cultural literacy can only be addressed when students are truly integrated within the mainstream curriculum. By successfully integrating students into mainstream experiences on a consistent basis, they gain exposure to critical sets of information that form the foundation of the "prior knowledge" that they will need to facilitate future learning experiences. In short, any educational program for at risk students must insure that they have an opportunity to acquire a broad array of content information to enable them to be productive in future work and learning situations.

"The first indicator of successful instruction is that a student's overall knowledge has been enhanced."

Enhanced Knowledge Base

The first indicator of successful instruction is that a student's overall knowledge base has been enhanced. That is, can students show that they have mastered much of the information presented in mainstream classes at a high enough level to receive a passing grade of "C" or higher? In order for students to benefit from a mainstream high school experience, it is vital that they understand a majority of the

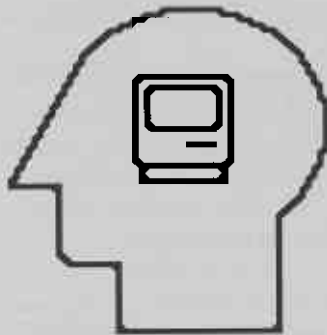
Good Information Processors

A second indicator, of equal importance to the acquisition of an enhanced knowledge base, is the degree to which students become "good information processors." The "information explosion" that has become a chief characteristic of modern society underscores the fact that a major skill which all students should acquire is the ability to continue to learn as the knowledge base changes and the demands for career updating

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and job retraining increase. In order for individuals with educational disabilities to effectively compete with their nondisabled counterparts, they must have the skills to be life long learners. Indeed, they must be good information processors. Pressley, Borkowski, and Schneider (1990) have portrayed the "good information processor" as a standard against which instructional efforts can be measured to determine the degree to which students have, in fact,



changed their ability to independently deal with curriculum content. Among the factors that they include in their model of the good information processor are the following:

- * knows a large number of useful learning strategies;
- * understands when, where, and why these strategies are important;
- * selects and monitors wisely, and is extremely reflective and planful;
- * adheres to an incremental view regarding the growth of mind;
- * believes in carefully deployed effort;
- * is intrinsically motivated;
- * doesn't fear failure—in fact, realizes that failure is essential for success and therefore, is not anxious about tests but sees them as learning opportunities.
- * knows a great deal about many topics and has rapid access to that knowledge

Social/Academic Citizenship Skills

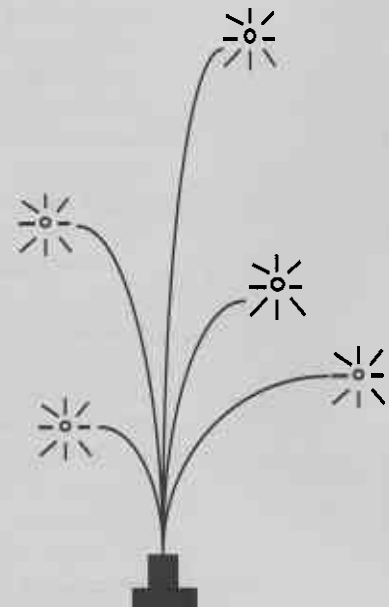
One of the most frequently cited educational outcomes for at-risk students is that of becoming independent learners and performers who can get along well with and understand other people. Such behavior change not only serves these individuals well in school but is essential in experiences they will encounter during their post-secondary years in the job market, as parents, and in dealing productively with their leisure time. The acquisition of social/academic citizenship skills puts at-risk students in a position to learn and perform independently in both school and out-of-school settings. Among the behaviors that operationally define good social/academic citizenship are the following: regular and responsible class attendance, work completed and handed in on time, appropriate deportment as a learner, intrinsically motivated to learn and to improve himself/herself; positive affect toward others; sensitivity to the needs of others; ability to appropriately advocate for his/her needs. In short, by focusing instructional efforts in these areas a

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very significant and meaningful set of outcomes will be addressed that are essential to both school and out of school success.

The specification of instructional outcomes is an

important part of the teaching experience. It gives focus to our work and provides a set of criteria against which to judge the success of our efforts. Helping at-risk adolescents reach the outcomes described above is beyond the scope of any one professional. Rather, it demands the teaming of several professionals, the student, and parents. By orchestrating the resources of many on behalf of a student we reduce the chances of a fragmented, aimless education that has often characterized the schooling experience for those at risk for school failure. The foundation of a meaningful educational experience for these students is the careful specification and monitoring of a significant set of educational outcomes.



Stratagem

Vol. 3: Issue number 6. Published six times per year by The University of Kansas Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities, Rm. 3061 Dole Human Development Center, Lawrence, Kansas, 66045-2342. Subscription rate: \$13 per year. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher, unless otherwise stated.

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Generating Support For Your SIM Program
by
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How can I get others to support (understand, appreciate, etc.) my learning strategies program and what it has to offer students? This is one of the most common concerns of SIM teachers and one of the most common questions asked of SIM trainers. In fact, this might be the most important question that could be asked. If a program is to have a positive, sustained, and pervasive impact on a school, it must be valued and supported. The opportunities for students to generalize, the real need for other teachers to have their efforts reinforced by mainstream teachers and to have access to special scheduling considerations, all derive from the perception that the program is valuable. Program support in a school is not a given; it is something which must be earned through effective instruction and shrewd marketing. Since program support is important and since it is not often given freely, garnering support is a fundamental responsibility of the SIM teacher.

How then does one bring this about?

Unfortunately, there is no "one size fits all" answer. The road to program support by the administration and other teachers may vary in different schools. In developing a learning strategy, one tries to replicate the sequence of cognitions and behaviors exhibited by **effective** goal setters, problem solvers, writers, etc. Similarly, one can draw on the experiences of other SIM teachers, extract the principles and



techniques which have proven useful to them, and organize them into a strategy for generating program support.

To that end I offer the **DOG** strategy. A strategy which, doggedly pursued, makes the SIM program the school's best friend!

The D Step - DELIVER THE GOODS

It is unreasonable to expect support for a program unless that program is effective. An effective SIM program teaches students to meet school and life demands (hereafter referred to as "the goods"). Accordingly, the first step of the DOG strategy is to DELIVER THE GOODS. Since excellent instruction is a necessary prerequisite for an effective program, each SIM teacher must constantly monitor and improve the quality of his/her instruction. Self-evaluation enables the teacher to

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understand where improvement might be needed. Mastery of the D step depends upon periodic self-evaluation using the **DUCKY** questions. Please note that these questions are to be used flexibly. Some might be emphasized more than others as a SIM teacher continues to improve. Every teacher should answer these questions honestly and seek information or help as necessary.

1. D - Do I Develop excitement in the learner?

Many students in SIM programs are disaffected learners. Since student engagement in the learning process is critical for mastery and generalization of learning strategies, the SIM teacher must constantly work to involve and motivate students. Motivational components of each strategy must be understood and used effectively. The teacher must use humor and model cognitions in ways that are both illustrative and fun. Presentations must be crisp, move quickly, and capture the imagination of students. Children must be brought into the discussions, challenged to set and exceed goals, and reinforced whenever and wherever possible. In short, strategies should be taught with flair.

2. U - Do I Understand the theoretical basis for strategy instruction, for the various strategy steps, and for the elements of the strategic environment?

Understanding these concepts allows a teacher to make informed and appropriate choices about pacing, materials, assignments, answering student questions, correcting student errors, etc. SIM teachers who do not fully understand the conceptual basis of SIM often make

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choices which are not consistent with the principles of cognitive instruction. Since these choices are not internally consistent, they conflict with one another and slow or frustrate the learning process.

3. C - Do I Carefully follow the steps of each strategy? Each strategy is developed over a long period of time, tested with many students, and refined so that it is effective. While it is certainly possible to improve each strategy, the probability that this can be done before the strategy is carefully taught and fully understood is poor. Effective strategies classrooms tend to be characterized by unmodified or only slightly modified strategy instruction. Unsuccessful strategies classrooms, on the other hand, are often characterized by heavily modified strategies presentations which leave out steps, or instructional stages, or have low levels of

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modeling, and fail to engage in goal setting and other motivational practices.

4. K - Do I Keep, organize, and use information about student progress? The ability to make correct instructional decisions and the ability to generate program support depend on information about student progress. This information includes strategies notebooks, samples of student products from classes, anecdotal records of student "discoveries" about strategic relationships, video tapes of performance, etc. These artifacts are often considered to be "extra." In fact, successful and supported SIM programs find them to be powerful learning and motivational tools as well as important "marketing" aids.

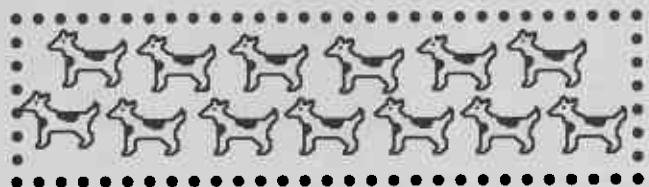
5. Y - Do I Yearn for the day when students will not need me? Often, a close and interdependent relationship develops between SIM teachers and their students. Diabolically, as the SIM classroom environment becomes more nurturing, the student is less likely to develop and apply the very skills which have been taught. For example, students often prefer the teacher to advocate for them, find the answer, help write the paragraph,

rather than personally assume the responsibility. The SIM teacher should teach the learning process not assume the learning task. For example, once a paragraph writing strategy is taught, the student must assume responsibility for its use in all settings. The SIM teacher must be willing to allow students to fail, ask a strategic question rather than supply an answer and be prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to foster student independence.

THE O STEP - ORIENT THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS TOWARD PROGRAM ADVOCACY

Assuming that the SIM program is effective, generating program support depends upon the teacher orienting his/her thinking toward program advocacy. Teachers are often reluctant to "beat their own drum," fearing that colleagues will see this as self-serving behavior. They do little to actively advocate for the program and wait for others to discover its value. It can be a long, long wait!

There is an important difference between self-advocacy and program advocacy. A self-advocate strives to advance him or herself. Conversely, a program advocate strives to advance the interests of students. In most cases, the teacher is often well advised not to become the most visible program advocate but instead to adopt a less visible and more



supportive role (more on this later). Teachers who are true masters of program advocacy often fade into the background, letting others talk and offer comments of program effectiveness. The main purpose for the O step is to abandon humility and to accept the responsibility for active and ongoing program advocacy.

THE G STEP - GET THE MESSAGE OUT

Once a teacher can demonstrate an effective program and has accepted the responsibility for program advocacy, the remaining step is to get the message out. Another sub-strategy, IMP, serves this IMPortant purpose.

1. I - Identify Influencers. Identify the sources of influence in the school and community. Your list might include the

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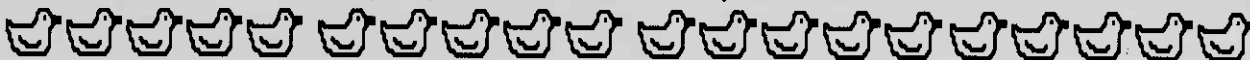
principal, a key teacher, or a supportive parent. It will almost certainly include the secretary and the cook. The trick here is to identify those who, once convinced that your program is solid, can either provide resources, supportive opportunities, or spread the word to others. Wherever possible you want to spread positive perceptions of your program through their influence.

2. M - Manage the means. Once it is understood to whom the message should be carried, manage the means to deliver the message. For example, a parent who calls with a positive comment about a son or daughter might be thanked by the teacher and immediately transferred to the school principal to deliver the message again. A student who has worked diligently might be sent to a cooperating teacher or counselor with a sample product or to the principal with a note asking that the student be reinforced. Have a plan to promote at least one advocacy activity each day.

Wherever possible let others do the talking or observe the effects of your instruction. Arrange for a School Board member or reporter to visit the classroom. During the visit let the students explain what they are doing and why. Let students tell teachers, the principal, or a counselor how important the program is to them. Since you have involved and excited students (remember the DUCKY questions?), use that excitement to excite others.

3. P - Produce the proof. Wherever possible, arrange to have any advocacy activity supported by proof of program effects. Use student notebooks, anecdotal records, tests collected from classes, writing samples, evidence of improved grade performance, or let students speak for themselves at IEP meetings after I PLAN training.

In summary, if a strategies program is truly effective, and this depends more on instructional skill and delivery than on **any** outside factor, there is little reason for the absence of support. Most often, effective programs are not well supported because they lack an advocacy program which is carefully planned and implemented; put out the DOG, grab your rubber DUCKY and join the other SIM IMP's in the winner's circle.



From the Editor's Desk:



Strategram will continue for next year (Volume 4), and thereafter on a year by year basis. We appreciate your support this past year! The renewal rate for Volume 4 will be \$13 (six issues). Your subscription renewal for Volume 4 will begin in September, 1991 and continue through August, 1992.

We are interested in your input on Strategram! Please take a moment to share your thoughts on how Strategram could be improved. Use the space below for your comments and send to:

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My comments about Strategram are:

Four horizontal lines for writing comments, enclosed in a dashed rectangular border.

RAPing in North Carolina

Monica Geary is a resource teacher at Culbreth Junior High School in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Monica is currently fulfilling the requirements for a SIM trainer. She received her M. Ed. in Special Education at East Carolina University and has taught handicapped children in North Carolina for the past eight years.



Monica Geary
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Monica has been using the SIM with her students ever since she first attended the Word Identification and Paraphrasing workshops several years ago. Since Monica has been using the *Paraphrasing Strategy* with her students over the past five years, she has developed techniques for keeping herself and her students organized.

As all of us know, organization is an essential aspect of any strategy. Since it is difficult to score the tapes of the entire class in one day, Monica divides her classes into groups, and the students rotate. Each student checks his/her folder in order to find

out about that day's assignment. (See page 7)

Some individuals will see that they have to record their "RAP" of an assignment using tape recorders, which are set up in carrels in the classroom. Each carrel contains an instruction chart (See below), tape recorder, cassette tape, and headphones. Monica has identified twelve passages from TIMED READINGS (Jamestown Publishers, 1980) for student use. The passage's title and page number is listed on the assignment sheet. Therefore, once the student locates the day's assignment,

he/she is ready to RAP!

The other group will take the comprehension test, which is also taken from the Jamestown Readers. The multiple choice format is very convenient for student and teacher use. Once the students are through taking the test in INK, they go to the answer key booklet and check through their test with a red marker. Once the students check their work, they initial the "Scored Test" column to indicate their readiness to review the previous day's RAP. Monica also likes to score the paraphrases with the student present. Therefore, they read the passage aloud and review the recording together. That way the student sees and hears what type of errors he/she has made. Of course, she always include at LEAST three positive statements in each review session and a review of the Paraphrasing Progress Chart. The "Update Progress Chart" column is initialed when the score has been recorded. Obviously, students will not fill in each column every day due to varied activities on different days.

RAP

Check the volume.

Turn on the tape recorder by pressing down the play and record buttons at the same time.

Say your name and the title of the passage in the recorder.

Press the pause button whenever you stop to read or think.

A. Say paragraph one in the recorder.

B. Do RAP for paragraph one (main idea first)

[R]ead the paragraph.

[A]sk yourself: What is the main idea?

[P]ut the main idea in your own words. (Record it!)

C. Do RAP for detail one and detail two.



Follow steps A, B and C for the rest of the paragraphs in the passage.

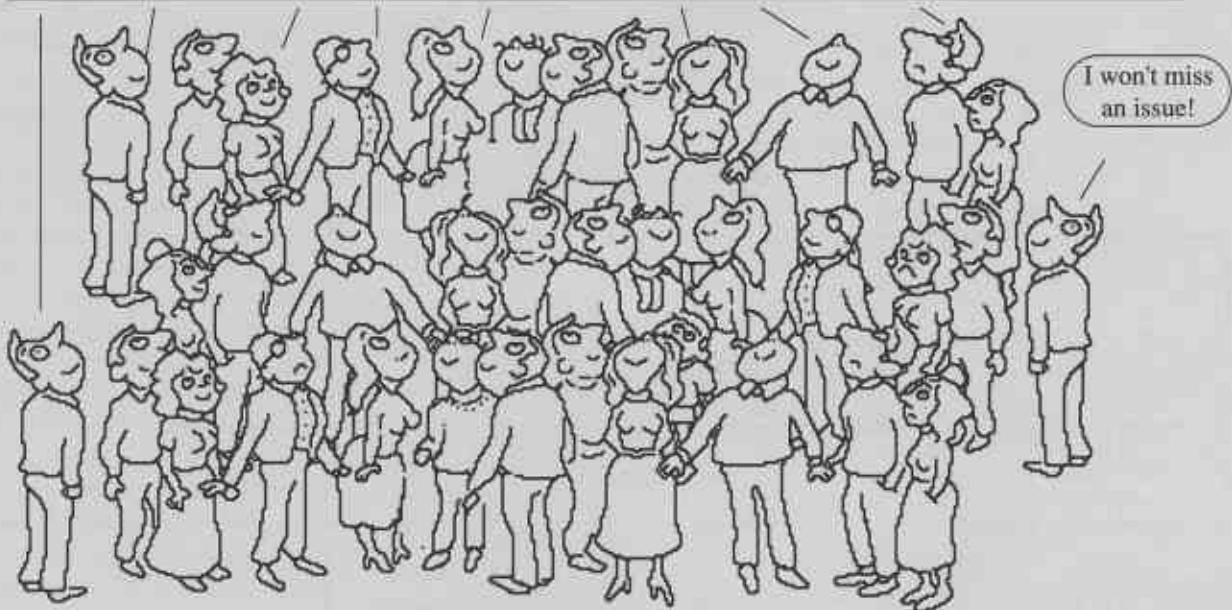
FOR THE CLASSROOM

Paraphrasing Assignment Sheet

Date	RAP Assignment	Take Test	Scored Test	RAP Score	Test Score	Update Progress Chart
	Book #: Title: Page #:					
	Book #: Title: Page #:					
	Book #: Title: Page #:					
	Book #: Title: Page #:					
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