

Survey says... Conference plans taking shape

Julie Tollefson
KU-CRL

As we prepare for this summer's International SIM Conference, we're using your suggestions, questions, and comments to shape the content offered in our sessions. A big "thank you" to those of you who completed our first survey regarding conference strands. We've learned a lot from your answers, and we've identified several themes running throughout your responses:

Defining literacy. What do we mean when we use the word "literacy"? What are the components of adolescent literacy? What is the working definition of literacy most common in the literature today?

Connections. How does SIM fit with other programs or current initiatives in schools and districts? Can we identify explicit links between SIM and content? How does SIM work with RTI models? What is SIM's role in the classroom, especially the general education classroom? How do we answer when teachers or administrators ask "Why SIM?"

Research and case studies. Respondents called for more examples of SIM in action and more data, especially data that clearly show the

Join the discussion at our new conference web site
<http://sim2009.kucrl.org>
See page 4 for more information

effect of SIM on literacy. Respondents identified a need to design data collection efforts to answer the questions schools are asking.

General education. Among the biggest challenges identified by the survey was how to show all teachers that literacy is "not just an English thing." Respondents want information and research showing how Content Enhancement supports literacy,

and they want to address options for secondary application of SIM, including large-group instruction. Respondents also would like to see sample materials for use in different content areas and with different age groups.

Administrators. Respondents would like help promoting SIM to administrators: What is the best way to approach administrators about

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CALENDAR

June 16-19, 2009

SIM Strategies for Reading and Writing
Lawrence, Kan.
Contact: Mona Tipton
(mkatz@ku.edu)

June 16-19, 2009

More SIM Strategies
Lawrence, Kan.
Contact: Mona Tipton
(mkatz@ku.edu)

June 22-26, 2009

Institute for Potential SIM Professional Developers in Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement
Lawrence, Kan.
Contact: Mona Tipton
(mkatz@ku.edu)

June 23-26, 2009

SIM Institute: Introduction to Teaching with Content Enhancement
Lawrence, Kan.
Contact: Mona Tipton
(mkatz@ku.edu)

New! June 23-25, 2009

SIM for Administrators
Lawrence, Kan.
Space limited; Contact: Mona Tipton
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August 10-12, 2009

Instructional Coaching Institute Level 1
Lawrence, Kan.
Contact: Mona Tipton
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August 12-15, 2009

Instructional Coaching Institute Level 2
Lawrence, Kan.
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*More calendar,
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implementing and supporting SIM in their schools? What can we say to convince them that SIM is a viable option? How can we win their support? As one respondent reflected on early professional development efforts: "I was naïve as to the importance of deep discussions with administrators about long-term planning for SIM."

Time. Respondents identified time—to work with teachers, to deliver professional development, to follow up with coaching, and to ensure fidelity—as a huge challenge in their professional development efforts.

Sustaining SIM initiatives. Respondents identified a need to develop more skills to see SIM initiatives through staff and administrative changes, fads, and other efforts to "fix" education. Survey results identified bringing new folks on board in SIM initiatives, sustaining commitment to SIM, and following up and coaching as areas in need of reinforcement.

The business of professional development. Several survey respondents are interested in pursuing additional information about the business of being an independent professional developer, including such topics as negotiating fees and record keeping.

Many of these concerns will be addressed in different ways throughout the conference. Some topics will be rolled into Wednesday's strands—extended opportunities to explore topics of interest. Others may be developed into a traditional-style session for Thursday. Still others may be explored in Friday's "affinity groups." See page 5 for more information about affinity groups.

STRAND DESCRIPTIONS

After Don Deshler's keynote address on Wednesday, participants will break into groups for in-depth exploration of five topics, or strands. SIM Professional Development Leaders were invited to help the Center build and deliver the strands. PDLs also will be instrumental in forming and leading affinity groups on Friday.

"While pondering the remodel for the

2009 conference, I knew that just like any remodel, analysis of the scope of the work would require architects knowledgeable about the structure and practiced in the work," says Patty Graner, Director of Professional Development.

Although not all PDLs were able to participate in strand development this year, all have contributed to this conference and to the work of the Center.

Based on the survey results, organizers have put together the following strand descriptions:

Strand 1: SIM and Literacy

Outcomes:

1. Help secondary teachers and administrators understand the importance and nature of adolescent literacy.
2. Explain literacy to teachers and administrators from several perspectives: workforce and postsecondary readiness, state curriculum standards, content acquisition.
3. Strategize obtaining buy in from teachers and administrators for engagement in literacy work.

Content Foci:

1. SIM in light of the IES practice report on adolescent literacy.
2. SIM to promote interface among literacy processes.
3. Discipline-specific literacy.

Strand 2: Instructional Coaching

The Big Four: A Framework for Understanding Instruction

Strand Targeted Content:

1. Classroom management
2. Content
3. Instruction
4. Formative assessment

The Big Four is a set of tools that instructional coaches can use as they work with teachers. The tools fall into four main categories: managing classroom behavior, implementing formative assessment, enhancing content knowledge, and improving direct instruction.

Strand 3: SIM as a Change Agent Strand Targeted Content:

This strand focuses on how SIM/CLC can and often does act as a catalyst for change in schools. Participants will engage in discussions about the kinds of changes SIM Professional Developers observe in schools as well as the changes needed for successful implementation. Topics may include the following:

1. What we have learned about change from SIM/CLC initiatives (and how our observations reflect the research)
2. Identifying elements for success in adolescent literacy initiatives
3. Growing SIM into a schoolwide RTI/literacy effort, integrating with other initiatives
4. Data, data, data—collection, organization, and review
5. Sustaining change even when... (staff turnover, administrative changes, structural changes)

Strand 4: Making Content Enhancement Make a Difference Strand Targeted Content:

1. Broadening teachers' use of devices
2. Surfacing CER and literacy connections
3. Knowledge of assets for PD

This session, focused for Content Enhancement PDs, will address how to help teachers effectively integrate CE routines across course work and grade levels to promote content literacy.

Strand 5: Strengthening your SIM Core!

This strand will provide resources

to move SIM Professional Developers to Professional Developers of distinction! Participants will actively engage in conversations focused on the areas listed below.

1. **CLC as an RTI Initiative**
 - Conversations on current RTI research with CRL staff
 - Conversations including contributions from current CLC sites
2. **Interweaving SIM and Other Initiatives**
 - Identification of key initiatives
 - Synergy of SIM and other initiatives
3. **Research & Data Collection**
 - Conversations about current SIM initiatives and projects with CRL staff
 - Setting up data collection and action research
 - Using data to make instructional decisions
4. **High-Quality Professional Development**
 - Components of effective professional development
 - Coaching and building capacity
 - Building teacher leadership and handling resistance

Resources will be provided during this session and participants are **encouraged** to come prepared with ideas and products to enrich the conversations. This strand will be your "go to source" for professional developers of distinction!

SAMPLE SESSIONS

The conference schedule is far from complete, but already we have some session descriptions. Visit [http://](http://sim2009.kucrl.org)

sim2009.kucrl.org for the most up-to-date information about the conference.

Content Enhancement Supplements: This session will focus on the newest Content Enhancement Supplements for elective classes (PE, health, fine arts, industrial arts, family/consumer science, and foreign language) as well as the supplements for math, English/language arts, social studies, and science.

Fusion Reading™: A Classroom Experience: Participants will become members of a Fusion Reading™ class, participating in actual classroom lessons to get first-hand exposure to the structure, procedures, curriculum, and materials that make up the program.

Integrating Makes Sense Strategies™ into the Content Literacy Continuum®: Essential Understanding SMARTsheets are genre-specific visual tools containing embedded semantic cues that target essential-to-understand information about the most common topics addressed in social studies, science, and literature.

A Journey of School Change: Representatives of Liberty Middle School in Hanover, Va., will share their journey of school change and the implementation of the Content Literacy Continuum® with SIM.

Motivating Students with Math Games: Participants will explore various math games and activities

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created by ALTEC at the University of Kansas. These free, web-based games were designed to teach concepts such as angles, ratios, coordinate graphs, and equations.

Stratopedia and the Social Web:

This session will talk about ways Stratopedia embraces social web technologies like blogging, podcasting, tagging, and RSS to do work, enhance communication, and encourage collaboration.

Using Social Media in Professional Development:

Podcasts, YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs make it easy to create and share content with others and to access content created by others. This session will look at ways “Web 2.0” technologies are being integrated into SIM professional development and provide tips on enhancing your own presentations and communications using social media.

Stratedirectory Online

Stratedirectory Online, our newest offering for the SIM® Professional Developer Network, is now open for business. This new, interactive directory format is a product of KU-CRL’s efforts toward a greener SIM® and is replacing the old paper directory.

If you have not yet joined the *Stratedirectory Online* community, please click the “Sign Up Now” button at

<http://directory.kucrl.org>

Interactive Conference

<http://sim2009.kucrl.org>

Complete, up-to-date information & registration forms

As befits our new approach to planning the 2009 International SIM® Conference, we’ve designed a new, interactive conference web site to increase your opportunities to offer suggestions and comments.

The Center’s art director, David Gnojek, worked with a team of content consultants from the Center to create the beautiful and easy-to-use site.

Descriptions of the strands for the first day of the conference have been posted to the site already, and we are in the process of adding descriptions of the more traditional sessions planned for Thursday. Note that the schedule is not set yet, so no times have been assigned for Thursday sessions.

We built the site using a foundation of blogging software. This allowed us to enable you to make comments on nearly all of the pages on the site.

We strongly encourage you to visit the site, start a conversation, or offer your suggestions or questions related to planned sessions or strands. To do this, just go to the page you’re interested in and scroll down to the comment section. You also can subscribe to an RSS feed so you can track comments, or you

can request to be notified by e-mail when new comments are added.

Briefly, here’s what you’ll find on the 2009 International SIM® Conference web site:

The *Home* page shows the most recent news about the conference in the main part of the page. A brief explanation of our interactive vision appears on the right side. Under the vision, with a “Recent Discussion” heading, all of the recent comments made across the site appear in a short list. We’ve included this feature so you can keep up on what people are saying and easily join in the discussions that interest you.

Many of the links at the top of the page are self-explanatory: Download registration forms at the *Registration* link.

Find the preconference schedule and session descriptions at the *Preconference* link.

The *About* link will lead you to general conference information as well as hotel and travel information.

The *Contact* page includes a form you can use to e-mail questions or requests to the Center.

The *Presenters* and *Sessions* pages will continue to build as the conference approaches.

DON'T MISS FRIDAY!

Make sure your conference plans don't end early. Not only are Friday's affinity groups a can't-miss opportunity, but we're also planning a raffle with FABULOUS PRIZES for those who stay through the end of the conference! Grand prize: Free registration to next year's International SIM® Conference! You must be present to win, so make sure your plans include staying through Friday!

Affinity Groups: Working Together

On Day 3 of the conference, we will convene "affinity groups"—groups of like-minded individuals who want to discuss how they can use what they've learned over the first two days. We believe that these activities may be some of the most valuable time that professional developers spend at the conference. We will establish some affinity groups, and others will naturally form based on participants' interests and needs. Group members will work together to arrive at a "so what?" response to everything they have learned throughout the conference and to define plans for future work. Below are some guidelines, drawn from the experiences of affinity groups at other conferences, that we will apply to the development of our affinity groups.

- Establish clear ground rules for discussion—have a facilitator to help the group stay on task
- Establish a specific purpose (i.e. to consult on specific topics, exchange "best practices," and enlist new and existing partners in cooperative action) and potential outcomes
- Make sure groups are small enough that everyone has the opportunity to participate (8-12 is most commonly listed as the best size)
- Allow enough time for discussion to occur, but not so much that some groups are looking for things to talk about at the end (1.5 hours seems to be the average)
- Paraphrase questions and answers and record/highlight key points throughout discussions
- Vidoetape / audiotape sessions
- Create options for later electronic discussions to enable participants to stay connected and to contribute after the face-to-face event
- Monitor, evaluate, and publicize the progress of discussion groups after the event

2009 International SIM® Conference Preliminary Schedule

Wednesday, July 15, 2009

- 7:30 a.m.
Registration
- 8 a.m.-8:45 a.m.
Welcome
- 8:45 a.m.-10 a.m.
Keynote: Rethinking SIM, Literacy, and Professional Development
- 10:15 a.m.-Noon
Strand breakout sessions
- Noon-1:30 p.m.
Lunch on your own
- 1:30 p.m.-4 p.m.
Strand breakout sessions
- 4 p.m.-5 p.m.
Poster session
- 5 p.m.-6:30 p.m.
Social

Thursday, July 16, 2009

- 7:30 a.m.-8 a.m.
Registration
- 8 a.m.-9 a.m.
Welcome, SIM awards program
- 9:15 a.m.-11:15 a.m.
Breakout sessions
- 11:15 a.m.-12:45 p.m.
Lunch on your own
- Noon-12:45 p.m.
Certificate ceremony
- 1 p.m.-4:45 p.m.
Breakout sessions

Friday, July 17, 2009

- 8:30 a.m.-9 a.m.
Welcome
- 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
Affinity group work
- 11 a.m.-Noon
Affinity group results
- Noon-12:30 p.m.
Closing session

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- **Affinity groups**

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October 5-7, 2009

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Lawrence, Kan.
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October 8-10, 2009

Instructional Coaching Institute Level 2
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