Stratenotes

Getting started: SIM micro-credentials

Strategic Instruction Model™ micro-credentials put your SIM knowledge on display. Micro-credentials, commonly known as badges, recognize your investment in professional learning and your dedication to giving students the evidence-based interventions and tools that can make a difference in their lives.

GETTING STARTED FOR ACTIVE SIM™ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPERS: RECEIVING YOUR OWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPER CREDENTIAL(S)

1. Read the July 2015 *Stratenotes* article about micro-credentialing.
2. Contact simpd@ku.edu to request an invitation to join your professional developer credential (LSPD, CEPD, LS-Preservice, CE-Preservice). You will receive an email from Badge List containing a link to join the badge as a "Learner."
3. Click on the link in the invitation. It will take you to the micro-credential page on the Badge List website.
4. Click on the green "Join This Badge" button near the top right-hand side of the page. You will join the micro-credential as a "Learner." This will make you a member of a learning group for Content Enhancement or Learning Strategies. As a member of the group, you will be able to see all of the credentials for all of the strategies or routines available in that group.
5. Notify KUCRL that you have joined the badge by emailing simpd@ku.edu. We will then award the credential to you. Note: Typically at this stage for most micro-credentials, a badge learner would post evidence. However, for your professional developer credential, because you have already demonstrated evidence of mastery to become a professional developer, we will award this credential before you post any evidence.
6. Add evidence to your credential. Be sure to read the Badge Overview for instructions about how to do this.
   - Long-time professional developers may not have access to evidence submitted originally to earn certification. In that case, you can provide more recent evidence that showcases your SIM practice (agendas, evaluations, information about projects in which you are involved, sessions you have conducted, etc.)
   - More recent professional developers may submit examples of the recent evidence submitted to their Professional Development Leader to become certified.

GETTING STARTED FOR ACTIVE SIM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPERS: AWARDING CREDENTIALS TO OTHERS

In order to award credentials, you must be active (be up to date on *Strateworks* membership and update conference attendance), and you must have received your own professional developer micro-credential.

Purchasing credentials

Credentials may be purchased by the learner or by the SIM Professional Developer working with the learner.

Submit a micro-credential order form along with payment to KUCRL. You may download a micro-credential form from http://sim.kucrl.org/micro-credentials. Pro-

Visit: http://sim.kucrl.org/micro-credentials

SIM
Strategic Instruction Model®

SIM™ MICRO-CREDENTIAL LEVELS

Level 1: SIM Professional Learning Credential

KUCRL awards this credential when a recipient attends a professional learning event, workshop, or session to learn about a SIM intervention, including how to teach Learning Strategies or use Content Enhancement Routines in the classroom. The SIM Professional Developer who led the session must submit a post-professional development report to KUCRL and notify KUCRL to award the credential.

Level 2: SIM Fidelity of Implementation Credential

KUCRL awards this credential when a recipient has taught a SIM intervention to students with fidelity, created a portfolio demonstrating proficient implementation, created a narrative log regarding implementation, recorded a video demonstrating key behaviors for self-reflection and coaching, and (optional) interviewed a student about implementation. The recipient must engage in a coaching relationship with a SIM Professional Developer who is active in the SIM Network. When all requirements have been met, the SIM Professional Developer notifies KUCRL to award the credential.

Level 3: SIM Specialist Credential

KUCRL awards this credential when a recipient, under the supervision of a SIM Professional Developer, first implements a SIM intervention with fidelity and then teaches another professional how to teach a strategy or how to teach with a routine; guides the teacher to fidelity; provides and describes coaching to implementation in the teacher's class; and (optional) interviews a student about implementation. When all requirements for this credential have been met, the SIM Professional Developer notifies KUCRL to award the credential. This credential allows the recipient to purchase specific SIM materials and teach others how to use them.
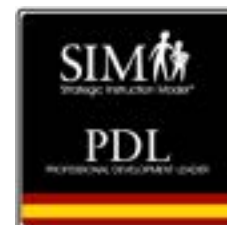
Level 4: SIM Professional Developer Credential

KUCRL awards this credential, the equivalent of the current SIM Professional Developer certificate, in either Learning Strategies or Content Enhancement. This credential is automatically granted to current SIM Professional Developers who are active members of the SIM Network (who have attended an update within the last two years and who have paid their *Strateworks* membership fee for 2015).

Level 5: SIM Professional Development Leader Credential

KUCRL awards this credential when a SIM Professional Developer has earned credentials in both Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement, is an active member of the SIM Network, and has met all requirements to be a SIM Professional Development Leader.

> Five levels of SIM micro-credentials indicate increasingly deeper levels of learning and practice. The micro-credentials can be earned individually, and subsequent levels can build upon previous levels.

vide the name, email address, and type of credential being purchased for each learner. (Example: Janet Roth,jroth@fakemail.com, Fidelity of Implementation, Fundamentals of Sentence Writing).

As a professional developer, you also may purchase credentials in the KUCRL online store. (Note: This section of the online store is not open to the public, so log in is required. Instructions to log in were sent to SIM Professional Developers in March 2015 and will be archived in SIMville. If you need help logging in, contact simpd@ku.edu.) Once in the store:

1. Click on the "Professional Learning" tab.
2. Select "Micro-Credentials."
3. Click on the link in the page introduction to fill in a short form for each learner. Submit each learner's name, email, and the credential(s) each learner will earn. This is the only way we will know to invite your learners to join the Badge List learning group, so don't forget the form! If you are submitting a large number of learners, you can send a spreadsheet to simpd@ku.edu in lieu of the online form.
4. Select the number of each type of credential (Professional Learning, Fidelity of Implementation, Specialist in LS or CE). Add them to the shopping cart and proceed to check out.

When KUCRL receives the order, the learner will be invited via email from Badge List to join the applicable micro-credential group. The link provided in the invitation will take the learner to the specific micro-credential Badge List page, where the learner will click on a "Join this Badge" button. The request to join must be accepted by KUCRL staff, who will admit the learner to the badge. This is a manual process, not automatic, so requests to join that are submitted outside of business hours may not be answered until the next business day.

Supporting the learner

To earn the Fidelity of Implementation and Specialist credentials, evidence of skill and knowledge must be posted, and that evidence must be reviewed and approved by a SIM Professional Developer. Here are the steps you'll need to follow to provide support to a micro-credential learner:

1. Sign in to Badgelist.com. Once signed in, you will see links to any Learning Groups you have joined.
2. Click on the Learning Strategies or Content Enhancement Group link. You will be able to see all of the credentials for all of the strategies or routines available in that group.
3. Scroll through to the credential of the strategy or routine your learner is working toward and click on it.
4. On the credential page, scroll to the bottom to the "Members" section. Members appear alphabetically by first name. If the learner's name does not appear, either KUCRL has not yet processed the order or the learner has not yet accepted the invitation.
5. Click on the learner's name to see the learner's progress toward earning the credential.
6. View the learner's progress and support your learner as he or she progresses through the requirements of the credential.
7. Encourage the learner to communicate with other learners using the Badge Wiki. More information about how to use the Badge Wiki can be found in the FAQ in the micro-credential section of the SIM website (http://sim.kucrl.org/micro-credentials). Only learners and experts of the credential can post in the wiki or see these discussions.

Note: As a SIM Professional Developer, you are not required to join a specific strategy or routine credential to view and support your learners' progress. However, you may want to join the specific credential and post evidence as an example for learners and to show more and deeper evidence of your expertise in a specific strategy or routine than is possible on your Professional Developer Credential badge. In this case, KUCRL will award the credentials to active SIM Professional Developers free of charge.

Awarding the credential

When your learner has completed all of the requirements for the credential to your satisfaction, notify KUCRL at simpd@ku.edu. Provide the date awarded and two or three statements about why you have awarded this credential to this learner. These statements will be attached to the learner's credential, including your name as the awarding SIM Professional Developer, and may be viewed by the public. Upon receiving your request, staff at KUCRL will "flip the switch" to notify Badge List to award the credential.

SIM Leadership Award

Kathy Boyle-Gast

Kathy Boyle-Gast of Athens, Georgia, embodies the qualities that make a great leader. She's energetic and generous. Quick to action and eager to learn. Creative and dedicated. And a tireless advocate for the Strategic Instruction Model™.

Boyle-Gast is the 2015 recipient of the SIM Leadership Award, which 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.

She's been a full-time professional developer since 2006, but she's been involved with SIM for almost 30 years, since participating in reading and writing strategies professional development in 1986. When she used the strategies with her seventh- through ninth-grade special education students in Lexington, Kentucky, she saw rapid improvement for all of her students.

"I was hooked," she says.

After she moved to Georgia, where she found almost no sign of SIM, she assumed a new mission, seeking SIM professional developer accreditation and preparing "to change the landscape of Georgia education." She completed Learning Strategies certification in 1992 and Content Enhancement a few years later. Other teaching responsibilities kept her from professional development work until 2006,

when she left public schools and set out on her own.

Since then, she's provided private tutoring, conducted SIM professional development through the University of Georgia, and worked with more than 25 Georgia school districts involved in state and regional grants, such as the Georgia Drop Out Prevention Project and the Northeast Georgia High School Writing Project.

"I never set up a website or advertised, but by word of mouth, the teacher and student success began to spread, and I gradually began to get requests for SIM PD across the state," she says.

Most of the schools with whom Boyle-Gast works would be characterized as economically deprived and showing inadequate progress based on NCLB measures.

"Many are beginning to realize that all of the 'quick fixes' being thrown at them by the state departments are not making any difference," she says.

With SIM, Boyle-Gast has shown that true change and improved results for students are possible. Take, for example, her work with a small district in Jefferson County, Georgia. For the past three years, with funding from grants from the East Georgia Learning Resource System, Boyle-Gast has provided professional development in SIM writing strategies with the full support of

the district's administration. Instructional coaches, and even the superintendent, attend her sessions.

"We are seeing rigorous implementation from the majority of teachers, and I am in consistent contact with the support people who are in the rooms regularly. It's fantastic," she says.

Students' overall writing scores improved in 2013–2014, resulting in a request from the superintendent to expand strategies instruction in the district.

"The outcomes of these efforts are looking really positive," Boyle-Gast says.

Within the SIM Network, Boyle-Gast has been a hard-working and energetic proponent of SIM. She's attended SIM in the Southeast every year but two since its inception; she's generously shared slides, checklists, rubrics, and other materials; and a couple of years ago, she helped organize an effort to develop scoring keys for use with *Proficiency in the Sentence Writing Strategy* student materials. She's even taken SIM to Ireland and the Bahamas.

Kathy Boyle-Gast: In Her Own Words

Testament to the power of SIM

Early on, after moving from Kentucky to Georgia in 1990, I corresponded with some of my middle school students who were recipients of my first years of teaching the *Sentence Writing Strategy*. One rather cantankerous but very intelligent student with LD (age 13 at the time), who really struggled with written expression prior to the strategies, wrote letters to me for the first two years after my move. He always did the "Search and Check" step, marking subjects and verbs, citing the formula, etc., on at least a few of the sentences that he wrote. He said he did this to let me know that he had not forgotten what I taught him. The last time I spoke to him on the phone was when he was 18 and he had moved to Virginia to begin his college career. That is one of so many testaments of the power of an effective strategy that provided a kid with success and confidence that contributed to his overcoming some potentially life-impeding challenges.

FUN FACT

Maybe her most extraordinary accomplishment is this: Boyle-Gast believes she has submitted post-professional development reports and evaluations from every SIM session she has conducted, going back to the days when reports had to be mailed to Kansas instead of submitted electronically. Every. Session.

It doesn't get better than that

Last spring, I was asked to demonstrate teaching a lesson in the *Fundamentals in the Sentence Writing Strategy* shortly after a PD with a group of elementary teachers. It was arranged to have all of the teachers come to one classroom to watch me provide instruction in the fourth *Fundamentals* lesson (the teacher had already begun to implement the week prior). Twenty-nine third-graders, all of whom were very deficient in their written expression skills, plus twelve teachers and a few administrators, packed into the classroom. I was nervous, since I had not taught a large group of young students for about eight years. Gratefully, it was like riding a bike, and it was so much fun to teach. Not only did the students do a fantastic job remaining engaged, they were able to recall the initial information provided by their newly trained teacher in prior days (albeit referring to their cue cards at first). Then, after presenting new information, modeling, and doing guided practice, I left the class as the students were doing a controlled practice item independently. About an hour later, the teacher came to find me with all of the students' work in hand. The practice sheets were scored, and she was ecstatic that they all had reached mastery. She said she had never seen some of the students in her class actually get and remain engaged and excited about learning (especially writing, with which most of them struggled significantly). It just doesn't get better than that.

Kathy Boyle-Gast received the SIM Leadership Award during the 2015 International SIM Conference in July. We prepared this profile of her and her work as part of the awards ceremony.

Gordon R. Alley Partnership Award
Mary Ann Ahearn

As program administrator for the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System, Mary Ann Ahearn holds both the past and the future of SIM in Florida in her hands. The keeper of the SIM flame in Florida since 2008, she upholds a more than 25-year tradition begun by Marty Beech and supported by many that she consistently brings to the table to advise and guide. Today, more than 200 professional developers support SIM in the classrooms of Florida's 74 school districts. Ahearn's job is to make sure the resources and structures are in place to continue this work.

"She has championed SIM at the state level, ensuring budget allocations are in place to hold an annual update and offering professional learning opportunities regionally across the state," says Patty Graner, director of professional development at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning and member of a Florida SIM advisory council established by Ahearn.

Ahearn is this year's recipient of KUCRL's Gordon R. Alley Partnership Award, which recognizes the vital role of partnership in successfully conducting large-scale research and development efforts. The award honors the legacy of Alley, one of the Center's founders and a master at mentoring the young and inexperienced assistant professors who

were assembled to conduct KUCRL's first research studies. Alley passed away in 1997 from complications from a serious accident several years earlier.

With Ahearn's support, Florida won a State Personnel Development Grant that supports the growth of SIM in targeted districts, and she led the development of a system for collecting data about professional learning, its implementation, and ultimately how it affects student learning.

"Her confidence, creativity, and compassion inspire each member of the Florida SIM Network to accomplish great things for educators, children, and families," says Alice Schmitges, a member (along with Sallie Payne) of Ahearn's SIM team. "She respects us as educators but deeply cares about us as people."

Marty Beech, who has worked alongside Ahearn for many years, says the Florida SIM network thrives because of Ahearn's leadership and the connections she makes between SIM and other statewide initiatives.

"Mary Ann is always available for counsel and direction," Beech says. "She will listen to what you have to say, ask the critical questions to help you think through the issues, and offer her assistance to resolve any issues."

Those who have met Ahearn recognize her commitment to going beyond

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expectations to ensure everyone has the best experience possible.

"She's a person of high integrity," says Don Deshler, former director of KUCRL. "In my mind, that is the highest compliment that can be paid to anyone."

Ahearn's visionary leadership inspires those with whom she works to constantly improve. Her enthusiasm has left its mark. Beech recalls Ahearn's trademark style of making introductions at gatherings.

"She always says 'Give it up for…'" says Beech. "So I'd like to say, 'Give it up for Mary Ann and her constant support of the SIM network in Florida.'"

Mary Ann Ahearn

Manages each project with expertise and must not sleep for all that she accomplishes

Amazing organization with a flare—awesome details and special touches

Ready to celebrate the successes of others

"**Y**es, I can do that" seems to be her modus operandi

Always respectful of others' suggestions/work

Nourishes and inspires professionalism

Network facilitation is SIMsational

—Sandi Soper

Mary Ann Ahearn received the Gordon R. Alley Partnership Award during the 2015 International SIM Conference in July. We prepared this profile of her and her work as part of the awards ceremony.

SIM CALENDAR

October 22–23, 2015
SIM x Southwest: August Update for SIM Professional Developers
Austin, Texas

November 10–11, 2015
Arkansas Update for SIM Professional Developers
Little Rock, Arkansas

January 11–February 7, 2016
Winter Virtual Update Conference for SIM Professional Developers

January 19–21, 2016
Coaching Strategic Instruction
Lawrence, Kansas

February 23–24, 2016
Southeast Update Conference for SIM Professional Developers
Charleston, South Carolina

April 11–May 9, 2016
Spring Virtual Update Conference for SIM Professional Developers

For a complete list of SIM events, including those not coordinated by KUCRL: **HTTP://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 and be included on the online SIM Events Calendar.

KU LEARNING
CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON
The University of Kansas