

# Stratenotes

The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning • Summer 2015 • Volume 23, Issue 9

## SIM tech innovations

Julie Tollefson  
KUCRL

The 2015 International SIM Conference introduced three huge innovations that have the potential to transform the future of the Strategic Instruction Model™ and professional development. All three take advantage of technology to extend the reach of our work with SIM.

### SIM MICRO-CREDENTIALING

In our last issue, we presented the concept of SIM micro-credentials, a way for you and the teachers and schools with which you work to show your knowledge, spread awareness of SIM, and support schools in building their own SIM capacity and sustainability. During the conference, Ben Roome from KnowledgeStream joined us to talk about Badge List, the platform that hosts the new SIM micro-credentials. We also offered several sessions to explore how micro-credentials can benefit SIM Professional Developers and teachers. Look for more information in a special section of the SIM website in the coming months.



### NEW STRATEDIRECTORY

A renovated Stratedirectory soon will allow SIM Professional Developers to choose whether to make their profile contact information public. Districts, schools, teachers, and parents will be able to search the directory to find SIM professionals in their vicinity. Features will allow professional developers to highlight their expertise and post credentials as proof of their abilities and skills. Expect

more information about all of the new Stratedirectory features in a future issue of *Stratenotes*.

### KUCRL ONLINE STORE

In January, we announced that we had been working to put in place an online ordering system that would allow active SIM Professional Developers to purchase materials at the click of a mouse. And now, we're happy to announce the system is live! From the SIM website (<http://sim.kucrl.org>), select the "Shop Online" option on the right side of the page. Log in using the email address you have listed in Stratedirectory to view materials available only to professional developers. The public can view materials available to all. Various new no-cost items, including white papers, will be added soon.

### CONFERENCE KEYNOTE

In keeping with our technology-rich theme, our keynote speaker this year was Richard Culatta from the Office of Educational Technology with the U.S. Department of Education. Culatta, a leader in the field of educational innovation who has a particular interest in games for learning, personalized learning, and open education, spoke on "Technology as a Tool to Redesign Learning."



Richard Culatta



Mary Ann Ahearn (on screen), recipient of the 2015 Gordon R. Alley Award.

In a first for the International SIM Conference, Culatta spoke remotely via Google Hangouts. The video of his presentation will be available on the SIM Vimeo site.

Culatta described six important trends that will transform learning, but first he addressed the issue of quality, high-speed, reliable Internet in schools. A federal initiative kicked off this fall, ConnectEd, will allocate millions of dollars to help schools install high-speed wireless Internet connections in the classroom.

"What you'll start to see in the fall is really a huge shift in the availability of high-speed Internet in all the places where learning is happening," he said. "I believe this is one of the biggest shifts we will ever see in education."

*Trend: Personalized Learning.* With technology and services such as Netflix and Amazon, we have become accustomed to being able to personalize nearly every aspect of our lives. Except, often, in education.

"I think one of the least equitable things we do in education is treat all learners the same," said Culatta. "We are used to having tools that help tee up experiences that are personalized

to our needs and interests. We don't do that nearly enough in education."

Technological innovations, though, are providing opportunities. Culatta described a classroom in which quick formative assessments generate customized schedules for every student with the goal of 100 percent mastery for every student on every learning task.

"Right now we hold time constant," he said. "What if we said the constant is going to be mastery? That's one of the things that technology allows us to do."

*Trend: Competency Based.* One challenge, Culatta says, is that the traditional education model is not competency based. Instead, he said, it's based on an old and very well established model known as "butts in seats"—students are allowed to move on after completing a specified amount of time. Competency-based learning, in contrast, means students demonstrate mastery before advancing. A shift toward competency-based learning could be very powerful.

*Trend: Common Skills Currency.* For competency-based models to have meaning, learners must have effective ways to tell the world that they have acquired new skills and abilities. Enter micro-credentials, or badging, as some people call it.

"From a professional learning standpoint, this is transformational," Culatta said.

Micro-credentials—such as the new SIM micro-credential system—allow professionals to show both the breadth of skills they have learned and depth of learning when they earn multi-level credentials.

SIM micro-credentials are a perfect example of vertical credentials. We've developed five levels of credentials, from professional learning to SIM



2015 SIM Leadership Award recipient Kathy Boyle-Gast, left, with Patty Graner.



Professional Development Leader. Each level represents a deeper understanding of SIM and its benefits in the classroom.

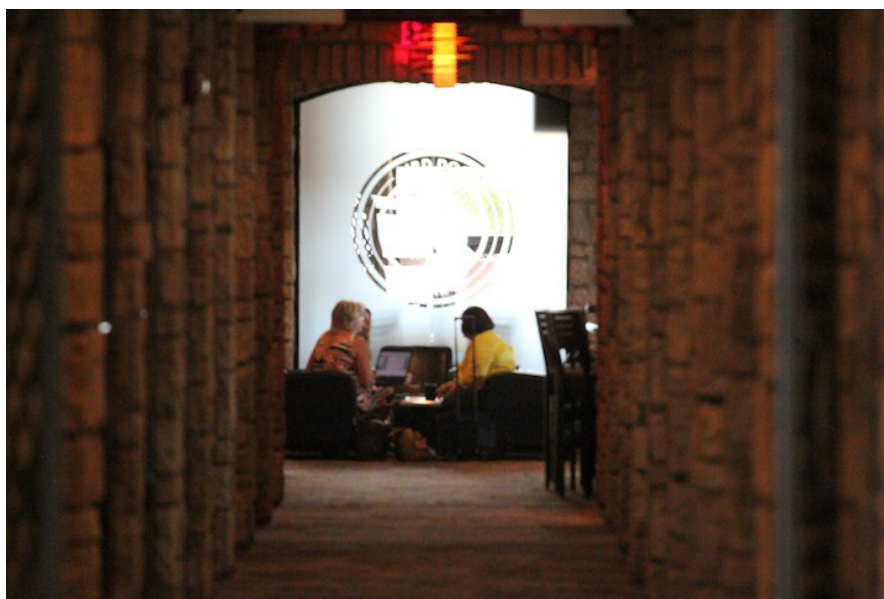
Our credential program is one of the first developed for teachers' continuing education.

"You're going to be defining this model for really what will be the future of professional development," Culatta said.

*Trend: Feedback in Near-Real Time.* The ability to visualize information is another powerful technological development that already is changing the way teachers teach and students learn. Culatta likened near-real-time feedback in education to similar feedback regarding health and fitness from devices such as the Fitbit. These activity trackers measure the amount of walking and other exercise a person does throughout the day and prompt individuals to get moving when they've been sedentary too long.

"The interesting part is, I know all of that stuff. I have been with me all day. I know I haven't gotten up from my desk," Culatta said. "But somehow, when I see it visualized, it immediately triggers a change in my behavior."

Educational tools, such as the learning progressions developed by the Khan Academy, offer similar incentives for learners—and teachers and parents—to think differently about their goals and achievements.



*Trend: Truly Mobile Learning.* For Culatta, truly mobile learning means appropriate technology is available whenever and wherever learning takes place. And that means the demise of the computer lab. He envisions moving from a Venn diagram where learning and access to technology barely overlap to a completely integrated model where technology reinforces all learning whenever it's appropriate.

The question, of course, is how to pay for one-to-one devices and other technology needed to make truly mobile learning a reality. Culatta points to the \$8 billion spent on textbooks in the United States as well as many millions more spent on toner and copiers and related materials.

"That's a lot of money that I would love to give back to schools, espe-

cially since textbooks are out of date as soon as you buy them," he said.

*Trend: Open Education.* Culatta is a proponent of giving teachers the technology they need to be able to share, co-create, and collaborate in the development of high-quality resources, such as those collected in the Illinois Shared Learning Environment project.

"It's very exciting when you see what happens when you can share," he said.

...

Video of Culatta's talk is available at <https://vimeo.com/simnetwork>. Because we experienced audio difficulties during the presentation, we have captioned the video to make it easier to understand.

The University of Kansas  
Center for Research on Learning  
Joseph R. Pearson Hall  
1122 West Campus Road, Room 521  
Lawrence, KS 66045-3101  
Main Office: 785.864.4780  
Order Desk: 785.864.0617  
Fax: 785.864.5728  
E-mail: [simpd@ku.edu](mailto:simpd@ku.edu)

Contributors:  
Patricia Graner | Mona Tipton | Peony Allen

Editor: Julie Tollefson

STRATENOTES is published eight times from September through May and once every summer by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning as part of Strateworks for the International Professional Development Network. Publication period 2014–2015; cost \$50.00. Permission to reproduce any or all parts of Stratenotes to support professional development activities is hereby given.

The University of Kansas prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, age, ancestry, disability, status as a veteran, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, gender identity, gender expression and genetic information in the University's programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Director of the Office of Institutional Opportunity and Access, IOA@ku.edu, 1246 W. Campus Road, Room 153A, Lawrence, KS 66045, 785.864.6414, 711 TTY.

## SIM™ MICRO-CREDENTIAL LEVELS

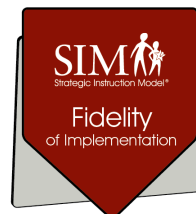
### Level 1: SIM Professional Learning Credential

KUCRL awards this credential when a recipient attends a professional learning event, workshop, or session to learn about a SIM intervention, including how to teach Learning Strategies or use Content Enhancement Routines in the classroom.



### Level 2: SIM Fidelity Credential

KUCRL awards this credential when a recipient has taught a SIM intervention to students with fidelity, created a portfolio demonstrating proficient implementation, created a narrative log regarding implementation, recorded a video demonstrating key behaviors for self-reflection and coaching, and (optional) interviewed a student about implementation.



### Level 3: SIM Specialist Credential

KUCRL awards this credential when a recipient, under the supervision of a SIM Professional Developer, first implements a SIM intervention with fidelity and then teaches another professional how to teach a strategy or how to teach with a routine; guides the teacher to fidelity; provides and describes coaching to implementation in the teacher's class; and (optional) interviews a student about implementation.



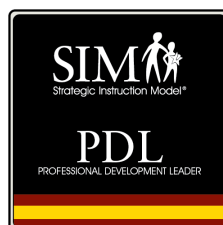
### Level 4: SIM Professional Developer Credential

KUCRL awards this credential, the equivalent of the current SIM Professional Developer certificate, in either Learning Strategies or Content Enhancement. This credential is automatically granted to current SIM Professional Developers who are active members of the SIM Network (who have attended an update within the last two years and who have paid their Strateworks membership fee for 2015).



### Level 5: SIM Professional Development Leader Credential

KUCRL awards this credential when a SIM Professional Developer has earned credentials in both Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement, is an active member of the SIM Network, and has met all requirements to be a SIM Professional Development Leader.



## SIM & KUCRL Online Resources

[www.kucrl.org](http://www.kucrl.org)

### Strategic Instruction Model

<http://sim.kucrl.org>

### Content Literacy Continuum

<http://clc.kucrl.org>

### SIM Workshops and Updates

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

### KUCRL News

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

### Publication List

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

### KUCRL Divisions

#### Advanced Learning Technologies

<http://www.altec.org>

#### Division of Adult Studies

<http://das.kucrl.org>

#### e-Learning Design Lab

<http://elearndesign.org>

#### Institute for Health and Disability Policy Studies

<http://health.kucrl.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>

Starts Oct. 5!

# Writing Strategies Institute

## PURPOSE

Strategic Writing Instruction, part of the Strategic Instruction Model™ (SIM), is among the leading evidence-based instructional programs in the country. In this institute, participants will learn about the principles and research associated with Strategic Writing Instruction; practice leadership and teaching skills; and create plans to implement the program in their schools. Participants will leave the institute with instructional programs they can use right away to help students meet writing standards and achieve high levels of success.

## STRUCTURE

This institute consists of two sessions. The first session will be Oct. 5–7, 2015. The first two days are critical for successful schoolwide or districtwide planning efforts. Participants will learn from Dr. Jean Schumaker the basic principles associated with Strategic Writing Instruction as well as how to teach specific strategies. Separate breakout sessions for administrators will focus on topics relevant to their roles as instructional leaders.

The second session will be Feb. 16–18, 2016. Administrators will work with staff and each other to further plan their reform efforts and to problem solve. Teachers will add specific writing strategies to their repertoires. All participants will learn how to provide professional development instruction and coaching to teachers. Dr. Jim Knight will provide instruction on instructional coaching and the coaching

cycle, which can be used to enhance teacher implementation of the writing strategy programs. Participants will leave with the tools they need to be effective instructional coaches for each strategy.

Professional learning during this institute will be “hands on” and practical. Participants will be able to use what they learn immediately in their professional practice as administrators, instructional leaders, or classroom teachers. Administrators and teachers will participate in both whole-group and breakout sessions. All participants will have hands-on experience learning about writing strategies.

## PARTICIPANTS

This institute will appeal to district decision makers and their teams of exemplary teachers who are interested in learning more about and implementing Strategic Writing Instruction. Teams of superintendents, principals, instructional coaches, and exemplary teachers at the elementary and secondary levels are encouraged to attend together. Types of teachers who are most appropriate for this institute are ELA teachers at the elementary, middle-, and high-school levels; special education teachers responsible for teaching writing skills; ELL teachers; and subject-area teachers who are leaders for their departments. State and county administrators are also encouraged to attend.

**Details:** <http://sim.kucrl.org/classes/details/writing-strategies-institute>

## Topics available for all:

- Introduction to Strategic Instruction
- Introduction to Writing Strategy Instruction
- The relationship of the strategies to standards
- The scope and sequence of instruction across the grades
- Applications across subject areas
- Tiered-support options
- Certification options
- Fundamentals in the Sentence Writing Strategy
- Proficiency in the Sentence Writing Strategy
- The Paragraph Writing Strategy
- Fundamentals in the Theme Writing Strategy
- Proficiency in the Theme Writing Strategy: Informative Writing
- The Capitalization Strategies
- The Commas Strategies
- The Punctuation Strategies
- Professional Development Skills
- Instructional Coaching Skills

## Topics for administrators during breakout sessions:

- Defining roles and responsibilities
- Creating and guiding leadership teams
- Ensuring accountability through goal setting and data
- Dealing with staff turnover/sustainability
- Budgeting concerns
- Working with various types of staff
- Working with various interest/consumer groups
- Scheduling concerns
- Solving issues related to computerized instruction

# SIM CALENDAR

**October 5–7, 2015,  
and February 16–18, 2016**

Writing Strategies Institute  
Lawrence, Kansas

**October 22–23, 2015**

SIM x Southwest: August Update  
for SIM Professional Developers  
Austin, Texas

**November 10–11, 2015**

Arkansas Update for SIM  
Professional Developers  
Little Rock, Arkansas

**January 11–February 7, 2016**

Winter Virtual Update Conference  
for SIM Professional Developers

**January 19–21, 2016**

Coaching Strategic Instruction  
Lawrence, Kansas

**February 23–24, 2016**

Southeast Update Conference for  
SIM Professional Developers  
Charleston, South Carolina

For a complete list of SIM events, including those not coordinated by KUCRL: **[HTTP://SIM.KUCRL.ORG/CLASSES](http://sim.kucrl.org/classes)**

**LIST YOUR OPEN SESSIONS ON THE SIM CALENDAR:** We are contacted by hundreds of educators each year who have heard about SIM or CLC and are looking for opportunities to learn more. Email information about your open sessions to [monatipton@ku.edu](mailto:monatipton@ku.edu) and be included on the online SIM Events Calendar.

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

Lawrence, Kansas 66045-3101  
1122 West Campus Road, Room 517

**STRATENOTES Volume 23, Issue #9**

The University of Kansas

**KU LEARNING**  
CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON

Presorted First  
Class  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Lawrence, KS