



STRATENOTES



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Another means of keeping in touch.....

We are excited to begin a new publication by University of Kansas Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities. *Stratenotes* is a publication expressly for trainers in our National Training Network. Its purpose is to keep you updated on some of our recent work and thinking as well as to inform you of some important upcoming dates and events. Each issue of *Stratenotes* will be kept to 1-2 pages -- easy for you to read and easy for us to write! For this issue, we'd like to update you on a new area of research for the Institute and get your feedback on plans for the CLD Conference.

Strategies research moves to the regular classroom.....

Increasingly, students with learning disabilities and other problems of low achievement are being placed in the regular classroom for the majority or all of the school day. The "inclusionary" movement has potential for dramatically changing the way that services are provided to at-risk students. The manuals that have been written for the Learning Strategies Curriculum were initially designed for use in a resource room or other support-class setting in which the primary role of the teacher was to teach skills and strategies to students. The big question that now must be answered is: "Can learning strategies be taught successfully to at-risk students within the context of the regular classroom when the teacher's major responsibility is to teach content?"

The KU-IRLD has received two new grants from the U. S. Office of Education to study this question. The tact we are taking with the first grant is to see whether social studies and geography teachers can imbue within their content teaching some instruction to the entire class on a strategy called "ORDER." ORDER is a strategy for helping students to recognize the organizational structure (sequential, compare-contrast, problem solution, or descriptive) of the curriculum information and to transform that information into a visual device. We are hypothesizing that when students deliberately analyze and manipulate curriculum information in this fashion, both their ability to understand and remember the information covered in class should improve.

The purpose of the second grant is to design strategies for helping students reason more effectively. The strategy instruction will be

designed to impact the higher order thinking skills of students by enabling them to apply exploration and explanation strategies to solving problems in the regular classroom.

In each of these research and product development efforts, we are exploring several issues related to the degree to which classroom teachers can tolerate additional demands on their time to accommodate for and meet the needs of students with LD. We are especially interested to see the degree to which the acquisition and generalization stages can be modified and still enable students to master the strategy and apply it so as to impact the success that they realize in mastering the curriculum.

In essence, this research thrust is based on the notion that the key to educational reform for at-risk adolescents is to have classroom teachers assume a markedly new vision of the teaching process. Specifically, this new vision incorporates the adoption of a strategic teaching process in which the classroom teacher takes the central role as both the planner and mediator of learning. *Within this new vision, the secondary teacher teaches not only the content but the strategies required to make learning content meaningful, integrated, and transferable.* In short, under this new role, teachers have a multifaceted agenda: (a) carefully organizing and transforming the content they teach into a form that is "learner friendly" and easy to understand; (b) considering which strategies students need in order to learn the content; and (c) teaching students how to use those strategies. Thus, teaching becomes a delicate balance among content goals, strategies required for achieving those goals, and facilitating students' learning experiences through strategy instruction.

