

SIM Trainers celebrate successes during 1998 national conference

By all indications, the 1998 National SIM Trainers' Conference was a huge success.

Nearly 200 people gathered at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri, to mark the 20th anniversary of the Center for Research on Learning, to celebrate our achievements as a Strategic Instruction Model family so far, and to look to the future as we continue toward our goal of improved instruction and success for students with disabilities and learning problems.

This year's conference featured two keynote speakers: Rick Lavoie, headmaster of Riverview School, a residential school in East Sandwich, Massachusetts, for 150 students with learning disabilities; and Floyd Hudson, professor of special education at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

In his address, Lavoie used real-life stories to illustrate the need to focus on what's best for students as he shared his concerns about the field of education and some of the trends it seems to be following. He also presented a special session exploring myths and misconceptions surrounding motivation in students.

Hudson also drew on personal experiences as he described the requirements of responsible inclusion. He followed the address with a workshop about his Class-within-a-Class instructional model.

More information about both speakers' talks will be published in future issues of *Strategram*.

The following new manuals were introduced during the conference:

- Fundamentals in the Sentence Writing Strategy (an instructor's manual and a student lessons book)
- Framing Routine
- Quality Assignment Routine
- Practicing the Storage Strategies: LINCS, FIRST, and PAIRS
- Recall Enhancement Routine

Look for more information about these new manuals in future issues of *Strategram*. See inside for more conference details.

Calendar

Aug. 3-7, 1998
Workshop for Potential
SIM Learning Strategy
Trainers
Lawrence, KS

Feb. 5-6, 1999
Far West/Midwest
Regional Update Meeting
Las Vegas, NV

March 4-6, 1999
Southeast Regional
Update Meeting

March 26-27, 1999
Northeast Regional
Update Meeting
West Virginia

April 21-23, 1999
Update Meeting
St. Johns Island

July 8-10, 1999
National SIM Trainers'
Conference

Special prizes

Several companies donated door prizes, which were given away periodically throughout the conference. Congratulations to those who won prizes and thank you to the following companies for their generous donations: Apple Computer, Inc., IBM Corporation, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Meseraul Printing, Inc., PRO-ED, Houlihans, and Animanian.

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Individuals, groups honored

Each year during the conference, the Center for Research on Learning presents special awards to individuals who have made a difference in our work and in the development of the Strategic

Instruction Model. This year, we added two new awards—the SIM Impact Award and the SIM Innovation Award—to honor groups as well.

Gordon R. Alley Partnership Awards

The purpose of the Gordon R. Alley Partnership Award is to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of individuals for their work in enabling the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning to fulfill its mission.

A key element of the operating philosophy of the Center is that of collaborative research. In the broadest sense, a collaborative philosophy underscores the fact that the mission of the Center can be fulfilled, on a sustained basis, only through the support, expertise, and cooperation of many professionals external to the Center. The staff of the Center recognizes that the insight, effort, and cooperation of such individuals have been, and are, essential to any success achieved by the Center.

Gordon R. Alley, one of the founding and key investigators of the Center, was a highly valued partner to his colleagues. He generously shared his expertise and time to enable others to reach their goals. The Gordon R. Alley Partnership Award is given to other professionals who contribute to the work of the Center in the same spirit Gordon did when he was a member of our staff.

Hugh W. Catts, III: Hugh, an associate professor in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing at the University of Kansas, is an internationally recognized expert in reading disorders, especially problems dealing with phonological awareness. He is the author of *Language and Reading Disabilities*, one of the leading textbooks on dyslexia and other reading disorders. Hugh has teamed with KU-CRL researchers on several research projects related to reading and literacy instruction and has very freely given of his time and energy to assist CRL researchers and doctoral students. His expertise and insights in the area of reading instruction have greatly influenced the thinking and work of CRL researchers.

Edwin S. Ellis: Ed is professor of special education at the University of Alabama and director of the Multiple Abilities Program (MAP). This program, supported by grants from the Kennedy Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, and the Coca Cola Foundation, focuses on preparing teachers to plan for and teach academically diverse classes. Ed is one of the most prolific writers in the field of learning disabilities and is the author of several of the instructional materials that are part of the Strategic Instruction Model. He continually works with CRL staff as a partner researcher to conceptualize and produce new ways of teaching students. The products of his thinking and research in the areas of generalization and instructional delivery in secondary schools have greatly influenced the direction and research of the CRL staff.

Robert E. Frederick: Bob, the director of athletics at the University of Kansas, was named one of the most influential people in college athletics in 1995 by *College Sports Magazine*. KU athletic teams have experienced unequalled success on the field *and in the classroom* during the past decade under Bob's leadership. He has teamed closely with CRL staff to develop the Learner Apprenticeship Program for student-athletes who are struggling with academic requirements. As a result of his strong commitment to student achievement, KU's student-athletes have excelled in their classroom performance. Bob has been insistent on providing the highest quality academic services to all student-athletes. His support of the work of CRL's Mike Hock has facilitated the development and validation of the Strategic Tutoring Model.

SIM Innovation Award

The SIM Innovation Award is given to schools or programs that have demonstrated highly innovative and effective applications of the Strategic Instruction Model. SIM Trainers who are recipients of this year's award are **Sue Woodruff** and **Maureen Johnson** from Muskegon High School in Muskegon, Michigan. Also receiving this award are **Arlyn Zack** (principal), **T.L. Lowe** (special services supervisor), **Jan Graham**, **MaryAnn LaGuire**, **Kathy Lutkus**, and **Marilyn Whitlow**. These individuals have established SIM as an *integral* part of the curriculum to increase the reading performance of all at-risk students in the school. At-risk students participating in the SIM reading program during the past three years have gained about four *years* in reading achievement in only six *weeks* of instruction!

SIM Impact Award

The SIM Impact Award is presented to school systems that have incorporated many components of the Strategic Instruction Model throughout major segments of their entire school system. The 1998 honorees are from the Osseo School District in Osseo, Minnesota. SIM Trainers who are recipients of this year's award are **Carl Skordahl**, **Shari Schindele**, **Janet Jones**, and **Sandy Van Pelt**. Also receiving this award are **Bob Perdaems** (principal, Park Center High School), **Judy Lamp** (principal, Maple Grove High School), and **Kate McGuire** (principal, Brooklyn Junior High School). For more than a decade, these professionals have been committed to providing a well-coordinated, broad array of SIM-based interventions to all students in the Osseo School District. The academic and social performance of hundreds of students throughout the Osseo District has been dramatically enhanced as a result of the broad-scale implementation of SIM.

SIM Leadership Awards

The SIM Leadership Award recognizes individuals who have shown exceptional leadership by helping educators become strategic teachers and, as a result, students become strategic learners.

Larry Bemish

Larry, an associate professor at Eastern Michigan University, completed his initial training in the Strategic Instruction Model in 1989. Since then, he has spread the word about SIM throughout Michigan. He has offered SIM training in several school districts and has taught several graduate courses dedicated to SIM. He infuses SIM components into every methods course he teaches. Colleagues note Larry's willingness to go into classrooms to implement SIM components with students as one of his most admirable attributes and one that creates a high level of respect among his colleagues and university students.

Barbara Millikan

Barbara became hooked on the idea of strategies instruction in 1982, and in 1985, she convinced the director of special education for Beaverton, Oregon, schools that she could improve the secondary schools' learning disabilities program with learning strategies. She became a SIM Trainer in 1986 and has continued to work to implement SIM throughout the state. She is now principal of Oak Creek Elementary School in Lake Oswego Schools and, in her spare time, has developed a strategies course for Portland State University. Barbara has co-organized the last four Far West and joint Far West/Midwest regional meetings.

Judy O'Malley

Judy, who was certified as a SIM Trainer in 1989, is a resource teacher at Fulton Holland Educational Center in West Palm Beach, Florida, where her primary responsibility is coordinating, implementing, and evaluating the Strategic Instruction Model staff development program for secondary teachers. Her knowledge of learning strategies and her professional assistance to teachers has earned her respect from her colleagues across the state. Since 1994, Judy has organized a statewide SIM Update Conference for all Florida trainers. In addition, she has coordinated the Training of Trainers for the state of Florida since 1995.

Mary Anne Tharin

Mary Anne, who is one of North Carolina's most highly regarded consultants in matters related to the education of exceptional children, became interested in the Center's research early in its history. In the early 1980s, she teamed with Ed Ellis to begin a statewide learning strategies training effort. She was a member of the first SIM Trainer group in 1985 and has trained more than 2,000 teachers and administrators in 128 school systems. As an adjunct professor at Loyola College-Baltimore, Mary Anne teaches a course focused on transition and the *Self-Advocacy Strategy*. She hopes to have more opportunities to provide training now that she's retired.

New look for poster session

The annual poster session and continental breakfast took on a slightly different flavor this year with the addition of a "Kaleidoscope" minisession.

During Kaleidoscope, 11 trainers set up stations at tables around the room. Participants then rotated from table to table to hear the three-minute presentations of tips and ideas. CRL doctoral student Gwen Berry kept an eye on the clock and rang a bell to keep everyone moving.

Both the traditional poster session and the new Kaleidoscope session yielded terrific ideas. Look for more information about these ideas in future issues of *Stratenotes* and *Strategram*.

Important CD information

Conference participants who received copies of the new Strategic Instruction CD may be a little confused. Unfortunately, the printer inadvertently neglected to print the instructions for using the CD on the inside of CD's cover. The CD will play on both Macintosh and Windows machines, but it does not run automatically.

Macintosh

To launch the program, double click on the file named **strategy.pkg**.

Windows

To launch the program, double click on the file named **strategy.exe**.

Eyes on the future

In addition to celebrating the past, this year's conference turned toward the future in a number of ways. Participants were asked to consider the viability of three possible scenarios for education in the future and to help build a movement to refocus the field of special education on effective instruction that makes a difference with students who are having difficulty learning. Focus groups met during the conference to discuss the possibilities of integrating technology in strategy instruction.

The next few pages describe these discussions and provide opportunities for those of you who were unable to attend the conference to get involved.

Refocusing the field of special education

Everyone attending the conference was asked to participate in a group effort to develop an action plan to help move the field of special education forward. During the conference, individuals and groups worked to develop ideas for a vision statement, a slogan or motto, and a graphic that could be used to identify the movement.

The goal of this campaign is to create a critical mass of individuals who together can be proactive to move the field of special education to again focus on the instructional needs of students. Research at the Center and elsewhere indicates that effective instruction is the leverage point that can make a difference with students who are having difficulty learning. Yet, the field of special education has lost that focus. The more than 900 SIM Trainers in the international network can make a difference.

The ideas gathered at the conference will be used to develop a campaign to influence parents, schools, policymakers, peer teachers, districts, funding agencies, state departments of education, school departments, schools of education, and national organizations.

The results of the week's thinking and working together were displayed during the poster session, and a follow-up session yielded additional ideas. Future issues of *Strategram* and *Stratenotes* as well as StrateNet and our Web site will carry updates on the progress of this movement. Refocusing the field of special education also will become a continuing topic of all of the regional meetings as we emphasize what we know is important: instruction.

Focus group for on-line instruction

KU-CRL doctoral students Barbara Glaeser, Paula Lancaster, and Pat Gildroy led a focus group to discuss issues regarding placing strategy training on line.

The presentation included a description of on-line (or Web-based) instruction, a definition of some commonly used terms, and differences in training for adults and for students. The focus group, consisting of SIM Trainers Joni Pontiff, Helen Barrier, Brenda Lazarus, Connie Gentle, Cris Siebenlist, Bev Colombo, and Barbara Carruthers, also looked at some current sites, including an instructional design course developed by Dr. Ed Meyen at the University of Kansas.

The group suggested several possible advantages of on-line instruction. Such instruction could provide the following:

- Training for new teachers who join a staff of teachers who have already had training
- Training for participants who miss a session of multiple-day training
- Updated training for experienced teachers
- Training for preservice teachers
- Ability to revisit training to watch modeling of different stages or just to revisit the information presented in the training

- Ability for participants to work at their own pace, which fits the busy schedule of teachers and administrators
- Opportunity to garner administrators' "buy in" for teacher training
- Statewide training and training for remote sites
- Formation of "study groups" of participants
- Ability to offer training for parents who want to teach their child at home
- Ability to scan practice pages and present them on the computer

During the discussion, only one concern surfaced: that on-line training not replace face-to-face interaction. Coaching is still vital to training, the group affirmed.

The group also talked about the format in which they would like to see this technology delivered and tentatively decided to form a study group to continue this discussion. If you are interested, please contact Pat or Paula at the Center for Research on Learning, (785) 864-4780. They also can be reached through StrateNet.

Scenario planning for the future

A Center for Research on Learning study group has spent the last several months developing scenarios outlining possible futures for the Center using a methodology described by Peter Schwartz in *The Art of the Long View*. The scenarios, which are the result of research and discussion completed by staff and students at the Center, describe possible futures for special education and special education research.

The study group presented these scenarios to conference participants, who were divided into small groups to discuss issues and questions associated with the scenarios. The groups were asked to address the following questions:

1. Which aspects of the scenario seem realistic to you?
2. Given those possibilities, what research should the Center conduct in the future?

Participants also were asked for general comments about the future. The following are two of the scenarios presented during the conference. Look for the third scenario plus more information and a summary of comments and how the scenario process will shape the future of the Center in future issues of *Stratenotes*.

If you have any comments or suggestions, contact Jim Knight at the Center, (785) 864-4780. He also can be reached through StrateNet.

Scenario: The Hypertext School

"A hypertext consists of multiple layers of texts, while a conventional text basically has only one layer—the text itself. Texts on a computer screen may be paragraphs, sentences, charts or graphics. Under a hypertext, each text is usually stored separately in a different file. When a text is needed, an operator can key in a command that pulls out all the texts on the computer screen at one time in a connected and logical way. A hypertext provides an operator with access to multiple layers. This feature allows anyone looking onto the computer screen not only to "read through" the text, but to go down "into" it for further degrees of detail or background source material. The essential feature of a hypertext is this ability to get "in" and "out" of multiple texts or layers."

—Nonanka, I. & Takeuchi, H. (1995). *The knowledge creating company*.

New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 166-67.

Julie Vetter was feeling upbeat as she walked into Bill Gates Academy, the private high school where she had worked for the past three years. She was pleased that she was a facilitator at a school that promised it would prepare students to be technologically literate citizens, and she felt the school delivered on its promise, with all students using a variety of technologies as they progressed through their Personal Educational Plans (P.E.P.).

As she walked through the school, Julie still felt excited by all that she saw around her. The old days of classrooms and teachers were long gone. "Now I am a facilitator," thought Julie, laughing about the change in terminology. "I make it

KU-CRL CD-ROM

One of the special giveaways during this year's conference was a new CD-ROM developed by the Center for Research on Learning to supplement training activities.

The CD presents an overview of the Center and strategic instruction that can be shown to administrators, teachers, and other interested groups. Specifically, the CD is divided into three broad segments:

- **About the Center for Research on Learning** presents the history and mission of the Center, introduces its staff, and describes the International SIM Trainers' Network.
- **Critical Questions** addresses some of the hard questions facing educators today, including "Why is process as important as content?" and "Are Learning Strategies obsolete?"
- **Strategic Instruction Model** describes SIM and provides several additional layers of details about Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement Routines. This section also looks at the realities faced by classroom teachers, the SMARTER Planning process, and the importance of teamwork in meeting students' needs.

possible for my students to have meaningful, learning experiences. I help them look through the window of technology out onto the whole world of knowledge."

The P.E.P.s were one of the things that Julie really liked about Bill Gates. All students had their own P.E.P.s, and they were all pursuing their own educational goals. Jasmine Ortega, for example, was working hard on her project creating a web magazine on techno pop, and Emily Montgomery was collaborating with a boy in New Zealand developing a CD-ROM describing the environmental applications for hemp. Joey Winslow had recently become excited about his project analyzing baseball statistics, and he had actually been e-mailing his results to Ken Griffey, Jr., the general manager of the New Orleans Anaconda. For the past week, Joey had been working at home, sending Julie excited e-mails about his new idea that pitchers would be more effective if they pitched for no more than three innings a game.

As she walked through the school, Julie remembered the day when Principal Rodriguez had told the school her new vision for Bill Gates. "We are not going to be like any school you've ever seen," she said. "Thanks to the nation's booming economy, we've now got the chance to create a place where learning is truly student-centered. I want us to create a hypertext school. This will be a school where students, facilitators, and parents all interconnect in an ever-changing variety of ways, all aimed at making certain our students stay excited about education and learn as much as quickly as they can. Like a hypertext, the language of the Internet, our school will provide our students with numerous spontaneous connections and numerous opportunities to learn about the content and strategies that they are interested in and that they need to achieve their goals."

Looking around the school, Julie felt that Dr. Rodriguez's vision had become a reality. *All* students in the school now used the Internet and other technological innovations to pursue the goals they set. Kids focused their intellectual energy on what mattered to them, and the Internet had opened up the world to them. What made this most amazing was the diversity of students in the school, students who formerly would have dropped out or been at risk for failure were now actively engaged in meaningful learning activities.

Julie was especially pleased that learning strategies were available on the net. Students who needed help with reading, writing, or goal setting simply logged on to the Kansas home page,

typed in their password, and went to work at the StrateLearning site. Joey Winslow had spent some time there just a few days earlier mastering the Multipass strategy, which had just been published.

Julie, herself, had recently completed requirements to become an on-line consultant for the Center. To become certified, Julie had completed all the necessary training offered on line and quickly mastered, through distance learning, all she needed to become an expert in

What made this most amazing was ... students who formerly would have dropped out or been at risk for failure were now actively engaged in meaningful learning activities.

learning strategies. Now Julie was available to offer e-mail advice to teachers whose questions were routed to her through the Stratenet site at Kansas University.

"It's funny," Julie thought, "e-mail is probably the biggest part of my day as a facilitator at Bill Gates. The students who are working at home send me my daily updates, and I get e-mails from other teachers I know around the country. What is best is the chance to keep parents in the loop through e-mail. So many of these parents have too much going on, and I'm so happy I can keep them aware of the great things their kids are doing." The world wasn't getting any safer, and e-mail was at least one way Julie could keep parents more involved in their children's learning.

As Julie sat down to read and respond to today's e-mail, she surveyed the students working near her. All students were happily pursuing their tasks, driven to learn by their own intrinsic interest in the projects on which they'd chosen to work. "You know," thought Julie, "this is really the way it should be. I'm so happy I'm a facilitator where student learning is really the one thing that matters."

Scenario: The Kids We're Forgetting

Julie Vetter felt exhausted, and she hadn't even stepped inside her school, North Senior High. She knew that yesterday, while teaching, her patience had been severely tested in the first hour when Joey Winslow had refused to even open his books and then spent the rest of the hour hassling the few students trying to pay attention. "The class is impossible," Julie thought. Julie felt helpless. If she sent Joey to in-school suspension, he'd only fall further behind. Besides, Joey wasn't the biggest problem she had with the class. Six or seven of the students really, let's face it, were illiterate, and probably half the class would have had labels coming out the kazoo in the old days before the de-legislation of SPED. LD, BD, SED, ADD, these kids probably could have qualified for them all, back then.

But now, as her principal had said when he announced to Julie that her strategy classes were canceled, "The days of special education are over." Julie remembered her principal telling her the school board no longer had the resources to support

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special education programs. "From now on, Julie, we've all just got to do more with less. Our board has decided that we've got to stop spending a large amount of our budget on a small number of kids who aren't going to amount to much. We've just got to forget about some of the kids, and focus on the ones we can help."

Julie shuddered, remembering that day. "It seems to me," she thought, "the number of kids we're forgetting is growing every day. And I don't see that many successes we can brag about." Students seem to have many, many needs, and they aren't getting the support they need. More and more kids are mixed up in drugs or crime, and too often they don't have anyone to depend on for help or support. Goodness knows in many cases their families just add to the problem.

When Julie found out she'd no longer have an opportunity to teach learning strategies, she thought long and hard about whether or not she wanted to continue as a teacher. Most of the other strategy teachers she had known had just thrown in the towel. "If I can't teach these kids how to solve their problems," Joan Davies had said, "I'm not interested in being a part of their problem." Pat Wilson and Eric Kertes had left North and been hired to teach at one of the three new private schools in town. More and more it seemed that the only kids getting any education were the ones whose parents could afford private schools.

Julie thought about her principal's cliché, "do more with less," and she started to simmer. Every year, the school board and the district embraced some new approach to education that sounded great in theory, but turned out to be totally impractical in the classroom. Julie and all the other teachers were just sick of people telling them how to do an impossible job.

The school's big push for technology was probably the most frustrating one. All the teachers had spent weeks of their summers sitting through tech training, with most of them rolling their eyes whenever they heard their trainers' promises about a Brave New World. North was going to be the school for the 21st Century, with every child computer literate. The truth was, the school had turned out a bunch of kids who could kill a thousand monsters on video games but couldn't read a single page. Sure the school had lots of computers, but students mostly used them to surf the web and play games. School was just like school had always been, except no one was doing anything to help those students falling through the cracks, and the cracks were getting wider.

Julie looked out as the students took their seats for the first hour, and she noticed that Joey Winslow wasn't there. "Hey, Vetter," Jasmine said, "We've got great news for you. You're not gonna have to put up with Joey anymore. He ran off to Florida. He's gone for good now." Julie's mind filled with thoughts and emotions. First, for the first time that morning she relaxed, knowing that with Joey gone she might get through her lesson just this once; then she felt a suffocating guilt, knowing that another kid was gone, and she hadn't been able to reach him.

A buzz was going through the class with the news about Joey, and Julie knew she had to get the class and herself on track. "Come on, guys," she said, "We've got to forget about Joey. We need to focus on those of us who are still here."

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