Stratenotes

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străt-ə-notes: an international newsletter for SIM Trainers

Basic Training

Presenting Learning Strategies

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Calendar

June 12-16, 2000
Workshop for Potential SIM Learning Strategies Trainers
Cocoa Beach, Florida

June 20-23, 2000
Workshop for Potential SIM Content Enhancement Trainers
Seattle, Washington

June 26-30, 2000
Workshop for Potential SIM Learning Strategies Trainers
Connecticut

July 6-8, 2000
International SIM Trainers' Conference
Lawrence, Kansas

July 10-12, 2000
Advanced Trainers' Workshop: Teacher-Guided Professional Development
Lawrence, Kansas

July 17-19, 2000
Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Workshop Level I
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

July 20-22, 2000
Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Workshop Level II
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

July 17-21, 2000
Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Workshop Content Enhancement
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

July 25-28, 2000
Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Writing Strategies Workshop
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

(continued on page 2)

During the 1999 International SIM Trainers' Conference, longtime SIM Trainer Jerri Neduchal of Orlando, Florida, shared her knowledge and experience with newer SIM Trainers. Jerri packed her "Process of Presenting Learning Strategies" session full of hints, tips, and activities that provided great ideas for all trainers, regardless of experience level. The session covered every aspect of training, from developing a training outline to options for varying presentation modes to tips for tailoring a training session to fit a time limit. This issue of *Stratenotes* features the second of two articles summarizing Jerri's presentation. The first article, which appeared in *Stratenotes* Volume 8, No. 3 (November/December 1999), focused on PROCESS, a mnemonic Jerri developed for the session (see the box on page 4). This article will take a close look at how to structure training sessions, using the *Test-Taking Strategy* as an example.

"My objective is to share with you as much as I can about the process of presenting and provide as much assistance as you need," Jerri said as she introduced the session. She ran the session much like she would a training session, pausing periodically to describe the thinking behind the activities she shared. Some activities, such as the warm up, she conducted in their entirety; others, she simply described in detail before moving on to the next section of the training.

For those of you who missed the session last year and wish you hadn't, Jerri will present it again during the 2000 International SIM Trainers' Conference in July.

Warm up

Every professional development session should always include a warm-up activity, Jerri said. The time spent on this activity should be directly related to the number of hours in which participants will be taking part in professional development. If your session is after school, after participants have worked all day, Jerri advised spending no more than 10 minutes on the warm-up activity. If the group will be together all day long, 15 minutes will be appropriate. Regardless of the time you have, *always* do a warm up.

For the session warm-up activity, Jerri instructed participants to pair up and share three things with each other:

- their names
- where they each were from
- the best thing about being in Lawrence thus far in the conference

After the pairs had time to talk together for a few minutes, they introduced each other to the bigger group.

More calendar

July 31-August 4, 2000
Workshop for Potential SIM Content Enhancement Trainers
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

July 31-August 4, 2000
Workshop for Potential SIM Learning Strategy Trainers
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

July 31-August 4, 2000
Workshop for Potential SIM Learning Strategy Trainers
Seattle, Washington

New on the Web

- **SIMville,** resources especially for SIM Trainers. Resources for new trainers added recently:
  - -Guidelines for setting up SIM Training
  - -General strategy session
- **May Spotlight.** *Seeking first to understand:* Using interviews to make professional development sessions more successful.
- International Conference information, including registration forms to be downloaded.

www.ku-crl.org

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Another warm-up idea Jerri shared with the group involved using famous pairs (Mickey and Minnie, Bill and Hillary, Frick and Frack). Write each name on a separate index card and pass them out to people as they come in the room. When it's time for the activity, have the participants seek out the other half of their famous pairs (Bill seeks Hillary, Frick looks for Frack, etc.) and introduce themselves, first to each other and then to the group.

Jerri and her colleagues are a terrific source of ideas for warm ups and other activities. They frequently present sessions full of ideas for activities, such as last year's "Red Hot & New," at SIM conferences. Look for more ideas during this year's international conference when Jerri and Sheri Fiskum present "Pump It Up."

Overview of Test-Taking

As you are preparing to present your professional development session, review the transparencies provided in the *Test-Taking Strategy Trainer's Guide*. Select only the most important transparencies to use during the session and carefully plan your transparency sequence to best support your presentation goals. You want the presentation to be meaningful, Jerri said, not just an "exercise in flipping."

Be prepared during your session for special circumstances to alter your course slightly. The following are two common circumstances that you might encounter:

- Some of your participants may not have attended a SIM Overview before coming to the *Test-Taking Strategy* session. It is important that you tell them a little about the Strategic Instruction Model and the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning at this time.
- During the overview, you may ask the group why this strategy is important. At least one participant likely will point to state standards as an answer. Tell the group that you will talk about the strategy first and later address how it can be adapted and used for standardized tests. It is important that participants understand the strategy completely before you begin discussing adaptations.

Jerri recommends the following sequence for the strategy overview portion of the session:

- Show that strategies are based on mnemonic devices.
- Show the mnemonic, PIRATES.
- Talk about the rationales for using the *Test-Taking Strategy* and go over them one by one.

  The Rationales behind the Test-Taking Strategy transparency contains quite a bit of information. In a large room with a large number of participants, the text must be big so everyone in the room can read it.

  Jerri usually puts a copy of this overhead in the packet she distributes to participants. Be selective about the transparencies you include in their packets, she cautions. The Rationales transparency is a good one to include because it will remind participants of key information they have heard during the session. It also will be good information for them to share with parents during open house meetings or conferences.
- Talk about the success formula for tests.

  This part of the presentation will require that you talk briefly about the strategies in the formula other than the *Test-Taking Strategy*, Jerri said. In many, if not most, of your sessions, the participants will not have had any contact with these other strategies. Your job here is to clearly show that these strategies also help students become better test takers. Point out that the other strategies in the formula—*LISTS, FIRST, LINCS, Paired Associates*—are study strategies, whereas the *Test-Taking Strategy* is not a study strategy. The *Test-Taking Strategy* provides a method for students to attack a test; it has nothing to do with studying.

- Talk about philosophical underpinnings.
- Talk about research results.

  In this section, explain the results so that they make sense to participants. For example, Jerri said, the Results transparency indicates that use of the *Test-Taking Strategy* has resulted in raising student scores 10 percentage points. Emphasize that an increase in test scores from 65 percent to 75 percent (10 percentage points) is an increase of almost two letter grades.
- Display the Selecting Students transparency and let participants read it for themselves.

  Always give some responsibility to participants to read on their own during the session, Jerri said.

> At this point in the presentation, Jerri pauses until the manuals have been distributed.

- Talk about what the manual looks like.

  The transparency describing the contents of the *Test-Taking Strategy* manual gives an overview of the way the book is set up. Do not try to give details about the Stages of Acquisition and Generalization at this point. You will lose your audience.
- Talk about the introductory pages.

  Jerri gives participants a highlighter and tells them to flip through the introductory pages, highlighting information as she points it out. After the session, they can read the whole manual on their own, paying particular attention to these parts. (Participants will need to read the entire manual before they teach the strategy.) At this point, Jerri also notes the eight Stages of Acquisition and Generalization and lets participants know that they will cover each stage individually later in the session.

  "I would not spend more than 10 minutes talking about pieces of the introductory pages of the manual," Jerri said. "You can spend less than 10, but I wouldn't spend more. You pick out what you think is important for them to know."

Stages of instruction

During this part of the conference session, Jerri shared many ideas for presenting the Stages of Acquisition and Generalization. She did not provide details for ***each*** stage at this time. However, she did make a training outline available to participants. Look for similar training outlines in a future issue of *Stratenotes* or in the SIM Trainer Resources area of the Center's Web site (www.ku-crl.org).

Stage 1: Pretest and Make Commitments

During this portion of the professional development session, administer the *Test-Taking Strategy* pretest to participants. Then, tell them to set it aside to be graded later. Jerri said she and her colleagues have found that the sessions are much more effective if the group studies the scoring guidelines before grading the pretest.

Direct participants to look at the manual. Talk about Stage 1 as it is presented in the manual. Review the layout of the first page of Stage 1 instructions. Point out that the first page lists goals, all of the materials a teacher needs during this stage of instruction, how to prepare, and how much time to allow. This pattern repeats throughout the manual for each stage of instruction.

Stage 2: Describe

Describe is a very thorough, long stage to present, Jerri said. It is the teaching stage, and every participant needs to understand it before leaving the session. If the only thing a participant takes away from the whole day is an understanding of this stage, that's fine, she said. As a trainer, you will need to spend much more time on the Describe stage than on any other, because teachers must be comfortable ►

Jerri's tips

Advertising

In the advertising distributed before the training session, be very clear about what you are going to teach. This not only will help establish expectations, but it also will minimize the number of people who attend your session expecting you to present about something else or who expect your presentation to be aimed at a different target audience.

Agenda

Post the day's agenda on the wall. Jerri has found that if the agenda is distributed as part of the packet given to participants, it often goes overlooked. Even if the trainer goes over the agenda, some of the participants at the end of the day will say that it would have been nice to have an agenda.

Circulate

While participants work on activities independently or in groups, circulate and listen to conversations and the questions they ask each other. This will help you know what's coming before it comes.

Transparencies

When you use a sheet of paper to cover part of a transparency, put it underneath the transparency so you can still see what it says. This will help you stay oriented to what you're talking about.

PROCESS: Presenting Learning Strategies

Jerri kicked off the conference session by introducing participants to PROCESS, a mnemonic she developed especially for this occasion. The mnemonic reminds SIM Trainers of steps they need to take to ensure a successful outcome to their efforts:

- Prepare all training materials (manuals, packets, and transparencies)
- Refresh your memory of the specific strategy
- Outline your personal objectives and participant objectives
- Create a training agenda that includes a balance of direct instruction and participant involvement
- Establish your credibility by using personal stories related to strategies
- Solidify the presentation by modeling critical teaching behaviors
- Self-evaluate and sing "hallelujah" when finished

Jerri's tips

Page numbers

Always check the page numbers on your training outline because the books often change. You need to be prepared with page numbers. People are constantly checking through the manuals for what you are talking about. Always give the page numbers and wait for them to get there.

Interaction

Try to involve the audience as much as possible throughout the session. The teachers in your group represent a vast amount of collective knowledge.

Audience

Focus your presentation to meet audience needs. Administrators want to hear the bottom line. They usually will not come for a full day. They want to hear about the research and about the results. Teachers, in contrast, want to hear how the strategy works and how they can make it work for them.

Flexibility

You can plan every aspect of a professional development session, focusing on the audience you expect, and still be confronted by a surprise pocket of people who have heard about the session but whose interests do not match your presentation goals. You can acknowledge the group but you cannot change what you are presenting in midstream solely for that group. You *can* say, for example, that you will address their concerns at the end of the session.

with the information in this stage. You will not be able to spend the same amount of time on every stage, Jerri said.

During the Describe Stage, indeed during the entire session, Jerri integrates lots of participant involvement.

"Why would you the trainer stand up and present the entire Describe Stage when you already know it and your goal is to get teachers comfortable with it?" she asks.

So at the very beginning of the discussion of the first step of the *Test-Taking Strategy*, Jerri uses an activity to introduce the first substrategy, PASS. See "Test-Taking Strategy Activity," described on page 7. Jerri repeats the Test-Taking Strategy Activity to introduce the second substrategy, RUN.

At this point, *participants* have already done the first two steps, Jerri said, so now *you* do the next step (Step 3: Read, Remember, Reduce). Direct participants to the page in the manual, then talk about it. Explain the two kinds of reduction: matching and multiple choice. Distinguish between matching, in which you mark out the letters of answers you know to be correct as you write them in the blank, and multiple choice, in which you mark out answers you know to be wrong. As the trainer, you also talk about the next two steps of PIRATES, then for Step 6: Estimate, return to the letters activity. By this point, participants know what you are doing and they are ready for you, Jerri said. Briefly explain the ACE substrategy as a guessing technique and explain how to do it. Then let participants complete the activity in their groups as before.

While they are studying and talking in their groups, display the Absolute Words and Non-Absolute Words transparency. You do not have to talk about this transparency, Jerri said.

Hint: Jerri and her colleagues use "A-ONE," the first letters of the absolute words, to help students remember them.

Stage 3: Model

In the Model Stage of *Test-Taking Strategy* workshops, Jerri advises beginning by modeling how to use the strategy for a couple of sections of a test, but then involve participants. After the first few sections, they won't be listening, she said.

Stage 5: Controlled Practice and Feedback

Controlled practice is a very good segment to start after lunch, Jerri said, because it forces participants to really concentrate and gets them involved in the session again.

Begin training in this stage by reviewing the evaluation guidelines: "Get out the books and the highlighters," Jerri said.

Have participants read the section of the manual that explains what scoring means.

"It's very clear in the book," Jerri said, "but you have to give them time to read it."

After they have looked at the evaluation guidelines, distribute copies of Scott Strong's test from the training packet and the corresponding completed example score sheet. Give participants time to go over these items with a partner. (Always have participants work with a partner during this segment.)

During this portion of the session, participants ***must*** practice scoring. "That drives them crazy," Jerri said. "But if you don't practice scoring, they have no way of assessing students when they leave."

Have participants grade their own pretests. Be prepared for a lot of excitement in the room, Jerri said, because they will know by now that they have missed the first 10 or 12 items required by the *Test-Taking Strategy.* Jerri reminded conference participants that the key to grading the pretest is in the back of the book, but she does not tell that to teacher groups while they are working on this exercise.

After participants have graded their pretests, uncover the score sheet transparency a little at a time, rather than revealing the whole sheet at once. Explain each piece as you uncover it. The reason for this piece-by-piece approach is that the score sheet as a whole is too visually distracting for participants. They won't be able to grasp what you are trying to convey to them.

Modifying the strategy

One issue that comes up frequently during *Test-Taking Strategy* professional development sessions is how to adapt the strategy to fit standardized testing situations. When participants ask whether students can use this strategy for standardized tests, Jerri advises that you be honest in your answer: "It can be very helpful in taking tests, as long as the strategy is taught the correct way."

In standardized testing situations, Jerri said, rules and regulations likely will prevent students from performing all of the PIRATES steps. As a result, SIM Trainers and teachers need to help students look at the strategy and determine what steps they ***can*** use.

Caution: Before attempting to help students modify the strategy in this way, teachers must master all of the steps of the *Test-Taking Strategy* first. Students, too, must learn PIRATES to mastery first.

"You can't modify something you don't know," Jerri said. "What we're heading for here is automatic levels. You would not ever tell them these modifications in the process of teaching the initial strategy."

Jerri offered the following example of modifications that may need to be made by students using the *Test-Taking Strategy* for standardized tests.

In most standardized testing, students are not allowed to turn back to completed sections (the T step). Often, students aren't allowed to write on the test page. However, they ***can*** bring a piece of notepaper on which they can write PIRATES. They can still use the P step, the PASS substrategy, and the I step.

"Even if they can't underline when they inspect the instructions, they can still look for the what and the where," Jerri said.

Students still can use the R and A steps, but the A step will have to be performed page by page. So after students have finished questions on one page, they have to look back and try to answer any they have skipped at that point. They will not be able to perform the T step, and they will not be able to do the S step unless they do it page by page.

Even though under this scenario students are not able to perform all PIRATES steps, they will be able to perform four more steps than they could have without the strategy.

Activities

Jerri gave session participants handouts describing many activities teachers can use when teaching the *Test-Taking*

Jerri's tips

Grade level

You don't need to be totally driven by what the manual says regarding appropriate grade level for the strategy. For example, elementary students can learn pieces of the *Test-Taking Strategy* that will bring up their test scores. They then can learn the whole strategy later. Elementary teachers adapt the strategies for their students all the time.

Timing

Offer the *Assignment Completion Strategy* early in the year, so students have the opportunity to use it more than once before the school year ends.

Requirements

When you are preparing to deliver a staff development session, ask up front for the amount of time you need, Jerri advises. "The *Test-Taking Strategy* is not one that can be sandwiched and done in two hours effectively," she said. The shortest amount of time Jerri has been involved in for presenting this strategy is five hours (two 2.5-hour sessions). Other strategies may lend themselves to two- or three-hour presentations.

Popular strategies

The *Test-Taking Strategy* is one of the most requested of all Learning Strategies, according to Jerri, who has been leading professional development workshops on the use of Learning Strategies for more than 11 years. She presents *Test-Taking* three or four times a year. Because so many schools are under tremendous pressure to increase scores and meet state standards, the *Test-Taking Strategy* may sound like the answer to a school's problems, Jerri said. ***It is important to give participants a very clear picture of what the*** **Test-Taking Strategy** ***is designed to do.*** The *Test-Taking Strategy* is simply a way for students to attack a test. It has nothing to do with studying or with content. You cannot stress this enough during your professional development sessions.

Other popular strategies are the *Sentence Writing Strategy,* because so many state assessments rely on writing and reading skills as measurements, and the *Self-Advocacy Strategy* and the *Paragraph Writing Strategy.* As a SIM Trainer, you must set some prerequisites of your own before offering professional development sessions. For example, Jerri said, you can't teach *Paragraph Writing* to students who can't write sentences.

Strategy. She advises providing similar information in the packets teachers receive at the session. It is very important to direct teachers' attention to these extra materials, she said.

Note: We will try to make some of these materials available to all trainers in the SIM Trainer Resources area of our Web site. We will announce the availability of new information in future issues of *Stratenotes.*

Assignment Completion

After taking participants through the whole professional development process using the *Test-Taking Strategy* as an example, Jerri offered advice regarding how to plan for and present the *Assignment Completion Strategy* following the same basic outline. (See the Assignment Completion Activity on page 7 for an idea of how to kick off a session.)

An important point to remember when presenting the *Assignment Completion Strategy* is that many schools now provide their own planners for students. Because of this, Jerri recommends asking participants to bring their school planners to the Assignment Completion session. They will receive a Quality Quest Planner as part of the session, but by bringing their school planners, they will be able to devise ways to integrate the two planners.

As you talk about the Stages of Acquisition and Generalization, as you show transparencies, and as you describe how the manual is organized, Jerri said, you must be cognizant of the fact that participants brought their own planners. You must set aside time for participants to figure out how they are going to adapt the strategy to be taught with their planners. It is very easy to do, Jerri said, but you must have the time built into the agenda. Otherwise, participants likely will walk away from the session thinking "We have our own planner. It doesn't have all these different kinds of sheets. It doesn't have an Assignment Window. We can't use this."

On the contrary, Jerri said, individual school planners easily can be adapted for use with the strategy. Teachers can duplicate pertinent pieces of the Quality Quest Planner and insert them into school planners, a task made easier by the fact that many school planners are organized into three-ring binders that also include the school handbook.

Jerri Neduchal was a high school teacher who taught Learning Strategies in her integrated English classroom. After teaching Learning Strategies for a couple of years, she was asked to become a SIM Trainer. She found the training very intense and, initially, she said, she wanted to drop out. But she stuck with it and, "You can't shut me up now about SIM," she says. Jerri is now a staunch advocate of the Strategic Instruction Model in her work as a Learning Resource Specialist with FDLRS/Action Resource Center in Florida.

Test-Taking Strategy activity

Preparing for the activity

1. For each of the substrategies in the *Test-Taking Strategy,* cut each letter of the mnemonic out of colored paper. Use different colors for each of the substrategies (for example, green for PASS, yellow for ACE, etc.)
2. On the back of each letter, write the number of the page in the manual on which that step of the substrategy is described. For example, if the P in PASS is described in the *Test-Taking Strategy* manual on page 20, section a, write "20a" on the back of the letter "P."
3. Laminate the letters so you can use them over and over again.
4. Pass the letters out to participants before the training session begins. These will be the basis for forming small work groups later during the session.

Directions for participants

1. Tell participants which color letter to work with (green letters for PASS, yellow letters for ACE, etc.)
2. Direct participants to turn the letter over to see the page number and then find that page in the book and find the information they are supposed to study.
3. Give participants about five minutes to study the information in the book.
4. When study time is up, tell participants to find the people around them who are holding the letters needed to complete the mnemonic. For example, a participant holding the letter A during the ACE discussion will get together with two other people, one holding C and one holding E.
5. Participants then share what they have learned about their letters with other members of the group.

Directions for the trainer

Walk around and listen as the groups are sharing information. When they are finished discussing, return to the overhead projector or chart paper and summarize, pointing out information that may be difficult to understand. For example, in PASS, you will probably need to point out the difference in how time and order are noted on tests: Make a note that when you allot time, you write a number of minutes; when you allot order, you write a number in a circle. Even when participants study this section in the book, they don't always pick up on this difference.

This activity can be used with any of the PIRATES substrategies. If you don't have an even number of people for one of the substrategies (if your group doesn't divide evenly by four for the PASS substrategy, for example), one member of the group will have to take two parts. This should not pose a problem because each part is fairly small.

Assignment Completion Strategy activity

At the beginning of an *Assignment Completion Strategy* professional development session, give an assignment that has several parts to your participants. For example, say, "Today, we're going to give you an assignment to be completed before you leave the session. Before you leave this session, I want you to write a plan that includes how you're going to present this strategy to your students, when you're going to start, and what key points you're going to include."

Ask participants to set the assignment aside, telling them that they will have time to work on the assignment later during the session.

Then ask participants a few questions, which you can display on an overhead transparency or a chart pad.

First, ask participants how they felt when you gave them the assignment. Give them time to think about how they felt and jot down notes, if they want.

Then, ask them what they started to do in their minds: How did they begin to organize for the assignment? Did they panic? Did they take notes? How did they react to the assignment?

Say to participants, "This is how your students feel every time you give an assignment, and they have five other teachers besides you who give assignments all day long." If participants multiply the anxiety they feel by five, that's how students feel.

The rest of the story: Tentative agenda for 2000 SIM Trainers' Conference

July 6-8, 2000 • Lawrence, Kansas

Thursday, July 6

8:00-8:45	Registration
8:45-10:00	Opening session: Vaughn keynote
10:15-11:45	Concurrent sessions
11:45-1:15	Lunch on your own
1:15-5:00	Concurrent sessions
5:15-6:30	Social

Friday, July 7

7:45 – 8:15	Registration
8:15-9:30	General session: Bauwen keynote
9:45 -11:15	Concurrent sessions
11:30-1:00	Luncheon
1:15-2:15	Poster session
2:30-5:00	Concurrent sessions
5:00-5:30	Regional get-togethers

Saturday, July 8

7:00-9:00	Kaleidoscope/continental breakfast
9:15-12:45	Concurrent sessions
1:00-1:30	Closing session

The full agenda will be posted on our Web site when it is completed. See **www.ku-crl.org** for up-to-date information.

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