

Stratenotes

The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning • August 2017 • Volume 25, Issue 6

2017 KUCRL Learning Conference Highlights



The center launched its first KUCRL Learning Conference this summer. Combined with the SIM Conference, it was a success with much energy. Participation in this conference fulfills SIM Professional Developers' requirement for conference attendance. Reuniting with members of the Network means expanding our knowledge and learning about Network members' new adventures, family members, jobs and life.

Presentations and Formats: The various formats and presentations provided a plethora of ways to learn. The Innovators Provoke format was well received as were the Poster and Kaleidoscope sessions. Overall conference evaluation comments were very positive.

Keynotes: Four keynotes provided participants with provocative messages that invited thoughtful consideration regarding perspectives and positions on education. Keynotes were made by international experts including Drs. Yong Zhao, Donald D. Deshler, John Hattie and Jim Knight. The conference videos will be available in SIMville this fall.

Celebrations: The SIM conference has always been a time for celebrations, and we carried that tradition on at the KUCRL Learning Conference. One of the first celebrations was the year pins. SIM PDers receive a five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five or thirty year pin signifying the number of times they have attended the conference in Lawrence. Jean Schumaker received a well-deserved 30 year pin, having never missed a conference. A second celebration was for those receiving their SIM certification, some their first and others their second or third. The certificate ceremony celebration, paired with the social on Wednesday afternoon, ushered in 50 new professional developers. Kudos to them, their Professional Development Leaders and mentors.

The third celebration was the presentation of the 2017 SIM Leadership Awards. Both recipients, Janice Creneti and Cindy Medici, hail from Florida. They have significantly changed the trajectory for teachers and their students both in Florida and through their federal State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). A fourth celebration was the presentation of the book, 30x30+ more stories of success, hope and innovation. Mona Tipton marshaled together this book with Network members' contributed stories that we hope you can use in your work. You will receive one at updates in the coming year, or you can download the pdf on the SIM page sim.kucrl.org.



Congratulations to all those receiving SIM Professional Development certification this year!

• **Arkansas** – Kandi Cowart, CEPD Bonnie Palasak, CEPD

• **Florida** – Mollie Bongiovi, LSPD Dawn Contin, LSPD Janice Kuebler, LSPD Heather Theobald, LSPD Danyle Lewis, CEPD Andrea Smith, CEPD

• **Missouri** – Elizabeth Hanak, CEPD Jen Menkhus, CEPD Erika Van Order, LSPD Cyndy Vincent, LSPD

• **New York** – Kerry Gentile, LSPD Angela Holland, LSPD Aja LaDuke, CEPD Stephanie Negron, CEPD Allison Roberts, CEPD Caroline Schwind, CEPD Kim Tennant, CEPD

• **North Carolina** – Elizabeth Gibbs, CEPD Jessica Mitchell Cline, CEPD Karen Mitchell, CEPD

• **Maryland** – Emily Short, Writing Strategies

• **Texas** – Heather Baker, CEPD Stephanie Ballard, CEPD Susan Bause, CEPD Samantha Bos, LSPD Teri Clement, LSPD Margaret Ann Coleman, CEPD Zenovia DeCuir, LSPD Lacy Dillard, CEPD Kia Greene, LSPD Michael Guillory, CEPD Keitha Hernandez, CEPD Whitney Houston, CEPD Jaime Kinslow, CEPD Cara Lantrip, CEPD Leticia Maynard, LSPD Sapna Patel, CEPD Kim Pena, CEPD Daphne Sewell, LSPD Amber Walker, CEPD Cyntell Washington, LSPD Amanda Wilson, CEPD

• **Virginia** – Linda Freeman, LSPD Dana McCaleb, PDL Whitney Miller, PDL Tammy Potts, LSPD Jocelyn Washburn, PDL



Pictured: Patty Graner, Mike Hock, Amber Walker, Jean Schumaker, Samantha Bos, Keitha Hernandez, Mary Black, Cara Lantrip, Stephanie Patino-Negron, Caroline Schwind, Sue Woodruff, Terri Clement, Elizabeth Gibbs, Jerri Neduchal, Zenovia DeCuir, Karen Mitchell, Pam Leitzell, Jessica Mitchell Cline, Patty Kohler Evans, Kandi Cowart, Renee Calhoon, Bonnie Palasak, Erika Van Order, Sapna Patel, Cyndy Vincent, Dana McCaleb, Lacy Dillard, Whitney Miller, Jocelyn Washburn



2017 Strategic Instruction Model Leadership Awards

Each year the Network is invited to nominate members for the SIM Leadership Award. The award recognizes individuals who have shown exceptional leadership and excellent service to SIM by helping educators become strategic teachers and, as a result, students become strategic learners.

This year, there are two recipients, Janice Creneti and Cindy Medici, both from Florida. Each contributes uniquely and each has a compelling story. Celebrate with them.



Pictured: Patty Graner, Janice Creneti, Jean Schumaker, Cindy Medici, Mike Hock, & Don Desher.



2017 SIM Leadership Award
CINDY MEDICI

Cindy Medici has been a part of growing SIM knowledge in Florida since 1989 when she taught her first SIM strategy, the Paraphrasing Strategy, as a graduate student at the University of Florida. With the support of her graduate advisor Dr. Cecil Mercer, co-author of the Level One manuals in the Strategic Math Series, she developed a thesis, The Effectiveness of a Concrete to Abstract Instructional Sequence with the use of a Mnemonic Device, using the early

materials for the addition and subtraction strategies. After graduation, she taught high school Learning Strategies classes at Northeast High School in Pinellas County, Florida where she saw how giving students an approach to difficult tasks changed their lives, from learned helplessness to empowered learners. As Cindy describes, "I was (and remain) on fire to share these tools with other teachers!"

For this reason, she became a SIM Professional Developer in 1993 and began working with teachers through the Florida Diagnostic Learning and Resources System (FDLRS) Gulfcoast Associate Center.

As a FDLRS Gulfcoast team member from 1997 to 2001, Cindy provided professional development in SIM for Pinellas County, utilizing resources from KUCRL to lead study groups, essentially communities of practice before communities of practice were a thing. In the 90's KUCRL produced a series of videos (Stratellite Connections) focused on surfacing the processes and purposes of SIM and offering suggestions for achieving optimal results. Cindy used these videos in her study groups. Throughout, Cindy was recruiting and mentoring SIM apprentices and new professional developers.

In 2001, Cindy became a Facilitator for the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) where she focused on providing professional development in Content Enhancement Routines to collaborative teaching teams. As the percentage of students with disabilities served in general education settings increased in Pinellas County, she extended professional development to groups of Curriculum and Instruction Coaches at the district and site-level to increase buy-in and use in General Education classrooms. She initiated and coordinated a video coaching project inspired by Jim Knight's work to provide further follow-up support for her professional development sessions. Through her continued strong advocacy for SIM,

she encouraged and coordinated opportunities for all FIN Facilitators to learn Content Enhancement Routines with the vision of increasing their use in inclusive classrooms across the state. In 2013, Cindy became the SIM Project Manager for the Florida State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), where she has engaged with 27 feeder pattern middle and high schools in three districts that struggle with low graduation and proficiency rates for their students with IEPs. She and her assembled team instruct in and support teachers in learning how to implement Content Enhancement Routines and/or Learning Strategies while building an environment to support change in practice.

From her earliest days, Cindy has recruited and mentored SIM Professional Developers, knowing that that is the only way to build and sustain capacity. As a part of her work as SIM Project Manager, she has engaged more than 35 current SIM Professional Developers to support and mentor the next generation, reinforcing implementation fidelity of SIM by providing high quality professional development followed by one-on-one coaching, facilitated planning, professional learning community activities and/or lesson study approaches. She has recruited and assisted potential SIM Professional Developers in each participating district to sustain efforts at the end of the grant, and to date, fifteen project participants have completed Potential Professional Development

oper Institutes and three of those have completed certification requirements.

To further bolster community support of SIM, she has created tools to support the participation of parents in helping their students who are learning Fundamentals in Paraphrasing and Summarizing and using The Unit Organizer Routine by developing and providing overview videos online that can be accessed in three languages.

Cindy has shared her knowledge with other professional developers, attending 20 SIM Conferences since 1998, presenting sessions on supporting administrators, coaching, aligning with district and school initiative and Florida Standards, scale and spread of SIM, and more. She updates and maintains LiveBinders of resources to support implementation of SIM Content Enhancement Routines and Learning Strategies and a wiki of resources for the Florida network. Cindy became a SIM Professional Development Leader in 2014.

Cindy was awarded the FDLRS Don Deshler Making a Difference Legacy Award in February 2017.



Two stories of success from Cindy

The SPDG SIM Project has been one of the greatest successes related to SIM across my career. With a strong vision, adaptable plans, and the necessary resources, our team (including the project staff and the Florida SIM Professional Developer Network) has been able to create differentiated long-term professional learning experiences for teachers that result in improved classroom instruction and outcomes for students. Even with multiple barriers, students with IEP's across our schools have shown improvement. As a sampling, at DeSoto Middle School, the students of early career math and science teachers who used Content Enhancement Routines out-performed students in classes of seasoned teachers not using Content Enhancement Routines. At DeSoto High School, students with IEPs received instruction in SIM Learning Strategies during their Learning Strategies class (a first for this school), and the average GPAs of students has steadily improved from 1.824 to 2.04. At Hardee High School, the percentage of students with IEPs earning C's or better in Biology rose from 24% to 57% over 2 years and the percentage of students with IEPs earning C's or better in Chemistry rose from

53% to 88% over 2 years. It is incredibly rewarding to be able to share instructional strategies that truly make a difference for kids as a full-time job responsibility.

One story that always recharges and reinvigorates my passion for doing the work is the journey of Christina, a gifted young lady with a reading disability. Her mother, Kimberlee, attended our Content Enhancement Routines professional development when Christina was in middle school. She used the routines to organize the information that Christina was learning in her classes throughout her middle and high school experiences. Christina graduated from the Cambridge Program at her high school and is now a very successful sophomore at the University of Florida. This summer, Christina got the chance to meet Dr. Keith Lenz as he was working with our SPDG SIM Professional Developers to prepare for summer professional development. Afterwards, she said to her mother, "That is the man who saved my life." I know her mom, Kimberlee, also had a huge role in supporting Christina's academic success, but the impact of the Routines on her ability to understand critical content was not lost on Christina. Kimberlee shares her personal experiences with teachers and other parents, as she is now an amazing CER Apprentice.



2017 SIM Leadership Award
JANICE CRENETI

Janice Creneti is a science person. She taught high school science classes for 17 years – Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Technology and Animal Science. The vast majority of that experience was with students who struggled in school, and she was struck by how many students deemed “not capable” as learners excelled in hands-on learning settings. “They were clearly capable learners who could solve real-world problems many of my ‘expert’ students could not,” says Janice. “I knew there must be a disconnect between ways they were being taught and what they needed to learn. I began to try to find teaching practices that could bridge that disconnect.”

Janice was introduced to SIM during her first year as an instructional coach. “Sitting in my first SIM professional development session on the Unit Organizer Routine taught by Cindy Medici, I could immediately see the level of scaffolding in the routine would have made all the difference for my students. Since I was an instructional coach without students of my own, I borrowed classrooms to take the Unit Organizer Routine for a spin. In every classroom, students (high school students who don’t admit to liking anything) said it really helped them, why hadn’t we been doing it with them sooner, and

would we please continue to do it for all future units. I got hooked and learned seven more routines from Cindy.”

When Florida was introducing the Biology End of Course (EOC) exam, Janice saw that many teachers were concerned with the volume of content that this new statewide exam could address. She advocated for Content Enhancement as a vehicle for the teacher planning process to help identify what was truly critical in the science courses and standards; she knew Content Enhancement would make the exam more accessible to all students.

In the 2011-2012 school year Janice was the instructional coach for the science department at a Title 1 school in Pinellas County. Her primary focus was supporting implementation of Content Enhancement with fidelity. At the end of that year, the school moved from a 14th place ranking in the district for Biology EOC scores to a 7th place ranking. Furthermore, the school closed the gap on Biology assessments from a 4-point gap in 2014-2015 to a 1-point gap in 2015-2016 between students with IEPs in Title 1 schools and students with IEPs in non-Title 1 schools. A high school in Hardee County Florida where Janice provided professional development and coaching for science teachers over a two-year period increased the number of students with IEPs earning a C or better in Biology from 24% to 57% and in Chemistry from 53% to 88%.

Cindy Medici, Florida’s State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) Project Manager, knows Janice’s skill level as a content specialist, coach, and SIM Professional Developer. “Janice is an

Teachers from the year-long Course First! pilot had the following to say about the impact of routine use in their classrooms:*

“It is something that they (students) actually ask for...I have also noticed that I have some of the highest engagement levels during the routines.” --J. Shipe

“The routines provide a structured way to take notes, review content, develop vocabulary and reading skills, organize chunks of information and know exactly what is important to understand about the unit...My test results are much better, with averages at least one letter grade higher than in previous years.”- P. Lussy

“I have found that by using CERs...student engagement has increased substantially...I have also seen scores improve on assessments and greater confidence on work being attempted. My referral numbers this year are the lowest they have ever been...and none for classroom management...all my students have been working as instructed and expected.” - T. Trealout

The routine use of Content Enhancement has allowed my students to have a sense of comfort when faced with new material. They are more willing to accept challenging topics because they are presented in a manner that they are familiar and comfortable with.”- S. Strickland

**From Leveraging the Strategic Instruction Model in Creating Optimal Learning Environments by Janice Creneti*

amazing asset to have on our team,” says Cindy. “She has a limitless energy and passion for SIM. She challenges our project to remain on the ‘bleeding edge’ of innovation by constantly seeking and trying new approaches while freely sharing what is learned and created with others for the benefit of all students. I am blessed to work with Janice, as I learn with and from her every day.” Patty Graner, Director of Professional Development at KUCRL adds, “Janice shines in her role as a Content Enhancement Professional Developer in this project because of her unique knowledge of the subject matter. She quickly understands how to use these higher order reasoning devices and she brings that rare combination of content expertise, practitioner language and understanding, and coaching savvy to her work.”

Together with Keith Lenz, the SPDG piloted a new approach to professional learning with high school math and science teachers in nine districts called Course First! Course First!, a redesign for Content Enhancement professional development, shifts planning focus to the course level to support creation of coherent units and lessons across a course. It also emphasizes the use of the explicit instructional sequence “Cue-Do-Review” across all classroom activities, even those not involving Content Enhancement. Janice explains, “My initial introduction to CERs was the Unit Organizer. While I caught the fever, other instructional coaches who attended did not. When I explored why, it turned out they had not connected as powerfully with the Unit Organizer as I had. I have tried four different routines as the best one to start with, most often the Unit Organizer, and every time, some teachers would think that it is always the routine to begin with, and others would not connect until a later routine. When I heard Keith talk about why he advocates starting

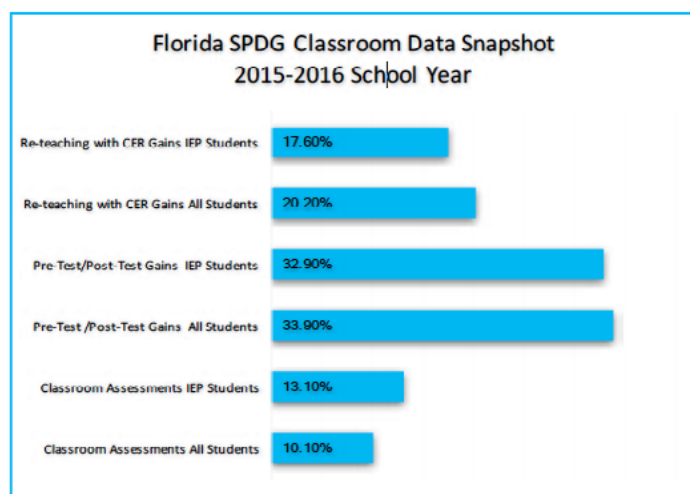


with Course Organizer, it made a lot of sense to me as a way to encourage a more strategic approach to the whole process, so I talked with Cindy about a piloting Course First with a group of science teachers in our district who had a good comfort level with their course standards and with SIM. Keith, Cindy and I spent a lot of time talking about what would need to be in place, and Keith helped us sketch out a plan and worked with our professional developers and coaches.”

Said Lenz, “I can suggest a simple idea or direction and with thought and reflection, Janice is off and running to transform it into classroom transforming practice. She really gets it. She honors the best of our professional development, but she is not trapped by past practices that are grounded in a linear professional development model which I helped to create. I can give no higher praise to a professional developer that challenges the status quo and proves we can do better. Janice and Cindy are rocking the system and making it better, and Janice on the front lines in classrooms is my hero!”

As a result of her SPDG efforts across those nine Florida district middle to high school feeder patterns, many science and math teachers have learned how to coconstruct their course content with their students. Thus, students’ matriculation to the next school or next class can be more seamless. For students who struggle or students with disabilities in those districts, this can mean a richer, more engaging and informed school experience with greater possibilities to graduate and be future ready.

Not only have Janice and Cindy’s SPDG results been appreciated in their state, their results have been shared nationally through the SPDG network. Their experiences are shared with SPDG projects across the country which are also focused on improving academic outcomes for students who struggle. Other project officers at Office of Special Education Programs at the federal Department of Education have expressed interest in the work of the Florida SPDG. Cindy and Janice



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- SIMTRAINER-L - an optional e-mail discussion list for SIM Professional Developers
- *SIMville* - a collection of resources and assets on our website available to active SIM Professional Developers
- *Professional Developer Micro-credentials* - <http://sim.kucrl.org/micro-credentials>

Please visit the SIM Website for more information - <http://sim.kucrl.org/sim>

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SIM CALENDAR

October 10-11, 2017

SIM Writing Workshop
Austin, TX

February 1-2, 2018

Florida SIM Update Conference
Florida, Location TBD

November 2-3, 2017

SIM x Southwest Update Conference
Austin, TX

February 27-28, 2018

Southeast SIM Update Conference
Charleston, SC

June 20-21, 2018

Northeast SIM Update Conference
Glastonbury, CT

For a complete list of SIM events, including those not coordinated by KUCRL, visit SIM.KUCRL.ORG/CLASSES LIST YOUR OPEN SESSIONS ON THE SIM CALENDAR: We are contacted by hundreds of educators each year who have heard about SIM or CLC and are looking for opportunities to learn more. Email information about your open sessions to monatipton@ku.edu to be included in the online SIM Events Calendar.

SIM ONLINE RESOURCES

SIM Website
sim.kucrl.org

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SIMville
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Publication List
kucrl.org/research

Report your professional development <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Post-PDDataSubmissionSurvey>

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STRATENOTES is published six times a year by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning as part of Strateworks for the International Professional Development Network. Publication period 2016–2017; cost \$50.00. Permission to reproduce any or all parts of Stratenotes to support professional development activities is hereby given.

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