

The Many Paths We Take to Find Answers in Our Research

Julie Tollefson
KU-CRL

Our work and the products we develop for teachers, students, and professional developers have always been solidly grounded in research. Before we release new materials, we must see results that are statistically significant and that truly make a difference for struggling students or teachers. Though these principles have not changed over the years, the methods we use to achieve them—the research design and practices we use for any given study—change to match the goals and needs of each project. Different goals require different methodology.

During the 2010 International SIM® Conference, a team of researchers working on our Teacher Quality project described how design research, a methodology chosen for the project, has allowed the team to adjust to challenges as they arise, leading to a better understanding of effective professional development.

Barbara Bradley, associate professor in the School of Education's Department of Curriculum and Development, is the methodology expert for the Teacher Quality project.

During the team's conference presentation, she compared the benefits associated with using three popular research approaches, illustrating that no single methodology is sufficient or superior in all circumstances.

- The scientific method—which involves asking a question, form-

ing a hypothesis, testing the hypothesis, analyzing data, and drawing a conclusion—is good when researchers want to compare the effectiveness of interventions in a specific situation. Results can tell researchers that, on average, Intervention A works better than



The Teacher Quality team recorded every teacher-coach interaction using Flip digital video recorders. Reviewing the footage helped the team evaluate the effectiveness of the coaching process and make changes for each successive iteration of the project.

CONTENTS

- Jean Schumaker honored, 2 • 2011 International SIM® Conference, 3 • 2011 Summer SIM® Classes, 4
- 2011 SIM® update opportunities, 4 • CRL & social media, 5

Intervention B most of the time in a given situation. This method, however, can lead to thinking of teaching as a linear process rather than the complex endeavor teachers face every day.

- Naturalistic inquiry, in which researchers observe the happenings and interaction in classrooms, captures the complexity of teaching and results in very detailed descriptions of current situations in education. The drawback to naturalistic inquiry, though, is it often does not address how to deal with the complexity of teaching.
- Design research is a collaborative process aimed at closing the gap between practice and research. It involves an iterative and adaptive process, in which researchers make incremental adjustments to interventions or practices throughout the duration of the study based on continuing analysis as data are collected.

The Teacher Quality project studies the effectiveness of instructional coaching as a means of moving teachers toward adopting research-based

instructional methods and materials for classroom use. The team wants to learn the most efficient way to translate those ideas into practice in the classroom.

"We can have 30 years of research on instruction, but if it doesn't get implemented by teachers, it's not going to make a big difference," says Jim Knight, principal investigator and director of the Center's Kansas Coaching Project.

In the Teacher Quality project, researchers, teachers, and instructional coaches collect data and meet regularly to discuss what is and what is not working in terms of the coaching process and improved instruction and learning in classrooms. The project, however, began using the scientific method comparing teachers' adoption of new instructional methods under three conditions: an expert coaching model, a partnership coaching model, and no coaching.

Based on what they learned in the comparative study, the team implemented a design research approach as they moved into the next phase of the project using the partnership

coaching model for all teacher-coach interactions. In this phase, Flip digital video cameras became key to the researchers' data collection. They collected hours and hours of video of teachers teaching, of coaches and teachers discussing teaching methods, and of individual interviews with teachers and coaches. Just as teachers and coaches reviewed classroom recordings to analyze and make changes to instruction, the research team reviewed all of the recordings to analyze the effectiveness of the overall coaching process.

The design research approach allowed the team to make adjustments to the coaching process when necessary. As problems occurred, teachers and coaches met informally with Jim to address concerns right away. In addition, regularly scheduled professional development workshops allowed coaches to help refine the coaching model for the next iteration of the study. For example, early on, coaches and teachers together reviewed video of the teacher in the classroom. These sessions did not accomplish as much as the research team and coaches had hoped, so in later iterations, coaches and teachers watched the classroom video separately and then came together to discuss what they saw. The team saw great improvement in the quality of the coaching sessions by making this one adjustment to the process.

Though the Teacher Quality project is nearing its end, the learning process continues. Coaches in the Center's new Striving Readers project in Michigan will benefit from the lessons learned in this study. Team members also are interested in pursuing the answers to several questions raised during the study, including questions related to student-focused goal setting, efficient methods of processing videos, and fidelity of implementation.

Congratulations!



Congratulations to Jean Schumaker, who was chosen to give this year's J. Lee Wiederholt Distinguished Lecture and Keynote Address at the Council for Learning Disabilities 32nd International Conference on Learning Disabilities. Jean's topic was "After 40+ Years of Research, This is What I Know FOR SURE." She gave the address in October at the conference in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

2011 International SIM® Conference

July 13-15, 2011 • Preconference: July 12, 2011

Exciting news! Steve Graham, professor and Currey Ingram Chair in Special Education and Literacy at Vanderbilt University, will be the keynote speaker for the 2011 International SIM® Conference.

Graham, who received his doctor of education degree in special education from the University of Kansas, is co-author of *Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools* (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007) and *Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading* (2010, Alliance for Excellent Education).

Get a head start on conference learning!

Prepare for the 2011 conference by reading Steve Graham's work before you get here. We recommend you download and read these reports (available as pdf files):

- *Writing Next*, <http://all4ed.org/files/WritingNext.pdf>
- *Writing to Read*, <http://all4ed.org/files/WritingToRead.pdf>



Steve Graham

CONFERENCE NOTES

Surveys

Look for announcements in the next few months as we develop surveys to ask for your input for the 2011 conference. Watch our Twitter account (@StrateTweets) and *Stratenotes* for instructions for participating in conference surveys. Your answers really do make a difference in what we offer during the conference.

Handouts

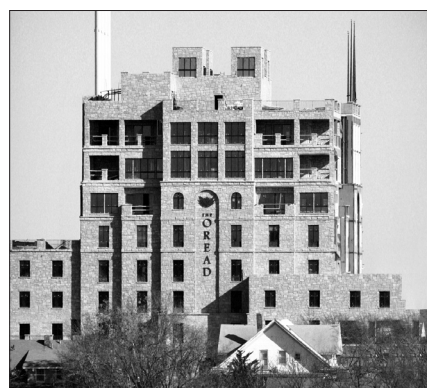
In 2011, conference handouts will be posted to the conference website, and you will be able to download them to your laptop or print them before your arrival in Lawrence.

2011 Venue: Oread Hotel

We heard so many positive comments about last year's conference venue that we will be returning to the same hotel for another year. The 10-story Oread Hotel, located on the edge of the University of Kansas campus, offers stunning views of the university and downtown Lawrence.

Among the hotel's amenities are an on-site spa—where participants can schedule a relaxing massage after a long day of intense learning and sharing—and wireless Internet.

The facility offers several dining options, including a restaurant/bar on the roof with a spectacular view of Lawrence and the surrounding countryside. In addition, the Oread is only a block from the Kansas Union, where there are more eating options



as well as retail stores that cater to your every Jayhawk need.

The hotel is taking reservations now for the SIM conference. Watch @StrateTweets on Twitter for conference announcements and look for all conference details in the January issue of *Stratenotes*.

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2011 Summer SIM® Classes

SIM® Learning Strategies for Pre-service Educators

\$975 until April 29, 2011

May 31-June 3 • 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tuesday-Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Friday

SIM® Content Enhancement Routines for Preservice Educators

\$975 until April 29, 2011

May 31-June 3 • 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Tuesday-Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Friday

SIM® Strategies for Reading and Writing

\$675 until May 13, 2011

June 14-17, 2011 • 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday; 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-noon Friday

More SIM® Strategies

\$675 until May 13, 2011

June 14-17, 2011 • 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday; 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-noon Friday

Introduction to Teaching with SIM® Content Enhancement Routines

\$675 until May 23, 2011

June 21-24, 2011 • 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday; 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-noon Friday

SIM® for Administrators

\$500 until May 23, 2011

June 22-24, 2011 • 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday; 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-noon Friday

Institute for Potential SIM® Professional Developers in Content Enhancement

\$800

June 20-24, 2011 • 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday; 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday

Institute for Potential SIM® Professional Developers in Learning Strategies

\$800

June 20-24, 2011 • 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday; 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday; 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Friday

Registration forms are available on our website:
<http://kucrl.org/classes>

All classes will be held in the Burge Union on the University of Kansas campus. Class fees do not include transportation, meals, or housing. Additional tuition fees payable to the University of Kansas apply for those taking these classes for graduate credit.

2011 SIM® Update Opportunities

Do you need to attend an update to maintain or reinstate your active status in the SIM® Network? Register today for any of these scheduled updates:

JANUARY 24, 2011 The SIM Virtual Update Conference begins!

Deadline for registration is **January 7, 2011**. We will be unable to accept registrations after this date. Space is limited; do register early if you want to participate. More details may be found in the September 2010 *Stratenotes*, available in SIMville.

JANUARY 25-26, 2011

Florida Update
Orlando, Florida

FEBRUARY 4-5, 2011

West Region Update
Las Vegas, Nevada

FEBRUARY 24-26, 2011

Southeast Region Update
Charleston, South Carolina
Keynote speaker: Don Deshler

JULY 13-15, 2011

International SIM® Conference
Lawrence, Kansas
Registration forms will be available in the January *Stratenotes*

NOVEMBER 4-5, 2011

Northeast Region Update
Location TBA

For more information and to download registration forms, please visit:

<http://kucrl.org/classes/archive/category/sim-for-professional-developers/>

If you have questions, contact Mona Tipton at monatipton@ku.edu or 785.864.0626.

CRL & Social Media

We're excited about the new ways you can stay in touch with the Center and SIM. Recently, we've added two new social media connections. Please visit!

Vimeo

<http://www.vimeo.com/kucrl>

Vimeo is a video sharing site similar to YouTube. It allows us a little more flexibility in the length of video we can share with you. We are steadily loading all of our existing video to this site and organizing it into albums. Check out the first four albums: Strategic Instruction Model, Instructional Coaching, KU-CRL Guest Lectures, and CRL Learns.

Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/kucrl>

Our Facebook page will feature a combination of news and fun stuff that goes on in all six of our divisions. Be sure to "Like" us to get automatic updates in your own Facebook feeds.

Twitter

<http://twitter.com>

Follow these Twitter accounts for the latest CRL and SIM communication in 140 characters or fewer:

@kucrl

<http://twitter.com/kucrl>

@stratetweets

<http://twitter.com/stratetweets>

@stratopedia

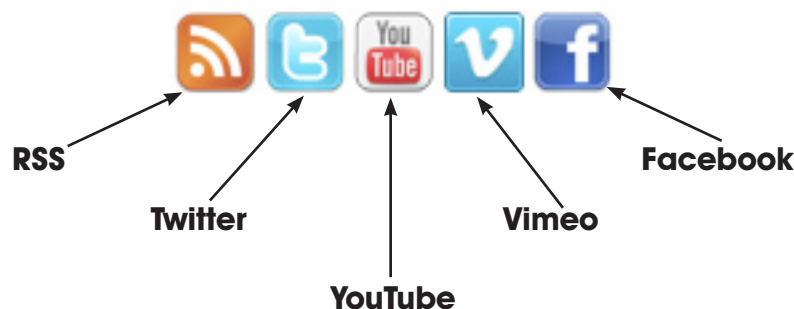
<http://twitter.com/stratopedia>

YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/kucrl>

The KUCRL channel on YouTube currently features 2010 award stories as our most recent additions.

You can easily access all of these services using the icons at the bottom right side of our home page. Also, don't forget to use the RSS subscription button to receive notifications through an RSS feed when we post news to our home page.



NEW! We've just added a Facebook page for our CRL Learns initiative. "Like" CRL Learns on Facebook to get announcements about guest speakers and other events

SIM & CRL Online Resources

www.kucrl.org

Strategic Instruction Model

<http://kucrl.org/sim>

Content Literacy Continuum

<http://clc.kucrl.org>

Stratopedia

<http://stratopedia.org>

SIM Workshops and Updates

<http://www.kucrl.org/classes>

SIMville Sign-On

User name: Network

Password: strategic

CRL News

<http://www.kucrl.org/news>

CRL Learns

<http://crllearns.kucrl.org>

CRL Project Profiles

<http://www.kucrl.org/profiles>

CRL Multimedia Archives

<http://media.kucrl.org>

CRL Publication List

<http://www.kucrl.org/research>

CRL Divisions

Advanced Learning Technologies

<http://www.altec.org>

Division of Adult Studies

<http://das.kucrl.org>

e-Learning Design Lab

<http://elearn.design.org>

Institute for Research on Adolescent Learning

<http://iral.kucrl.org>

Kansas Coaching Project

<http://instructionalcoach.org>

Professional Development Research Institute

<http://pdri.kucrl.org>

INSIDE:

- Getting answers in our research, 1
- Jean Schumaker honored, 2
- 2011 International SIM® Conference, 3
- 2011 summer SIM® classes, 4
- 2011 SIM® updates, 4
- CRL and social media, 5

Get *Stratenotes* in color!

You can download a full-color version of this newsletter from the *Stratenotes* archives section of SIMville.

CALENDAR 2010-2011

Feb. 3-4, 2011

West Region Update
Conference for SIM Professional Developers
Las Vegas
<http://kucrl.org/classes>

Feb. 24-26, 2011

Southeast Region Update
Conference for SIM Professional Developers
Charleston, S.C.
<http://kucrl.org/classes>

May 31-June 3, 2011

SIM® Learning Strategies for Preservice Educators
Lawrence, Kan.
<http://kucrl.org/classes>

May 31-June 3, 2011

Teaching Content to All: SIM Content Enhancement Routines for Preservice Educators
Lawrence, Kan.
<http://kucrl.org/classes>

June 14-17, 2011

SIM Reading and Writing Strategies
Lawrence, Kan.
<http://kucrl.org/classes>

June 20-24, 2011

SIM® Learning Strategies Potential Professional Developers Institute
Lawrence, Kan.
<http://kucrl.org/classes>

**Complete calendar of coming events
at <http://kucrl.org>**

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The University of Kansas

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