

Taking a cue from business: Maximizing staff development ROI

Don Deshler

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Increasingly, members of the Strategic Instruction Model network report that school districts are cutting back on staff development opportunities as part of cost-saving measures. In light of skyrocketing education costs, administrators often target staff development as one of the first things to go in school budgets.

Perhaps one of the major reasons that these programs are often cut so readily is that, as a group, staff developers have not been successful in persuasively demonstrating that the resources invested in staff development yields high returns for participants, for students, and for the school organization itself. It is important that we start to seriously consider how we might assess the work we do in the staff development process as a means of determining the *return on investment (ROI)* that schools receive as a result of allotting limited resources to these activities.

A few basics on ROI

Imagine a school administrator who—fully aware that if he or she doesn't make effective use of limited district resources, someone else will be given the chance—launches a tough program to improve the return on investment on all school expenditures. ROI has two components: a numerator and a denominator. In the business world, the numerator is generally seen as “net income”; the denominator is viewed as the “net investment” or costs used to produce income for the organization. The overall ROI increases to the extent that one of two things happens:

1. net income increases
2. net investment decreases.

Further, in business, managers generally know that it is typically easier to reduce costs (that is, cut the denominator) than it is to increase income (that is, increase the

$$ROI = \frac{\text{Net Income}}{\text{Net Investment}}$$

Calendar

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

March 4-6, 1999
Southeast Regional
Update Meeting
Embassy Suites
Charleston, South
Carolina

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

April 21-24, 1999
Update Meeting
St. Johns Island, Virgin
Islands

July 8-10, 1999
National SIM Trainers'
Conference
Holidome
Lawrence, Kansas

Trainer news

- **Judy O'Malley** of West Palm Beach, Florida, plans to welcome her third grandchild soon, when her daughter travels to China to adopt a baby girl.
- **Joyce Rademacher** of Oak Point, Texas, has had a busy and successful year. Joyce is the author of the recently published *Quality Assignment Routine*, and she's also had five articles published in various educational journals.
- **Bob Sanders** of Scotch Plains, New Jersey, received the Teacher of the Year award for the 1997-98 school year. Bob believes teaching learning strategies to teachers and students helped him earn the award.
- **John Schmidt** of Overland Park, Kansas, received a 25-year pin for his years of service in special education in the Shawnee Mission Public Schools.

Send your news to Julie Tollefson at the Center for Research on Learning, 3061 Dole, Lawrence, KS 66045 or e-mail Julie at jtollefson@ukans.edu

STRATENOTES is published eight times from September through May and once every summer as part of Strateworks of the International Training Network by the Center for Research on Learning, 1998-99, cost \$35.00. Permission to reproduce any or all parts of *Stratenotes* to support training activities is hereby given.

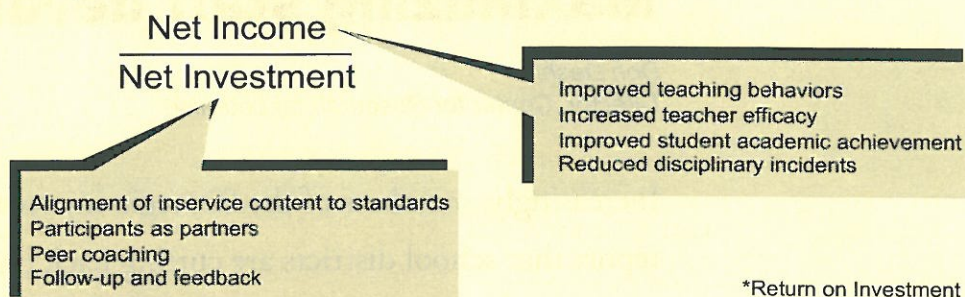
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numerator). It is often easier to cut costs than it is to create new markets or anticipate changing customer needs in pursuit of an increase in income. Hence, when managers are under intense pressure for a quick ROI improvement, they often look to the denominator for their solution. This readily explains why, in recent years, we have read so much about downsizing, restructuring, mergers, and reengineering in the world of business

deemed critical by key stakeholders in the educational enterprise. In other words, we have no guarantee that high workshop ratings will increase the numerator. Thus, we need to shift our focus to those factors that result in improvements in things decision makers deem to be central to improving school performance.

When considering the ROI denominator within an educational context, there are several factors that

Staff Development ROI*



and industry. All of these are mechanisms that business uses to improve its return on investment.

Applying ROI to staff development

The concept of ROI has some powerful implications for the work that we do both in staff development and in the classroom. Let's review some ways that ROI can be improved through our work in staff development. Turning first to the numerator: Whereas in business we think in terms of net income, in education, it would be logical to think in terms of such things as improved teaching behaviors, increased teacher efficacy, improved student academic achievement, and reduced disciplinary incidents. In short, we must consider any indices that would result in an improvement in those outcomes valued by students, parents, teachers, and administrators. As staff developers, we must continually focus our energies on important outcomes. *Clearly, receiving high ratings in a staff development workshop is no guarantee that improvement will be noted in those factors*

research has told us must be present to maximize the outcomes. In other words, there are certain "investments" that must be made in the nature of the staff development process if we want to realize quality outcomes. Regrettably, like managers in business, administrators in education frequently minimize or cut back on critical investments that must be present if the overall cost of staff development is to produce a good return on that investment. Among the factors that have been found to make a significant difference in the quality of staff development efforts are the following:


- **Aligning staff development content to outcome standards:** To improve student performance on outcome standards, it is imperative that what is taught in staff development offerings be in alignment with those standards. Alignment of staff development content requires careful conceptualization, coordination, and planning.
- **Engaging participants as full partners in planning and executing staff development:** There is ample

evidence that teachers gain greater benefits from staff development experiences if they are engaged as active partners in planning both the content and formats used. Efforts to engage participants in all phases of the staff development process and to provide them with both voice and choice requires additional planning and flexibility.

- **Building in opportunities for peer coaching:** One of the most powerfully documented procedures for improving the outcomes of staff development work is to engage participants in peer coaching arrangements after the formal inservice session(s). The support, accountability, and opportunities for practice and feedback with colleagues have been shown to markedly affect both the rate and quality of implementation of educational improvements.
- **Providing sufficient time and support for planning and implementation:** Becoming proficient with new innovations generally requires significant time to both think about and plan for ways to integrate newly learned procedures into ongoing classroom routines. In addition, time is needed to practice the new procedure and receive feedback. Scheduling time for these

activities *as an integral part* of the staff development process is a significant factor in helping teachers master a new teaching practice.

Regrettably, most staff development experiences in today's schools do not incorporate any, let alone all, of these factors. To the contrary, these factors are often the first to get cut as a part of education's attempt to save costs, downsize, restructure, and reengineer itself. Although the elimination of these factors from staff development programs is an efficient way to save costs and temporarily appease higher administration and school boards, the *apparent* improvement in the educational ROI through this reduction in the denominator is only window dressing. In reality, the dollars spent on staff development sessions that are void of the four factors bulleted above seldom result in significant improvements in student outcomes. Hence, the dollars spent are largely a wasted investment; the long-term return on investment is very poor!

As staff developers, we need to do all that we can to convince educational decision makers how important it is for them not to shortsightedly cut those factors in a staff development program that can substantially improve their long-term return on staff development investments. 

Job opportunity

We are aware of an opportunity for a seasoned strategies teacher to relocate to South Bend, Indiana, to tutor a student at Notre Dame University. The position includes excellent pay and benefits. If you are interested, contact Don Deshler at CRL for more information. (785) 864-4780.

Trainers honored

SIM Trainers Judy O'Malley and Marsha Kufel of West Palm Beach, Florida, received this year's Jane Langenbach Award during the annual Florida SIM Trainers' Update Meeting. The award recognizes outstanding performance as a trainer. It was established in memory of Jane, who was one of the original strategies trainers in Florida.

CRL news

We are please to announce that Jeff Thomas has joined the CRL staff. Jeff's primary responsibility will be to produce *Stratellite Connection* videotapes. We are very fortunate to tap Jeff's expertise. He is retired from the Air Force, where he was a professional video producer. He also has been a television photographer and editor in Colorado Springs. Jeff has come to the University of Kansas to obtain a degree in film studies.

Share your ideas

You may have ideas for

- convincing educational decision makers of the importance of the four factors listed in the article
- measuring the effectiveness of staff development programs in ways that make a difference to stakeholders

If you would like to share those ideas with other trainers, send them to the Center for Research on Learning, attn.: *StrateNotes*, 3061 Dole, Lawrence, KS 66045. You also may post your ideas on StrateNet or e-mail them to us at jtolfelson@ukans.edu.

SIM training opportunities in 1999

Pedagogies for Academic Diversity in Secondary Schools Workshop for Preservice Educators

May 25-29, 1999 (Tuesday-Saturday)

\$510

This workshop is for college/university faculty involved in teacher education programs, specifically educators who prepare teachers who will be responsible for large group content-area instruction in general education middle- and high-school settings. This workshop will enable faculty to prepare teachers to implement a variety of teaching routines designed to ensure mastery of critical ideas and concepts. Applications are due by April 1, 1999.

Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Workshop Level I

July 19-21, 1999 (Monday-Wednesday)

\$350

Teachers who have had no training in SIM or perhaps have been trained in only one or two strategies will benefit from this workshop. The SIM Level I Workshop is designed for teachers of students who are at risk for school failure, including those who have mild disabilities. Teachers will become familiar with the SIM Overview and will be taught to implement the SLANT, Sentence Writing, Word Identification, and Test-Taking strategies as well as one Content Enhancement Routine. Registration is due by May 7, 1999.

Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Workshop Level II

July 22-24, 1999 (Thursday-Saturday)

\$350

This workshop is for teachers of students who are at risk for school

Workshop fees, application forms

Training fees cover the cost of materials provided with the training. Participants will be responsible for their own transportation, housing, and meals.

Applications or registration forms for training at the University of Kansas are available from Janet Roth, Training Coordinator, KU-CRL, 3061 Dole Center, Lawrence, KS 66045, (785) 864-4780.

failure. It will provide training for educators who already have been trained in SIM procedures and have implemented some of the strategies or routines with students. Teachers may select a total of six strategies or routines from the following offerings: Error Monitoring, Paragraph Writing, Theme Writing, Visual Imagery, Self-Questioning, Vocabulary, Memory, Test-Taking, and Assignment Completion Strategies and several Content Enhancement Routines. Registration is due by May 7, 1999.

Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Workshop Content Enhancement

July 19-23, 1999 (Monday-Friday)

\$395

This workshop is designed to provide an opportunity for teachers to learn new methods to teach large amounts of content to academically diverse classes in "learner friendly" ways. In this hands-on workshop, participants will plan how to use Content Enhancement Routines to enhance the ways they present content and improve students' ability to organize, understand, and remember critical information. Registration is due by May 7, 1999.

Workshop for Potential SIM Content Enhancement Trainers

August 2-6, 1999 (Monday-Friday)

\$510

Participants in this workshop will be

selected through an application process. Individuals who have previously been trained in and have successfully implemented a variety of Content Enhancement Teaching Routines will be trained to begin the process of becoming a Content Enhancement Trainer. Applications will be accepted from individuals who have administrator support and can submit a portfolio of teaching devices showing implementation of a variety of teaching routines throughout a course. Routines are not taught during the workshop; the focus is on the training process. Applications should be postmarked by April 10, 1999.

Workshop for Potential SIM Learning Strategy Trainers

August 2-6, 1999 (Monday-Friday)

\$510

Participants in this workshop will be selected through an application process. Individuals who have been trained in the Learning Strategies Curriculum and have implemented a variety of learning strategies will be trained to be potential trainers. Teachers need to have implemented at least four strategies; supervisors and coordinators must have implemented at least two strategies with at least one student. Strategies are not taught at the workshop. The focus is on the training process. Applications should be postmarked by April 10, 1999.

Registration Form

National SIM Trainers' Conference

July 8-10, 1999

Holidome

Lawrence, Kansas

Name: _____

Social Security Number (required): _____

Work Address: _____

Work Phone: _____

Home Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

I give permission for CRL to include my name, address, and phone number in a listing to be distributed to conference participants: **yes** **no**

How many previous National SIM Trainers' Conferences have you attended? _____

Registration Fee

All 3 Days

Thursday-Saturday, July 8-10

Early Bird: **\$90**

Registrations postmarked after May 1: **\$100** \$ _____

2 Days

☐ Thursday, July 8

☐ Friday, July 9

☐ Saturday, July 10

(Please check the days you plan to attend.)

Early Bird: **\$70**

Registrations postmarked after May 1: **\$80** \$ _____

1 Day

☐ Thursday, July 8

☐ Friday, July 9

☐ Saturday, July 10

(Please check the day you plan to attend.)

Early Bird: **\$45**

Registrations postmarked after May 1: **\$55** \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Make check payable to KU-CRL

Mail to Janet B. Roth

The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning

3061 Dole

Lawrence, KS 66045

Your receipt for registration will be available at the conference.

StrateNotes January 1999

Conference information

The National SIM Trainers' Conference will be July 8-10, 1999, at the Lawrence Holidome. The sessions on new manuals most likely to be presented are the following:

- Cooperative Problem Solving Strategies
- The Inspect Strategy, by Charlie Hughes, for using spell checkers
- The Proficiency in Sentence Writing Strategy

In addition, manuals that have been published during this past year (*Course Organizer, Recall Enhancement, Framing, Fundamentals of Sentence Writing, Quality Assignment, and Practicing the Storage Strand Strategies*) will be covered in conference sessions.

We also promise to bring in a well-known, inspirational speaker and to offer in-depth sessions on some strategies and routines.

Trainers who plan to attend the conference may make specific requests. These requests should be made now, while we are planning the program.

Events & materials

Your three-day conference registration fee includes the following:

- Friday lunch
- snacks at the Thursday social
- Saturday continental breakfast
- training materials

One- or two-day registration fees cover training materials and special events occurring on the days for which you are registered.

Kaleidoscope session returns

The 1999 National SIM Trainers' Conference will feature the return of our popular kaleidoscope session. This new way of sharing and exchanging information proved to be a hit with 1998 conference participants.

The kaleidoscope session is designed to allow more people to trade ideas, tips, and successes. Participants move through several stations, hearing three-minute presentations at each one.

The kaleidoscope presentations compliment the traditional poster session. If you have an idea that doesn't lend itself well to a traditional poster, consider presenting it during the kaleidoscope session. Please also be thinking of ideas you can present in the traditional poster format.

Conference reservations

Rooms are available at the Lawrence Holidome for \$65 per night plus 10.9 percent tax. Reservations may be made with the hotel by calling (785) 841-7077, ext. 8902. 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 1, 1999. After that, reservations will be taken on a space-available basis only, and the hotel cannot guarantee the special rate.

Call for Presentations

National SIM Trainers' Conference

July 8-10, 1999

Lawrence, Kansas

We invite all of you who have designed great programs and materials to share your ideas with other SIM Trainers during the 1999 National SIM Trainers' Conference. We offer three options for sharing during the conference: one-hour presentations, the poster session, and the return of our popular kaleidoscope session. See information at left to learn more about the kaleidoscope session.

If you would like to give a one-hour presentation or to participate in the poster or kaleidoscope session, please complete the application form below and return it by **May 1, 1999**, to KU-CRL, 3061 Dole, Lawrence, KS 66045.

Presentation

Title of Presentation:

Description (*No more than 150 words; attach another page, if necessary.*):

How much time do you need for this presentation? _____

Poster Session

Title of Program:

Description (*No more than 150 words; attach another page, if necessary.*):

Kaleidoscope Session

Title of Program:

Description (*No more than 150 words; attach another page, if necessary.*):

Conference Meetings

I would like to meet with the following CRL staff members:

Staff member:

Topic:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Strategies, routines, or topics I would like to have included on the conference agenda: _____

Strateworks membership benefits

This issue of *Stratenotes* has been sent to all trainers, active and inactive. Trainers must meet the following criteria to maintain an active status:

1. Attend an update training session every two years. The Center for Research on Learning publishes four to six new instructional products every year. These are presented at each of the update sessions so that SIM Trainers can be on the cutting edge with the most current thinking and developments relative to strategic instruction. Trainers have several options for participating in update training sessions. Every year, CRL hosts a national conference and several regional meetings. See the calendar on page 1 for a list of the meetings planned for 1999.
2. Maintain a membership in *Strateworks*. *Strateworks* is a collection of different tools produced by CRL to communicate with the SIM Network on a continuing basis:
 - *Stratenotes*—a newsletter designed to present ideas on current trends in education relevant to strategic instruction as well as information about new material releases and

training sessions (published nine times a year).

- *Strategram*—a publication aimed at practicing teachers that contains hands-on classroom implementation ideas (published six times a year).
- *StrateNet*—an electronic communications network that enables SIM Trainers to communicate with each other and with CRL and to receive “hot-off-the-press” information electronically.
- *Stratellite Connection*—videotaped programs designed to show teaching demonstrations and to hear from SIM Trainers and CRL staff. (A limited number of free copies are available for study groups and active network trainers. Others can be purchased for \$15.)
- *StrateDirectory*—a listing of all trainers who complete the Directory Information Form. The form is available at update training meetings and in the back of current *StrateDirectories*.
- *StratePubs*—recent articles describing research of interest to SIM Trainers.

Strateworks Renewal 1998-1999

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Work Phone: _____

Please indicate at which address you prefer

to receive mail: _____ home _____ work

E-mail address: _____

Mail completed form and your payment of \$35
to KU-CRL, 3061 Dole, Lawrence, KS 66045.

CRL technology notes

- Our new *Introduction to Strategic Instruction* CD-ROM made its debut during the 1998 National SIM Trainers' Conference in July. It also will be distributed at regional meetings in 1999. If you are unable to attend one of the meetings, you may get a copy by calling the Center for Research on Learning at (785) 864-0617. The cost is \$10 plus \$4 shipping and handling.
- The CRL Web site provides information about the Center for Research on Learning, our research, our products, and our coming events. Visit the site at www.ku-crl.org.
- Trainers may now access *StrateNet* through the Center's Web site. To access your *StrateNet* desktop from the main CRL Web page (www.ku-crl.org/htmlfiles/core.html), do the following:
 1. Click on *StrateNet*.
 2. Select Web Login.
 3. Click on the Login button.
 4. Enter your user name and password.
 5. Click on the OK button.
If you do not have a valid name and password, you must contact Andy Barker, *StrateNet* Administrator, to obtain one. Andy may be reached through e-mail at abarker@ukans.edu or by calling the Center at (785) 864-4780. You must be an active trainer to obtain a *StrateNet* user name and password.

Nominees sought for leadership award

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 Training Network who regularly attend update training sessions; maintain *Strateworks* memberships; share knowledge with other members of the network through *Strategram*,

trainer reports, *StrateNet*, or presentations at national, regional, or state conferences; and participate in such SIM opportunities as regional committees, preservice studies, or *Stratellite Connection* study groups.

Please make nominations either verbally or in writing by **March 1, 1999**, to Janet Roth, KU-CRL, 3061 Dole, Lawrence, KS 66045, (785) 864-4780. Janet may be reached electronically through *StrateNet* or through Internet e-mail at jroth@ukans.edu. Be sure to include your name and a reason you are nominating the person.

Trainer request

Elaine Fine, a SIM Trainer from New Jersey, has requested information about any teachers who have used the strategy approach with students with hearing impairments. In one of the districts in which Elaine provides training, a group of teachers works with this population. She would like to connect them to others, if possible. Elaine may be reached through *StrateNet* or we can forward your information to her.

FIRST CLASS

University of Kansas
STRATENOTES Volume 7-Issue #4
CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON LEARNING
Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities
3061 Dole Center
Lawrence, Kansas 66045