

Calendar

March 8-10, 2001
Southeast Regional
Update Meeting
Charleston, South
Carolina

March 21-23, 2001
Virgin Islands Update
Meeting
Maho Bay, St. John Island

May 29-June 2, 2001
Pedagogies for Academic
Diversity in Secondary
Schools Workshop for
Preservice Educators
Lawrence, Kansas

June 13-15, 2001
Strategic Instruction
Model: Writing Strategies
Workshop
Lawrence, Kansas

June 18-22, 2001
Strategic Instruction Model
(SIM) Workshop: Content
Enhancement

June 20-23, 2001
Strategic Instruction Model
(SIM) Workshop Level I
Lawrence, Kansas

June 20-23, 2001
Strategic Instruction Model
(SIM) Workshop Level II
Lawrence, Kansas

June 21-23, 2001
California Update Meeting
Buena Park, California
All SIM Trainers welcome

June 25-27, 2001
Strategic Instruction
Model: Reading Strategies
Workshop
Lawrence, Kansas

More calendar on page 2

When those who have the power to manipulate changes act as if they only have to explain, and when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own. For the reformers have already assimilated these changes to their purposes, and worked out a reformulation which makes sense to them, perhaps through months or years of analysis and debate. If they deny others the chance to do the same, they treat them as puppets dangling by the threads of their own conceptions.

—Marris quoted in Fullan's *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, p.31

What can Strategic Instruction Model Trainers do so that teachers have the opportunity to work out their own "reformulation" of strategies or routines covered during workshops?" This question stands at the heart of the research on Teacher-Guided Professional Development¹ (TGPD) conducted over the past six years at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. TGPD is intended to offer a number of simple tools professional developers can use to avoid the problems inherent in the too-inflexible approach to training described in the above passage. Among the tools offered by TGPD are process structures, simple activities that facilitators can use to guide groups through various stages of professional development, such as needs assessment (see "Seeking first to understand" parts 1 and 2 in *Stratenotes* Vol. 8, No. 6, and Vol. 8, No. 7) and implementation planning (see "Dynamic planning" in *Stratenotes* Vol. 9, No. 2). This ➤

¹Teacher-Guided Professional Development is designed to address four phases of school improvement: (a) assessing a group's needs, (b) providing education on an innovation that addresses a group's needs while also surfacing problems inherent in implementation of the innovation, (c) inventing solutions to those problems, and (d) planning for implementation. Each of these phases is ideally interrelated in a continuing process.

Process structures are mechanisms that professional developers can use to empower groups to move through the four identified phases of school improvement. Thus, process structures include interviews for assessment, mechanisms for surfacing problems during learning sessions, a problem-solving strategy for teachers, and an implementation planning strategy.

FIND Strategy

Problem-Solving Process Structures in Teacher-Guided Professional Development

Jim Knight, Research Associate
Center for Research on Learning

Second, after a group decides a problem is worth trying to solve, it needs to rephrase the problem as a challenge. Frequently, when people discuss the challenges and problems they face, the way they describe their problems makes finding a solution ➤

The FIND Problem-Solving Strategy

Focus on the problem

Identify leverage points

Notice possible solutions

Decide on the best solution

Figure 2

more difficult because they state it in terms that are entirely negative. For example, they might say, "I don't have enough time to rewrite my textbook to include a partnership perspective" or "My students don't get enough support at home to keep them motivated." When we state problems in this way, focusing on the barriers, we are tempted to write off solutions as too difficult.

An alternative is to describe a challenge in a statement that focuses on the solution. Rather than describing the challenge or barrier, state the problem so that it describes the desired outcome. For example, rather than saying, "I don't have enough time to rewrite my textbook," say "How can I find a way to ensure that my students learn about important female scientists?" A simple shift in the way the problem is stated may enable individuals or groups to find solutions that otherwise might have been overlooked.

Step 2: Identify leverage points: The Five Whys

A leverage point can be understood as the spot in a system where an intervention can have the greatest effect. For that reason, identifying leverage points is an essential part of problem solving. Some leverage points are obvious; others often are difficult to uncover. For example, a person who is extremely thirsty might well be more motivated by water that is free than by a large sum of money. Water in such a case is an obvious leverage point. At most other times, however, the issue is more complicated, and that is especially

true when we are exploring complex problems with human beings.

The Toyota Motor Corporation, which has long recognized the importance of leverage, uses a simple strategy for identifying leverage: "The Five Whys." At Toyota, when people are confronted with a problem, they try to identify leverage points by repeatedly asking "why?" as they explore the thorny, intertwined aspects of a problem. For example, a teacher using this strategy might have the following internal dialogue:

"I'm feeling burned out as a teacher."

Why?

"Because I'm not enjoying teaching."

Why?

"Because my students don't seem to like my classes as much as they did two years ago."

Why?

"Because, well, I guess that's because I'm tired and just not as prepared as I used to be."

Why?

"Because I've committed to being involved in far too many extra-curricular activities, and my time for planning and resting has been significantly reduced."

Having used the "Five Whys" strategy, the teacher now knows a leverage point; all that remains is finding a solution to the problem. Of course, finding a solution to her problem, being too involved in non-teaching aspects of the school, is still a significant challenge.

Step 3: Notice possible solutions

Once a leverage point has been identified, a group should be guided to invent a wide variety of solutions. Two process structures, brainstorming and clustering, can be used to generate a long list of possible solutions.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a very popular, and often misused, process structure that ►

Trainers institute

Connecticut's SERC is looking for individuals to participate in a five-day SIM Learning Strategies Trainers Institute (potential trainers workshop) in August.

The Institute is designed to prepare educators to become trainers in Strategic Instruction Model Learning Strategies. SIM Trainer Rosemary Tralli will present the program.

The institute will be August 6-10, 2001, in Middletown, Connecticut. For more information about the application process, contact Alice Henley, project coordinator, at (860) 632-1485, ext. 311.

Building in India

Lalitha Ramanujan, a SIM Trainer in India, reports that she has been "in the midst of a marathon project of building a school for children with learning difficulties." When the school is completed, it will be the first in India.

On the air

SIM Trainer Barbara Caruthers, a learning disabilities consultant in Garner, North Carolina, recently appeared on National Public Radio's All Things Considered. She was interviewed as part of a story about North Carolina's efforts to include students with disabilities in statewide tests. In addition to the interview, the story included clips of Barbara helping her students prepare for the writing portion of the state exam.

Send your news to Julie Tollefson at the Center for Research on Learning, 521 Joseph R. Pearson Hall, 1122 West Campus Road, Lawrence, KS 66045 or e-mail Julie at jtollefson@ukans.edu.

Schedule change

A half day has been added to the schedule for the Pedagogies for Academic Diversity in Secondary Schools Workshop. The workshop will be May 29-June 2, 2001, in Lawrence, Kansas. For a description of the workshop, visit the workshop information page on our web site, www.ku-crl.org/htmlfiles/workshops.html.

SIM Leadership

Now is the time to nominate an outstanding certified inservice trainer or preservice trainer for the SIM Leadership Award. This award recognizes individuals who have shown exceptional Strategic Instruction Model leadership by helping educators become strategic teachers and, as a result, students become strategic learners.

Nominees should be active members in the SIM International Training Network who regularly attend update training sessions; maintain Strategworks memberships; share knowledge with other members of the network through *Strategram*, trainer reports, or presentations at national, regional, or state conferences; and participate in such SIM opportunities as regional committees or preservice studies.

Please make nominations either verbally or in writing by March 10, 2001, to Janet Roth, KU-CRL, 521 Joseph R. Pearson Hall, 1122 West Campus Road, Lawrence, KS 66045, (785) 864-4780. You may e-mail your nominations to Janet at jroth@ukans.edu. Be sure to include your name and a reason you are nominating the person.

can be used to enable a group to generate a large number of ideas. When using this process structure, facilitators present an issue or problem and ask the group to suggest many possible ideas or solutions. The facilitator records every comment offered by participants on a flip chart, white/black board, computer program linked to a projector, or in some other way that enables everyone to see the results. The facilitator's goal is to involve the entire group in generating an extensive list, with each new idea inspiring still more new ideas or suggestions. When done correctly, brainstorming can be an inspiring experience that energizes all of the participants in the session.

Brainstorming is most effective when the following guidelines are followed:

1. Separate judging and inventing.

The creation of new ideas is frequently inhibited by a critical analysis. When creating new ideas, the important task is creating ideas, not deciding which one is best. For that reason, brainstorming works best when all ideas, even those appearing outlandish or bizarre, are accepted without judgment.

2. Record every idea publicly.

Simply put, the professional developer should just write every idea that pops out of every participant's mouth. All ideas should be listed publicly, on flip charts, a white board, or through the use of a computer and projector.

3. Generate a lot of ideas.

To get the best ideas, you need many ideas. Therefore, a person facilitating a brainstorming session should encourage participants to offer all ideas. In a light-hearted way, the facilitator can remind everyone that the goal is quantity not quality, simply because the truly creative idea often arises only after many other ideas have been suggested.

Clustering

Developed and popularized by Tony Buzan in *Mindmaps* and Gabriel Rico in

her *Writing the Natural Way*, clustering (or mindmapping) is an easy-to-use process structure that individuals and groups can use to generate and organize ideas. For some, clustering is so easy that it seems like doodling with the brain, yet clustering is also a very powerful way to efficiently generate and sort ideas or, in other words, to create clusters of ideas.

Clustering can be used to plan or problem solve, create or invent. Individuals use clustering for such tasks as pre-writing, time-management, money management, or priority setting. Similarly, groups can use clustering to generate lists of possible solutions for problems, to create a list of activities teachers will need to complete to be ready to use a learning strategy, or ➤

Web links

Workshop

Advanced Trainers' Workshop: Teacher-Guided Professional Development, July 30-August 1, 2001.

www.ku-crl.org/htmlfiles/announcements/advanced.html

Articles

- Open conversations: The art and practice of Partnership Learning
www.ku-crl.org/archives/1998/298spot.html
- Seeking first to understand: Using interviews to make professional development sessions more successful
www.ku-crl.org/archives/2000/0500spot.html
- Seeking first to understand, part 2: Reporting back on interviews to make professional development sessions more successful
www.ku-crl.org/archives/2000/0800spot.html
- Dynamic Planning: A process structure from Teacher-Guided Professional Development
www.ku-crl.org/archives/2000/1100spot.html

to enable a group of teachers to sort which essential concepts will be taught in which grades.

Although it is generally considered an independent activity, clustering is also a group process structure. Facilitators can lead groups to use it by completing the following steps:

1. Tape several flip-chart pages to a wall, making sure there are an equal number on the top of the wall and the bottom of the wall. The pages should all be taped together so that lines can be drawn from one page to the next without marking the wall.
2. Draw an oval in the center of the pages, and write the problem, issue, or goal for which the group needs to generate ideas inside the oval. For example, a professional developer helping a group of teachers develop a language arts curriculum scope and sequence might start with an oval as in the following example:



3. Once the oval has been drawn, ask the group to suggest broad categories that need to be considered or explored. After each person suggests a category, the facilitator should draw a line from the central oval, make a new oval, and then write in the suggested category as in Figure 3
4. Once all categories have been recorded, ask the group to elaborate on each category. Each time an idea is suggested, draw a line, draw an oval, and record the new idea. Cluster the ideas around appropriate categories; then, organize ideas so that they naturally sort from general to more specific, as depicted in the partially completed diagram in

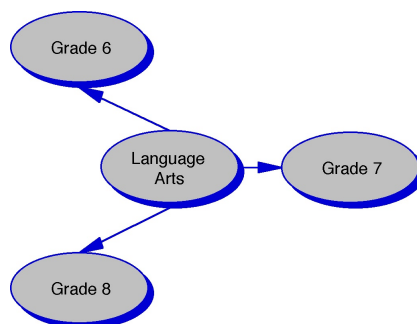


Figure 3

Figure 4, which contains plans for a sixth-grade language arts curriculum.

5. Continue to develop the diagram until a sufficient number of ideas have been introduced, and group members think they have reached the level of particularity necessary.

Clustering is an easy-to-use process structure that is usually quite enjoyable. This process structure enables groups to quickly invent and organize a large number of ideas.

Using Computers

Some facilitators, comfortable using computers and projectors, may prefer to use a computer software program, such as *Inspiration*, to facilitate clustering. Rather than writing ideas on flip-chart paper, the facilitator can type the idea into a computer and project the developing clusters for the entire group to see. Also, the computer program can be edited easily (it's difficult to make changes on flip-chart paper once the ideas have been written with a marker), and once the diagrams are developed, they can be printed and copied for each member of the group.

Step 4: Decide on the best solution

Once a list of possible solutions has been generated, group members must choose the one solution they consider to be the best. A group ➤

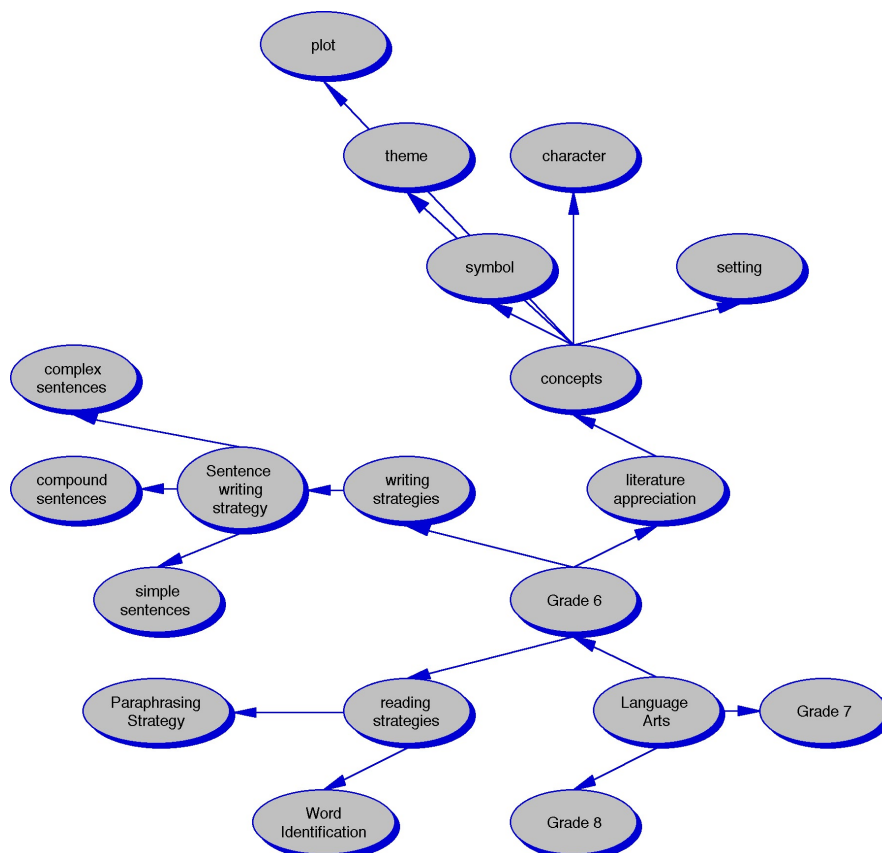


Figure 4

Inventing Solutions	
<p>1. <u>Focus on the challenge:</u> Rewrite your roadblock as a solvable problem statement:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>3. <u>Notice possible solutions</u> Use brainstorming to identify possible solutions:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>2. <u>Identify leverage points</u> Use the "Five Whys" or other strategies to identify leverage points:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>4. <u>Decide on the best solution</u></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

E-SIMville

- **Conference registration form**
- **Preconference registration form**
- **Call for presentations form**
www.ku-crl.org/htmlfiles/announcements/conference.html
- **Advanced Trainers' Workshop registration form**
www.ku-crl.org/htmlfiles/announcements/advanced.html
- **Workshop information and registration forms**
www.ku-crl.org/htmlfiles/workshops.html

Figure 5

can choose the best solution for its specific circumstances by selecting criteria by which each possible solution will be judged and then applying the criteria. Although numerous criteria are insightful, two criteria are especially useful. Frequently, the best solution is the one that (1) will have the greatest effect and (2) is easiest to implement. Teachers can use the problem-solving form in Figure 5 to help them invent powerful, practical solutions to the challenges they face.


References

Fullan, M.G. with Stiegelbauer, S. (1991) *The new meaning of educational change*. New York: Teachers College Press, p. 31.

Knight, J. (2000). Seeking first to understand: Using interviews to make professional development sessions more successful. *Stratenotes*, 8(6) 1-3.

Knight, J. (2000). Seeking first to understand: Part 2: Reporting back on interviews to make professional development sessions more successful. *Stratenotes*, 8(7) 1-4.

Knight, J. (2000). Dynamic Planning: A process structure from Teacher-Guided Professional Development. *Stratenotes*, 9(2) 1-3.

Pascale, R.T. (1990). *Managing on the edge: How the smartest companies use conflict to stay ahead*. Touchstone Books. 

E-sources to help you keep in touch and find the support you need for your SIM endeavors:

SIMTRAINER-L

To engage in discussions for SIM Trainers, subscribe to our e-mail discussion list. Send an e-mail message to

listproc@ukans.edu

In the body of the message, type

sub SIMTRAINER-L Your Name

Replace "Your Name" with your name. Note that SIMTRAINER-L is all one word; do not type any spaces in the list name. Do not type anything in the subject line of the message.

SIMville

SIMville is the first place to look for training and classroom activities. From the Center's web site,

www.ku-crl.org

click on "SIM Trainer Resources." When you select the log on option, you will be asked for a password. Type "**strategic**" in the box (do not type the quotation marks). The password is case-sensitive, so you must use all lowercase letters. Click on the "OK" button. To bypass the password screen in the future, bookmark the first SIMville page.

The Road to the Final Four

Travel with us during International Conference

Our theme for the 2001 International SIM Trainers' Conference, "The Road to the Final Four," emphasizes four foundational goals that have served us well on our journey thus far and will continue to guide us as we continue to work on behalf of students with disabilities.

Helping students become independent and interactive lifelong learners:

Knowing when to be independent and when to rely on others serves us well as successful individuals. It's a mindset we want to foster in students who have disabilities to help ensure they will be successful in school and beyond.

Improving the quality of instruction in schools: From Muskegon to Baton Rouge, from Seattle to Orlando, and around the world, SIM-based programs

Conference dates

July 18-20, 2001

Lawrence Holidome

Note: The conference will begin on Wednesday and end on Friday.

Conference theme

The Road to the Final Four

1. Helping students become independent and interactive lifelong learners
2. Improving the quality of instruction in schools
3. Integrating SIM with other best practices
4. Creating real access to the general education curriculum for all students

are bringing real system-wide change to whole schools and districts.

Integrating SIM with other best practices:

SIM alone may not meet every need. Thus, members of the network must look for ways to creatively weave together SIM and other practices to build effective educational programs.

Creating real access to the general education curriculum for all students:

Although real access to the general education curriculum doesn't always mean learning in the general education classroom, we know that more students with disabilities can be served in these settings if teachers take certain steps.

• See keynote speaker information on page 8.

Share your experience in poster, kaleidoscope sessions

The 2001 International SIM Trainers' Conference again will feature the popular *kaleidoscope* session. During this session, participants move through several stations, hearing short presentations at each one. If you have an idea that doesn't lend itself well to a poster, consider presenting it during the kaleidoscope session.

The conference *poster* session is a valuable way to share your ideas and accomplishments with other members

of the SIM Network. Our poster session coordinator will work directly with you to ensure you have the materials you need. Please be thinking of ideas you can share in this way.

You may download a Call for Presentations form from our web site: www.ku-crl.org/htmlfiles/announcements/conference.html.

The form also appeared in the January issue of *Stratenotes*.

Conference info

www.ku-crl.org/htmlfiles/announcements/conference.html

Requests: Trainers who plan to attend the conference may request sessions on specific topics. These requests should be made now, while we are planning the program. See the Call for Presentations form on our web site.

Registration: Early-bird registration for all three days of the conference is \$90. After May 1, the fee is \$100. Reduced rates are available for those who can attend only one or two days. A registration form is available on our web site.

Hotel: Rooms are available at the Lawrence Holidome, the conference hotel, for \$67 per night plus 10.9 percent tax. Reservations may be made with the hotel by calling (785) 841-7077. Please specify that you are with the National SIM Trainers' Conference to ensure special group rates. A block of rooms will be held for SIM Trainers until June 20, 2001. After that, reservations will be taken on a space-available basis, and the hotel cannot guarantee the special rate.

Transportation from Kansas City International Airport:

- Superior Shuttle Service, (888) 795-3914. Make reservations 12 to 24 hours in advance. \$24 one way, \$45 round trip.
- Midwest Limousine Services, (888) 467-3729. Rates begin at \$60 per trip for a limo holding 4; groups are welcome to split fares.

Gersten to give conference keynote address

The keynote speaker for the 2001 International SIM Trainers' Conference will be Russell Gersten, Director of the Eugene Research Institute and professor in the College of Education at the University of Oregon.

Gersten's opening-day address will be "What the Research Really Says about Factors that Lead to Sustained Change in Classroom Teaching." Typically, Gersten said, when researchers or staff development specialists discuss failures to translate research into classroom practice, they share anecdotes or war stories. However, there is a solid body of empirical research on the process of teaching that can help us gain perspective on our own efforts.

Gersten will present key findings that are relevant for those working



Russell Gersten

as consultants or in professional development. He will especially emphasize factors that lead to continuing, sustained use of research-based practices.

Gersten also will present a breakout session during which participants will explore relevant

issues that come up in their work. He will share some successes, failures, and ambiguous experiences related to trying to effect change in classroom teaching.

A significant emphasis in Gersten's research has been on delineating and understanding instructional variables that have an effect on student learning, such as the process of change, reading comprehension, and bilingual education. He also has extensively studied teacher development and collaboration.

Gersten has more than 100 publications in scientific journals as well as journals geared toward practitioners. He has edited two books on learning disabilities.

• *See page 7 for more conference information.*

FIRST CLASS

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STRATENOTES Volume 9-Issue #5
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