

At the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, we believe no child or adolescent can be left behind in the quest for literacy, equal opportunity, and a future with promise. Since 1978, we have worked to break the processes of learning down into easy-to-remember steps to make learning manageable for those students who lack the basic literacy skills they need to succeed in school or compete for jobs.

The result of our research is the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM), a comprehensive approach to adolescent literacy that addresses the need of students to be able to read and understand large volumes of complex materials as well as to be able to express themselves effectively in writing.

Our work is especially relevant today:

- Eight million adolescents have failed to master the reading skills they need to succeed in school or compete for jobs.
- Schools are under increasing pressures from numerous forces to meet ever-higher goals for student performance.

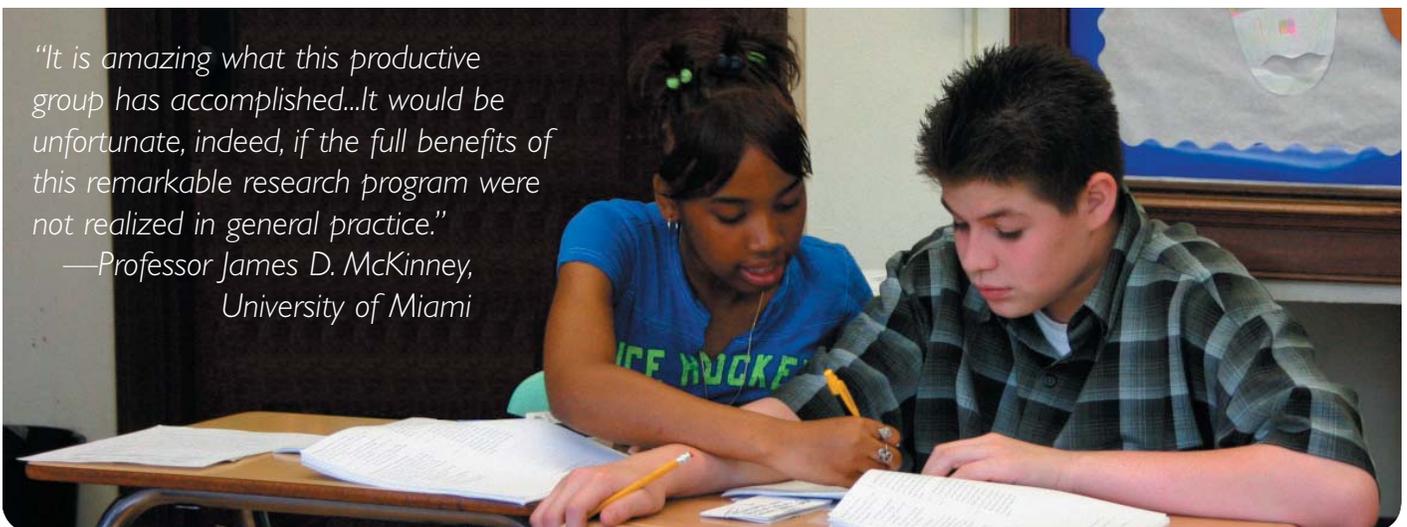
Closing the gap between what these students are expected to do and what they are able to do is a daunting task.

The challenge will not be addressed through token efforts. The solution requires significant changes, investments, and leadership.

For more than a quarter century, we have worked directly with classroom teachers to develop materials that improve the learning experience for students and the teaching experience for teachers. As a result, we have the research, the success stories, and the proven track record to help schools succeed in meeting the needs of their students.

"It is amazing what this productive group has accomplished...It would be unfortunate, indeed, if the full benefits of this remarkable research program were not realized in general practice."

*—Professor James D. McKinney,
University of Miami*



STRATEGIC INSTRUCTION MODEL

An approach to improving
adolescent literacy



The Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) employs two complementary approaches to improving adolescent literacy:

1. **Teacher-focused interventions**—called Content Enhancement Routines—prompt teachers to think about, adapt, and present the content most important for student success in a "learner-friendly" fashion. The routines help teachers carefully organize and present critical information in such a way that students identify, organize, comprehend, and recall it.
2. **Student-focused interventions**—called Learning Strategies—are designed to provide the skills and strategies students need to learn the content. SIM's Learning Strategies Curriculum encompasses strategies for acquiring information from the printed word, for organizing and memorizing information, for solving math problems, and for expressing information in writing (including on tests).

Recognizing that academic interventions alone are not sufficient for student success, SIM also includes components that help students create and participate in productive learning communities, develop strong and appropriate social skills, advocate for themselves and their needs in education conferences, envision positive futures for themselves, and plan how to reach their goals.

QUALITY TEACHING MATERIALS

Our research confirms that appropriate and supportive teaching materials greatly enhance teachers' ability to provide quality instruction in their classrooms. At a minimum, these materials consist of well-designed teacher manuals, student learning sheets and practice activities, scoring rubrics that enable teachers to provide high-quality feedback, and the necessary technology supports (such as DVDs and computers).

Our long-standing commitment to and investment in developing these instructional supports underscores the importance we place on this aspect of our work.

QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to placing our research findings into the hands of practitioners, students, and other researchers in the field.

An extensive network of dedicated professionals who share our values and goals take the primary responsibility for promoting our products and teaching methods. This network—the SIM International Professional Development Network—consists of more than 1,000 individuals who offer workshops, inservice training, and support for state initiatives across the country and around the world.

FROM HOPELESSNESS TO INDEPENDENT LEARNER

Frank, a repeating ninth-grader, was becoming very discouraged in school. He failed almost everything in his first ninth-grade year and was disengaged from school and felt a sense of hopelessness at the beginning of his second attempt. He read at the third-grade level.

Then, Frank enrolled in a SIM-based reading course. During small-group instruction, he learned specific steps of a new strategy for

attacking the many unknown words he encountered in his school assignments. Frank became very involved and worked hard, not missing a single class period.

By the time he returned to his sophomore English class, Frank was reading at grade level. Weeks later, his reading teacher found him in the library, where he was reading a book and proud of himself and his accomplishments as a learner.

VISION

The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning is an internationally recognized research and development organization noted for creating solutions that dramatically improve quality of life, learning, and performance...especially for those who experience barriers to success.

MISSION

Our work centers on solving the problems that limit individuals' quality of life and their ability to learn and perform in school, work, home, or the community.

GOALS

Research

To conduct research that dramatically improves the quality of life in the school, workplace, home, and community for all individuals, but especially for those who experience barriers to success.

Development

To develop resources, technologies, and procedures that facilitate learning, teaching, and advocacy for individuals.

Professional Development

To prepare others to use new knowledge and validated practices that improve quality-of-life outcomes.

Organizational Change

To promote public policy and reform in schools, social service agencies, and other institutions that enhance optimal learning, social proficiency, personal success, and appreciation of human diversity.

Dissemination

To share knowledge generated through research and development in ways that reach the largest possible audiences.

"The students tell me that they feel better when they don't have to ask someone what different words are when they are reading. That's because they now have a strategy to figure it out on their own. That is very rewarding to me as a teacher."

—Classroom teacher from Louisiana

These individuals work directly with teachers and districts, providing opportunities for teachers to learn to use the SIM instructional practices and then supporting their efforts in the classroom. To build school district capacity in supporting continuing SIM implementation, many districts support the development of their own SIM staff developers.

We support and coordinate the SIM Network, ensuring that members adopt our high standards for quality of both instructional materials and professional development experiences.

We organize international and regional conferences as learning opportunities for our network members. Other supports include newsletters, e-mail discussion forums, videos, CDs, DVDs, and web sites, all designed to aid members in their work or provide updates on our latest thinking.

QUALITY RESEARCH

We believe that our best results are obtained when we work directly with the individuals affected by the problems we seek to solve. Consequently, we have partnered with teachers in hundreds of classrooms to develop and refine SIM instructional materials to meet the rigorous standards we have set for ourselves.

One of our most fundamental beliefs is that our materials must be socially as well as statistically significant. In other words, an intervention that increases student performance from 20 percent to 40 percent may be statistically significant; however, the intervention holds no real social significance because the student still will fail the course.

By holding firm to our high standards, we have built a solid





base of work upon which schools can rely as they develop programs to meet today's extensive demands. Not only are schools required to show student gains, they also have to prove that they use teaching methods grounded in research. Evidence-based practices are key features in recent education legislation, including the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

Our extensive research—which has been reviewed by scientific panels at the U.S. Department of Education and other public agencies and documented in leading academic publications—demonstrates that use of SIM interventions can improve student performance.

"No one could examine the entire body of evidence generated by the KU-CRL staff and not conclude that they have devised important instructional programming that is effective. The completeness of their approach is unprecedented in the history of design, validation, and implementation of curricula based on scientific analysis. As far as the research-based curriculum development community is concerned, the Kansas group is the best of us. The rest of us can learn much from them."

*—Distinguished Professor Michael Pressley,
Michigan State University*



ABOUT KU-CRL

From our beginning in 1978 as the Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities, we have grown to encompass four research institutes and multiple lines of research. Now known as the Center for Research on Learning, we concentrate our research in the following areas:

- **The Institute for Effective Instruction** studies factors related to academic achievement, designs interventions that dramatically improve the performance of learners, and develops systems to ensure implementation success.
- **Advanced Learning Technologies (ALTEC)** studies ways to improve student performance by integrating advanced technologies and education.
- **The Division of Adult Studies (DAS)** addresses issues in the transition, education, employment, and quality of life of adults with disabilities.
- **The e-Learning Design Lab** studies and develops online instruction with an underlying commitment to identifying and institutionalizing the elements of online teaching that are inherent in a mature pedagogy.

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