

## College Ready

Practices that matter most for high school, college prep

### *KUCRL Staff*

SIM Professional Developers who attended the 2013 International SIM Conference received a real treat in keynote speaker Elaine Allensworth.

Allensworth, interim executive director of the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, spoke about “School Practices that Matter Most for High School and College Readiness.” In her presentation, Allensworth wove together many strands of the Consortium’s research to illustrate her message. The Consortium studies Chicago schools in depth in a way that allows researchers to make connections across topic areas: Instruction is related to teacher evaluation, which is related to leadership, and so on.

“It’s a way to get a big picture of what’s happening in schools,” she said.

Allensworth set the stage for her research by talking about the national movement to prepare all students to pursue college degrees and the shift among students themselves in what they expect from their futures. Almost all students expect to get a four-year college degree, she said, which is basically double the number in the recent past.

National priorities have changed, too, from No Child Left Behind’s emphasis on achievement test scores to the current administration’s stated goal of leading the world in the number of college graduates.

“This is a big shift,” she said. “Now we not only need to get test scores up, but we need to get kids finishing school, graduating college. We never as a nation have come

close to getting all kids college ready.”

In fact, about a quarter of students fail to graduate from high school, and about half of graduates nationwide have a grade-point average lower than 3.0.

“If students don’t have a 3.0 GPA in high school, their chances of getting that four-year college degree are really, really dim,” she said.

In 1997, Chicago public schools implemented a policy to require all students to take a college preparatory curriculum. The movement expanded Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs, eliminated remedial classes, and instituted “double dosing” of math and English classes for students with the weakest skills in those areas.

In 2005, Chicago implemented a student-centered instructional delivery system built upon strong curricula, formative and summative assessment, curriculum coaches, and the latest technology.

Unfortunately, Allensworth said, none of these strate-



Elaine Allensworth

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gies had the expected results. Her presentation focused on the factors she and her colleagues have identified that must be in place for such initiatives to succeed.

Her first message: Increasing instructional challenge may have no benefit for educational attainment (and may even bring declines) unless accompanied by more attention to student behavior and support.

After Chicago adopted its policy for increased curricular rigor, Allensworth and her colleagues found that more students finished their ninth-grade year with credits in Algebra I and English; before, many students took remedial courses in those areas. But they also found increased failure rates and absences. College preparatory classes became more disorderly. Math grades declined



*Don Deshler addresses conference participants. In the background: Patty Graner and KUCRL's new co-director, Kathleen Lane.*

for students with the weakest skills, and they found no improvements in test scores. In fact, test scores for students with the highest skills actually declined. The researchers also looked at graduation rates, which decreased just after the district implemented the policy. Even when they looked just at students who graduated from high school with a "B" average, the percentage of those students who completed a four-year college degree declined.

The researchers traced the disappointing results to two things: 1) The quality of college preparatory classes actually declined with the policy. 2) Schools were less likely to offer the very highest levels of math and science classes

after they implemented the policy. Fewer students took physics and precalculus, for example. The highest achieving students were less likely to continue on in math and science.

With implementation of the instructional delivery program, pedagogy improved and the challenge of the curriculum improved, but classes became more disorderly. Classroom order must be in place for students to learn successfully, regardless of curriculum, Allensworth said.

In their work with schools, Allensworth and her colleagues have identified three general categories of instructional elements that are important to student achievement.

The first category—degree of challenge in the classroom—includes such things as how much work students have to do, the critical thinking involved, and whether teachers expect students to work hard.

The second category—classroom



*At left: Jean Schumaker (left) and Eva Alley, wife of the late Gordon R. Alley. Below: Hanging spoons.*







Patty Graner (left) and Devona Dunekack.

control—encompasses whether the classroom is orderly, whether students do what teachers expect them to do, student participation, attendance, and whether students complete their work.

Student support, the third category, includes monitoring and feedback, individualized assistance, clear instruction, multiple ways of explaining material, and clear expectations.

“We find these things are really key for test scores, learning gains, and grades, but not in the same way,” Allensworth said.

For higher test scores, orderly classrooms and high academic challenge are vital. Without challenge, students have below-average learning gains. Likewise, learning gains are low in disorderly classrooms. Classes that have the best gains are challenging *and* orderly. Students in these classes do what’s expected of them. In these classrooms, students are required to work harder, but teachers need strategies related to motivating students and students may need explicit learning strategies to help them

handle the work.

Allensworth’s second message: Improvements in educational attainment require higher course grades, more so than higher test scores. Middle school grades are more predictive than test scores of how students are going to perform in high school. Likewise, high school grades are more predictive than test scores of how students will perform in college.

Allensworth’s third message: Students’ grades depend on much more than their core academic knowledge and skills. They are affected by a host

of what Allensworth and her colleagues call “non-cognitive” factors (anything not measured by cognitive tests), such as mindset, perseverance, and social skills. She and her colleagues organize these factors into five general categories:

**Academic behaviors** (attending and participating in class, completing work)

**Academic perseverance** (grit, tenacity, persistence, self-control)

**Academic mindsets** (students’ beliefs about themselves in relation to academic work, sense of belonging, self-efficacy)

**Learning strategies** (study skills, goal setting, metacognitive strategies, self-regulated learning)

**Social skills**

Allensworth packed a lot of information into her keynote address, including recommendations to help teachers and schools prepare for the additional demands of implementing a more challenging curriculum. The video of her presentation will be available in our Strategic Instruction Model album on Vimeo:

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

Keep on eye on SIMTRAINER-L, the SIM Facebook page, and *Stratenotes* for announcements.

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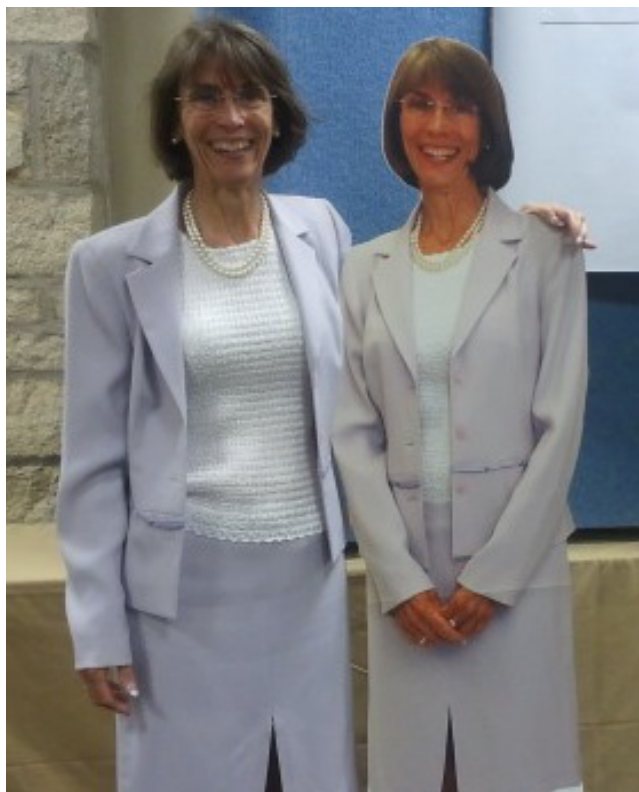
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## SEEING DOUBLE?



*One of the fun extras of the 2013 International SIM Conference: Life-sized cardboard cut-outs of Don and Jean! Thanks to SIM Professional Developer Barbara Duchardt for sharing these photos.*

## SIM EVENTS CALENDAR: AN INVITATION

Are you holding SIM Learning Strategies or Content Enhancement Routine sessions that are open to public registration (allow attendees from outside of the school or district)?

Are you presenting a session about SIM or CLC at a conference or seminar open to public registration?

We are contacted by hundreds of educators each year who have heard about SIM Learning Strategies, Content Enhancement Routines, or the Content Literacy Continuum and are looking for opportunities to learn. In the past, we have responded with contact information for active SIM Professional Developers located near the person making the inquiry, and

they contacted those professional developers to see whether opportunities were available. This is awfully cumbersome! We are very excited to start spreading the word about learning opportunities in a more direct way.

We invite you to let us know about these opportunities so we can post them on our SIM Events calendar and on our SIM Facebook page.

Submit details about these events to [simpd@ku.edu](mailto:simpd@ku.edu). To be listed on the calendar, you must submit the following information:

1. Name of event. This could be the strategy or routine or the title of the presentation you are present-

ing and the name of the conference.

2. All dates of the event (if there are follow up days, include those)
3. City and state where the event will occur
4. Who to contact for more information or to register/enroll/sign up for the event, including email, phone number, and event website, if there is one.

Please contact me with questions, and start sending information about your SIM events today!

Mona Tipton, 785.864.0626  
[monatipton@ku.edu](mailto:monatipton@ku.edu)

# OPPORTUNITY TO HELP TEST CLASSROOM TOOL

Here is an opportunity for you to help your schools and the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning.

## WHAT

Field-testing of the Adaptive Reading Motivation Measure (ARMM). Developed at the University of Kansas, this tool helps to pinpoint what motivates students in grades 5-12 to learn.

## HOW LONG WILL THIS TAKE?

Students need to use a computer or an iPad for 20–30 minutes to complete the ARMM.

## HOW DO YOU PARTICIPATE?

1. Contact KUCRL for a packet of information, including how to sign up for the field test.
2. Sign on at [armm@ku.edu](mailto:armm@ku.edu).

## WHEN

**Now!** We need as many students grades 5-12 as possible to complete the survey by October 2013.

## BENEFITS TO YOUR SCHOOL

1. Schools/ teachers will receive their students' results.
2. For each student who participates, the school will receive 40 free tests for the next five years.

## CONTRIBUTION

Your schools' participation helps to develop knowledge, nationally, about adolescents and learning.

For more information, including packets for signing up to participate in the field test, **contact KUCRL at [armm@ku.edu](mailto:armm@ku.edu)**.

## BY PAPER OR ONLINE:

### SIM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORTING

Don't forget: You can submit your SIM professional development session reports electronically. Visit the following link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PostPDDDataSubmissionSurvey>

Alternatively, you can send paper reports to Director of Professional Development, KUCRL, 1122 West Campus Road, JRP 517, Lawrence, KS, 66045.

## NEW SIM TUTOR LIST

We frequently receive calls from parents who ask how to access **Learning Strategies** for their children. To meet this need, we are developing a list of people who provide this type of service or would like to. Specifically, our list will include SIM Professional Developers (active, inactive, retired, retiring, thinking of retiring) or teachers that professional developers would recommend who provide this type of service or would like to. **This is an opt-in list.** If you are interested in being included on the list, please go to

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SIM\\_Tutor\\_List](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SIM_Tutor_List)

to give us your information.

When parents contact us, we will give them the names and preferred contact information for members of the SIM Tutor List who live nearby.

## FOLLOW US!

### Facebook

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

### Twitter

[@StrateTweets](https://twitter.com/StrateTweets)

# SIM CALENDAR

**Dec. 5–6, 2013**

Ohio Update  
Toledo, Ohio

**Jan. 13–Feb. 2, 2014**

Virtual Update for SIM Professional  
Developers

**Jan. 28–30, 2014**

Florida Update

**Feb. 25–26, 2014**

Southeast Update Conference  
for SIM Professional Developers  
Charleston, S.C.

**April 21–May 12, 2014**

Virtual Update for SIM Professional  
Developers

**May 28–30, 2014**

SIM Learning Strategies for  
Preservice Educators  
Lawrence, Kan.

**May 28–30, 2014**

Content Enhancement Routines  
for College/University Content  
and Preservice Educators  
Lawrence, Kan.

**June 9–10, 2014**

Iowa Update

**June 16–18, 2014**

Meeting the Standards: SIM  
Writing Strategies and the  
Conventions  
Lawrence, Kan.

**June 18–20, 2014**

SIM Writing Strategies: Meeting  
the Standards Including CCSS:  
Paragraphs and Themes  
Lawrence, Kan.

**July 16–18, 2014**

International SIM Conference  
Lawrence, Kan.

**FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF SIM EVENTS, INCLUDING THOSE NOT  
COORDINATED BY KUCRL, VISIT [HTTP://SIM.KURL.ORG/CLASSES](http://sim.kurl.org/classes)**

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