



Leveraging Research to Promote Schoolwide Literacy in Secondary Schools

The Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) Content Literacy Continuum (CLC) focuses on helping secondary schools develop and sustain comprehensive and integrated literacy programs. This school improvement process is led by a SIM Implementation Team with extensive experience in secondary literacy. The team works with administrators, teachers, and staff to develop and implement a standards-based plan to improve literacy and content area learning tied to student performance on state assessments.

SIM consists of a variety of research-based interventions. Some of these interventions focus on helping teachers think about, adapt, and present critical content in a "learner-friendly" fashion. Some interventions focus on helping students learn the skills and strategies students need to learn content. This brochure highlights the

Components of the SIM Content Literacy Continuum

- Content Mastery
- Embedded Strategy Instruction
- Explicit Strategy Instruction
- Intensive Skill Development
- Intensive Clinical Intervention

Our primary goal is to establish a coordinated schoolwide approach to improving literacy for all students in secondary schools that will enable students to meet higher standards.

critical features of a three- to four-year school improvement process.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure mastery of critical core curriculum content to develop the background knowledge required for comprehension, independent learning, and cumulative literacy development.
2. Integrate key learning strategies into and across core curriculum courses to (a) co-develop literacy skills in conjunction with content mastery, (b) teach students when and how to use strategies, and (c) teach students to value the process of learning how to learn.
3. Develop support structures to more explicitly and intensively teach those strategies that are required/integrated across core curriculum courses for those students who need more direct instruction than can be provided by teachers in core curriculum courses.
4. Identify and support the development of intensive literacy course options and services (i.e., for students with literacy skills below a fourth-grade level) that are integrated into overall schoolwide literacy development efforts.

5. Prepare professionals that support literacy goals, such as those provided through speech and language specialists, to provide clinical support services consistent with schoolwide literacy efforts.

BASIC FEATURES

- Programs are supported by more than 25 years of research conducted by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning.
- Professional development activities are guided by the principles of constructivism, adult learning, and the change process in schools.
- Work is supported by continual on-site and off-site expert technical assistance.
- Decision making is based on continual use of student and school data.
- Key teacher instructional resources for implementation are provided; classroom resources for students are available in the school or are clearly identified in advance.
- Services and supports are provided through a collaborative model and are modified continually to meet school needs.

SIM CONTENT LITERACY CONTINUUM COMPONENTS

Level 1

CONTENT MASTERY

What students do: Students learn critical content required in the core curriculum regardless of literacy levels.

What teachers do: Teachers compensate for limited levels of literacy by using Content Enhancement Routines to promote content mastery and by making the necessary modifications for students with learning problems.

What it looks like: For example, the history teacher introduces a unit on "Causes of the Civil War" by co-constructing with students a Unit Organizer that depicts the critical content demands of the unit. The organizer is used throughout the unit to link students' prior knowledge to the new unit and to prompt learning strategies such as paraphrasing and self-questioning. Other routines are used to ensure that critical vocabulary is developed.

Professional development: Core curriculum teachers learn and implement Content Enhancement Routines throughout every unit across the year.



Level 2

EMBEDDED STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

What students do: Students are introduced to and learn to use key learning strategies for increasing literacy across their core curriculum classes.

What teachers do: Teachers directly teach and then embed instruction in selected learning strategies in core curriculum courses. Teachers use direct explanation, modeling, and group practice to teach the strategy and strategy steps and then prompt student application and practice in content-area assignments throughout the year.

What it looks like: For example, at the beginning of the year, the history teacher explains that being able to paraphrase the history text is important because paraphrasing is required to write reports, answer questions, and discuss ideas. The teacher shares the steps of the *Paraphrasing Strategy* (RAP) with students and models how to paraphrase history text to complete different types of learning tasks. Class activities and assignments are designed to require students to paraphrase text and use information. Both oral and written information is paraphrased. Paraphrased responses may take an oral or written format. The Unit Organizer is used to model and prompt paraphrasing of critical chunks of content. The teacher continually evaluates and provides feedback to encourage high-quality paraphrasing throughout the year.

Professional development: Content teachers learn selected learning strategies (e.g., paraphrasing, self-questioning, visual imagery, word identification, textbook usage, sentence writing, paragraph writing, theme writing, etc.).

Level 3

EXPLICIT STRATEGY INSTRUCTION OPTIONS

What students do: Students who have difficulty mastering the strategies presented across courses by core curriculum teachers learn them through specialized, more direct, more explicit, more intense instruction delivered by support personnel.

What professionals do: Support personnel provide more intensive instruction via supplemental instructional sessions delivered in the general education classroom, in a pull-out program, through the offering of a separate course, or through beyond-school programs.

What it looks like: For example, the history teacher notices that some students in the class are struggling with paraphrasing. Support personnel develop a plan to reintroduce the steps of the *Paraphrasing Strategy (RAP)* to this group of students. Support personnel provide additional models and practice in paraphrasing text. The support personnel may guide the student through paraphrasing paragraph by paragraph, gradually encouraging students to paraphrase more independently. Explicit feedback and additional practice are provided. Support personnel may work daily for 15 to 20 minutes for three to four weeks or more until the student gains confidence and masters applying the strategy. As the student learns the strategy, the student sees that his history class and other classes require the strategy and gets the message that this is a valued skill that is worth learning.

Professional development: Support personnel and teachers learn more about specific learning strategies, how to provide more intensive instruction, and a process for providing more strategic tutoring.

Level 4

INTENSIVE SKILL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

What students do: Students develop decoding skills and increase reading fluency through specialized, direct, and intensive instruction in reading. Intensive instruction in listening, speaking, and writing is often a part of these services.

What professionals do: Teachers, reading specialists, special education teachers, speech-language pathologists, and



other support staff team to develop intensive and coordinated instructional experiences designed to address severe literacy deficits. Reading specialists and special education teachers often deliver these services. They also assist content teachers in making appropriate modifications in content instruction to accommodate severe literacy deficits.

What it looks like: For example, some students appear to have significant difficulty comprehending because they do not have sufficient decoding skills or they have language problems. Sometimes, these problems are identified before strategy instruction begins and sometimes the problems emerge during strategy instruction. The staff as a team develop options for courses and support services that directly address deficits that cannot be addressed through less intensive efforts. However, the students still can participate in the history class because the teacher is presenting content in ways that take into consideration poor reading strategies. Intensive research-based programs—such as the *Corrective Reading Program* or *Language!*—typically are chosen as the curriculum to develop these types of services.

Professional development: Reading specialists and special education teachers learn approaches to teaching literacy skills and strategies to students with disabilities.



*A mind is a fire to be kindled,
not a vessel to be filled.*

—Plutarch

Level 5

INTENSIVE CLINICAL INTERVENTION OPTIONS

What students do: Students with underlying language disorders learn the linguistic, related cognitive, metalinguistic, and metacognitive underpinnings they need to acquire content literacy skills and strategies in intensive clinical one-to-one instructional settings.

What professionals do: Speech-language pathologists deliver curriculum-relevant language therapy in collaboration with other support personnel teaching literacy. They assist content teachers in making appropriate modifications in content instruction to accommodate language disorders.

What it looks like: For example, students identified as language impaired may have difficulty learning the *Paraphrasing Strategy* (RAP) even when it is taught by learning strategists in a language-sensitive fashion. They may need therapeutic intervention delivered by a speech-language pathologist to address the linguistic and metalinguistic underpinnings of the strategy and the academic content.

Professional development: Speech-language pathologists learn curriculum-relevant approaches to language therapy that interface with other intensive interventions provided to students.



ABOUT KU-CRL

Since 1978, the Center for Research on Learning at the University of Kansas has developed ways to help students, especially adolescents who are struggling in school, to become good learners. We work with school programs and out-of-school programs to create and deliver a more strategic approach to education.

A FEW EXAMPLES OF THE MATERIALS

AVAILABLE INCLUDE:

- Clarifying Routine
- Concept Mastery Routine
- Course Organizer Routine
- Error Monitoring Strategy
- FIRST-Letter Mnemonic Strategy
- Framing Routine
- Fundamentals/Proficiency in the Sentence Writing Strategy
- Lesson Organizer Routine
- Paragraph Writing Strategy
- Quality Assignment Routine
- Recall Enhancement Routine
- Self-Advocacy Strategy
- Self-Questioning Strategy
- Strategic Tutoring
- Strategic Tutoring Training Video & Guide
- Test-Taking Strategy
- Tutoractive Session Organizer
- Unit Organizer Routine
- Visual Imagery Strategy
- Word Identification Strategy