



STRATENOTES

A National Newsletter for SIM Trainers

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Strategic retirement

A Retiree's Point of View

—Marianne S. Dean

Retirement? It may be years in the future for some implementers and trainers, but others of us were introduced to the Strategic Instruction Model, or its precursors, more than 20 years ago. In addition, some of us were well along in our careers when SIM came over the horizon. With these two factors in mind, I'd like to share a retirement strategy of sorts with you, and weave my own story into its steps.

Before I introduce the strategy steps, you should know what I did before I retired. I was a special education teacher for 22 of the 23 years I was in the classroom. I was a Learning Strategies/ Study Skills Mentor teacher for the last two of those years. I first learned about "cognitive study skills" that were being researched at the University of Kansas through a professional journal article published in 1977. I followed that work as closely as I could from far-off California. As the Strategic Instruction Model developed, I implemented each strategy in my classroom and then became a trainer in 1987. I took early retirement from the classroom in 1989 but continued training until 1994.

The strategy

Now let's take a look at the Retirement Strategy.

Retire part-time

Explore "golden handshake" retirement options

Teach as a substitute or a tutor

Investigate a consulting business

Recycle your professional journals

Enrich others with your materials

Mentor a trainer to take your place

Engage in enjoyable activities

Nurture new relationships

Transfer strategic thinking and behavior

Retire part-time

Retirement is a life-changing step, not to be taken quickly or without testing the waters. There are several part-time options available to give retirement a try before making a permanent commitment. Teaching half days, teaching only one semester, or taking a sabbatical for a semester or a year could provide opportunities for trying out retirement. You might find you are utterly happy doing absolutely nothing that is educationally relevant. Or you might use the time to polish a new approach to strategies and be ready to reenter the classroom with renewed vigor.

Explore "golden handshake" options

In districts eager to reduce their teaching ranks, so-called "golden handshake" options could be considered as a gradual retirement. Variations such as working 25 days a year for five years could give opportunities for developing or implementing SIM projects.

Teach as a substitute or a tutor

If you are not ready to give up the classroom altogether, consider substitute teaching. Districts are delighted to hire retired teachers as substitutes. This can give you an opportunity to bring strategies into new territory. Think of how you could turn around an entire class by teaching SLANT and then leave the strategy directions behind for the returning teacher.

Long-term substituting presents amazing opportunities for strategic interventions. Let me tell you about my "Substitute Teaching Adventure." A few weeks before the beginning of my second year of retirement, I volunteered to substitute in the high school classroom where my husband worked as an instructional aide. The teacher was my friend and had planned to be out only for the first five weeks of school. As it turned out, she did not come back at all. It gave me an opportunity to create a total SIM classroom/program. What fun! What a challenge! The students and their parents were very enthusiastic, and so was my husband. Pretty soon, I had administrators and other teachers coming in to see what was happening.

Tutoring is another rich avenue for continuing to teach in retirement. It presents opportunities to

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intervene strategically in the lives of children and adults who haven't been exposed through their school experiences. Some of the advantages over substitute teaching include naming your own hours, naming your own price, freedom to use your own materials and teaching practices, and freedom to choose your students.

Investigate a consulting business

Assuming you have retired completely from the classroom, there are abundant opportunities to continue as a trainer through consulting. This was my first step when I retired. I already was established as a trainer for the 13-district consortium where I had been training for the last two years while I was still teaching. Thus, it was easy to sell my services. It was also easy to expand to other districts through networking. Training on a part-time basis was different from simultaneously training part time and teaching full time. The training sessions were much easier to plan for and implement. When a new strategy was published, I could make arrangements to go into a classroom, and "pilot" it, make a video for training purposes, and gain a "true believer" teacher to "testify" at trainings. It was also now possible for me to spend more time in the trainees' classrooms for coaching. Many of my trainees were the only teachers in their schools who were implementing, so it was very difficult for them to find coaching partners.

Recycle your professional journals

SIM professionals are avid readers of professional literature. It can accumulate at an alarming rate over the years. When my collection reached a critical mass and I knew it was time to part company with it, I found a small private college with a special education department that was overjoyed to receive a gift for its own library of 20 years of 14 different journals. I was overjoyed to have the shelf space for new and different interests!

Enrich others with your materials

Eventually, retirement reaches the point where you are no longer using that vast storehouse of materials all SIM folks seem to collect. A very important Retirement Strategy step is to enrich others with those materials before they become obsolete! I had many SIM and SIM-related materials, both for teaching and training, and I wanted them to have good homes. I had given away many, many other teaching materials when I left my own classroom, but I was still using the SIM materials. Five years after my initial retirement in 1989, I decided it was time to "hang it up" entirely. This led me to the next strategy step.

Mentor a trainer to take your place

Whenever you decide you are not going to train anymore, and this is usually at the same time you decide you are drowning in all those materials that should be enriching others, you will realize that you want a qualified trainer to take your place to carry on the work you have so carefully crafted.

In my case, a young man who was preparing to be a trainer approached me at a national SIM Trainers meeting and I was able to coach and co-train with him the last year I did training. After he completed all other SIM requirements, he was able to assume the training for the districts I had been working with. One day, he brought his truck over, and we loaded it with all of my training materials. He drove away a happy man! That same day, he loaded my car with all of the rest of my teaching materials, and the next day I had a give-away at my district's office for all the special education teachers. They drove away with lots of new resources!

Engage in enjoyable activities

Retirement is the time to engage in those activities you never had time for when you were employed. It's the time to learn new skills because you want to. A caution: Choose carefully and slowly what you add to your life, or you will find your days filled fuller than they were when you were still employed! Some of the activities that I added to my life were learning about birds and bird watching, refreshing and relearning my high school Spanish skills, and volunteering at a local food pantry and at my church. I learned the hard way how to say "No" when the requests for volunteering began to overload my calendar!

Nurture new relationships

Retirement will eventually diminish the frequency and intensity of the contacts and relationships you had with your professional colleagues. At that time, new relationships need to be formed and nurtured through the new activities you have chosen. Relationships with your nuclear and extended family will undergo changes as well. Opportunities for deepening and strengthening family ties are a special bonus of retirement years.



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Transfer strategic thinking and behavior

After encouraging students to think of other places to use strategies and to adapt strategies to be applied to other situations, make sure that you do the same with all the skills you have embraced as a teacher and trainer.

Do you have a quality routine for your "life" assignments? Do you use such strategic skills as list making, priority setting, time management, and evaluation? Are your "living materials" organized as efficiently as your teaching materials were by using file cabinets, folders, closet organizers, kitchen and laundry organizers, garage organizers, and financial organizers?

The task of becoming the manager of my financial affairs after my husband's death was much easier when I generalized the organizational skills of a SIM Trainer to that of a financial manager. When I have been asked to serve as a church committee member or chair, SIM training skills such as focusing a group, modeling a procedure, or coaching someone new to the committee have all been invaluable.

Reviewing the Retirement Strategy steps, it is obvious this strategy is far from ready for publication for several reasons: It hasn't been thoroughly researched, there is no pre-test or post-test, the mnemonic device is too long. Nevertheless, it is full of useful nuggets, and I leave it to others to research and refine! My hope is that it will stimulate your thinking and prompt your action towards a strategic retirement.

Training ideas

Attention Grabbers

from Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12
and The Dover Area School District

Deborah Wickwire, supervisor of Special Education in Dover, PA., draws on her experience and provides 10 tips for trainers to use to grab attention, organize presentations, and enhance the instructional experience for participants:

1. Deborah places her overheads in clear sheet protectors in a three-ring notebook. She places the black line master after each sheet protector. This helps to keep all of the overheads in order.
2. She provides highlighter pens and sticky tabs for participants, who can then tab each section as training proceeds and use the highlighter to note important aspects of the presentation.
3. Deborah provides Post-It Notes in a variety of bright colors for participants to write notes during the presentation.

4. Deborah often dresses in crazy get-ups for her presentations. During Visual Imagery Strategy training, she has worn a beret, carried a megaphone, and acted like a movie director. Also during this presentation, she read a children's story book and prompted participants to visualize parts of the story. Then, participants compared and contrasted their visualizations.
5. For LINCS training, she uses a colorful paper chain and five links of metal chain. At the end of the training, she gives each teacher a paper chain and a metal chain.
6. During Paragraph Writing Strategy training, instead of using the colorful overhead of the candy box, Deborah uses a real bag of candy, which she then shares with participants.
7. For Content Enhancement Routine training, Deborah uses a travel theme, making sure "the students are with us on our journey." To begin Unit Organizer training, she has teams of participants come up with directions to some obscure place. Then she gives them a map of the area to find the best route to their destination. She relates this activity to how teachers often begin their "journey" of instruction and how much easier it is to know where we are going when we have a map (a visual organizer).
8. Deborah uses a large anchor and a little boat during training of the Concept Anchoring Routine, again emphasizing the idea of going on a journey and the effects of an anchor.
9. Deborah also has used a unit organizer overhead to introduce, instruct, and review the major concepts from the training for the Unit Organizer Routine. This way, teachers can see the organizer in action.
10. Deborah has used a video of the teachers she supervises teaching parts of the strategies she is training. The participants seem to enjoy seeing a "real" teacher instructing students.

Training for Trainers

Instruction in most of the strategies and routines will be offered this summer at the Strategic Instruction Model Workshop-Levels 1 and 2. Instruction will be directed to teachers. If you would like to receive training in particular strategies or routines, please contact Janet Roth at KU-CRL. A daily fee may be arranged. Janet may be reached through StrateNET, by Internet e-mail at jroth@quest.sped.ukans.edu, or by calling (913) 864-4780.

More training ideas

Surface Counseling

The following are a few ideas for use in Surface Counseling training.

Ask teachers to take out a piece of paper (or distribute 3" by 5" cards or small pieces of paper) and reflect on their childhood and teenage years. Ask them to write on the paper a problem they had that they might have shared with another person if they had had someone they trusted.

Alternatively, ask the teachers to write on the paper a problem one of their students shared with them.

Explain that the problem should be something they are willing to share with the person sitting next to them and with the group.

Have the teachers share the problem with their neighbor. (You may skip this if you want.)

Have the teachers place their papers into a bag or a box. (Later in the session, draw problems from the box for examples.)

Follow this activity with a discussion. Ask the teachers what they felt like as a kid with a problem (or how their students seem to feel). Make a list of the emotions and feelings they contribute. Then ask them why they might not have shared the problem with someone. Make a list of the reasons for not talking about problems with someone who might help them.

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Use the problems in the box of problems submitted by the teachers as examples as you describe the Problem Solving Steps. Describe the step, read a problem out of the box, and then explain how the step might be facilitated for the specified problem.

For example, after you describe the Plan Solutions Step, choose one of the problems from the box and, as a large group, brainstorm solutions. Write the solutions on the Solve Your Problem Worksheet.

Choose another problem out of the box, divide the teachers into pairs or small groups and have them brainstorm solutions. Have the groups share their solutions with the large group.

Then explain the Specify Consequences Step and conduct a discussion of the consequences for the solutions generated by the large group.

Have the smaller groups generate consequences for the solutions they created. Similarly, have them rate the solutions that they have created.

Thus, as you describe the steps, alternate the activities between lecture/discussion and practice.

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Provide a live model of how to conduct a surface counseling session. You might prepare the model ahead of time and ask one of the participants to be the student in the interaction, coaching the person on what to do during a break. If you are very brave, you might choose a problem out of the box of problems created by the teachers on which to focus the surface counseling session. Take time during a break to read a few of the problems and choose one that can be handled in a short period.

Northeast Conference Report

The beautiful resort area of Rensselaer, N.Y., was the setting for the Northeast Regional SIM Trainers' Update Meeting. This area, which has served as a gathering place for international policy makers, writers, poets, and groups interested in growth and learning, was ideal for the conference.

Highlights of the conference included a presentation by Dr. Jean Mooney of Boston College on Content Enhancement applications and a presentation by Mary Sue Crowley of Rochester, Vt., on how to teach written strategies within the context of the regular classroom. Dr. Elaine Fine of Montclair State University presented how to instruct the Paired Associates Strategy and other memory strategies. Dr. Tony Bashir of Emerson College presented considerations for strategy instructors to keep in mind when selecting and teaching learning strategies to students given the language difficulties that many learning disabilities students have.

Don Deshler conducted sessions about recent and coming manuals and presented a special session about future directions.

The setting, the scrumptious meals, the stimulating conversation and the opportunity to learn were terrific! They were only topped by conference director and host Ed Pieper's innovative games and activities that lasted late into the night. Ed, of St. Rose College, got everyone involved with his innovative versions of SIM Pictionary, dart tournaments, pool tournaments, and pingpong tournaments. Participants hated to see the conference conclude, but all agreed they would return for next year's event.

Trainer News

Addison Watanabe reports that strategies training is alive and well in the Pacific. Addison just returned from Guam, where he has started training and implementation of the Learning Strategies Curriculum. Participants consisted of general education teachers sent by their principals. The teachers made a three-year commitment to implement the strategies in their schools.

Are You Listed?

The 1997 edition of *StrateDirectory*, the directory of SIM Trainers, will be published in January. A number of trainers have asked why their names are not found in the directory. The directory lists only those trainers who have completed and returned their directory information forms to the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. Legally, we cannot distribute trainers' names and addresses unless they have given us permission. Completion of the form for the directory gives us the needed permission.

In addition to distributing the directory to all *Strateworks* subscribers, we distribute the state lists of trainers from the directory to school districts and individuals who are looking for trainers to provide SIM instruction.

If you have not returned your completed directory form, do so by December 18, 1996, to be listed for 1997. Return the form to *Strateworks* Directory, KU-CRL, 3061 Dole Center, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045, or fax to (913) 864-5728.

A copy of the form appears on page 6 of this issue of *Stratenotes*.

Score Manuals Revised

Revisions have been made in the new edition of the SCORE manual. The most radical change is in the format. Each cue card is displayed on the left of the page on which it is used. Other changes include new art work and some modifications to the skill steps. Providing a second model during skill instruction has been eliminated.

Cue cards have been changed so the current training packet will not work with the new manual. Plans are in process for new training packets, which will include overheads.

The new manuals are available from EDGE for \$10, the same price as the former edition. As always, there is a 40% discount on one personal copy for each trainer.

Regional Update Meetings

If you haven't attended a regional SIM Trainers' Update meeting yet, it's not too late. Three regional meetings remain for the 1996-1997 year.

All SIM Trainers are welcome to attend any regional update meeting. Trainers are required to attend at least one update meeting or the national conference every two years to maintain an active trainer status.

The Far West Region will meet Feb. 21-22, 1997, at the Imperial Palace in Las Vegas, NV. To reserve a room at the Imperial Palace, call (800) 351-7400 before January 21, 1997. Please indicate that you

are with the Western Regional Strategies Group.

The North Central Regional SIM Trainers' Update Meeting, also scheduled for February 21-22, 1997, will be held at the Palmer House in Chicago, in conjunction with the Learning Disabilities Association Conference. To reserve a room at the Palmer House, call (312) 726-7500 and request information about room reservations for the Learning Disabilities Association Conference.

The Southeastern Region will meet February 27-March 1, 1997, in Charleston, SC. For room reservations, call the Sheraton Charleston Hotel at (800) 968-3569. For more information about the conference, call Jerri Neduchal at (407) 317-3500.

Get Your Concepts Online

If you've browsed *StrateNET* recently, you've probably noticed a number of Concept Diagrams that have been added to the electronic bulletin board system. The new diagrams cover a wide range of content areas, including such topics as Manifest Destiny, Spanish Regular Verbs, and Biomes.

We'd like to hear what you think about these new offerings. You may send your comments and suggestions to Janet Roth or Julie Tollefson through *StrateNET* mail. If you have a Concept Diagram you want to share, enter it in the Concept Diagram area of *StrateNET* or mail it to Janet or Julie at KU-CRL, 3061 Dole, Lawrence, KS 66045.

Thank You to Mary Lee...

Mary Lee has been a key part of the KU-CRL training team for many years. She has served as editor of *Strategram* and has made all physical arrangements for the National SIM Conference. Mary has entertained numerous workshop participants with her lovely hospitality and food. She is leaving our staff to pursue other interests, and we will miss her very much. We thank her for her many contributions to the SIM Network.

...And A New Face at KU-CRL

Julie Tollefson has joined our staff as editor of *Stratenotes* and *Strategram*. She also will be looking for more ways to use *StrateNET* to keep SIM Trainers in touch with each other and with KU-CRL. Julie brings 10 years of experience as an editor and writer in the newspaper and financial services industries to this position. She looks forward to meeting you and hearing any suggestions you might have for *Stratenotes*, *Strategram*, and *StrateNET*. In addition, if you have any questions regarding your *Strateworks* subscription, contact Julie at KU-CRL.

We look forward to a very productive relationship as Julie uses her many talents for the SIM Network.

