SIM Learning Strategies: The Writing Strategies

The SIM Writing Strategies are evidence-based teaching tools that gradually release control from teacher to student to help students express themselves and master the writing skills required in most state standards across grades 2 through 12.

Writing is a complex skill that is often not given the attention needed for many students to become sophisticated, proficient writers. There are countless reasons teachers find writing difficult to teach. However, the reality is effective writing instruction requires explicit, scaffolded instruction with timely, descriptive feedback. SIM Writing Strategies provide scaffolded instruction and a progression of writing skills from the simple sentence, to a single paragraph, to multi-paragraph essays and themes. Each SIM writing strategy provides explicit, intentional, scaffolded instruction with descriptive feedback, mastery learning, progress monitoring, and generalization across all content areas.

SIM
Strategic Instruction Model®

"Previously, students presented written pieces with non-cohesive sentence structures including four or five word sentences all beginning with "I like...". Since implementing this instructional model, students demonstrate understanding that each sentence must be unique and provide a subject and an action for the subject."

For in-depth descriptions of SIM instructional tools and interventions, please visit KUCRL's SIM website:
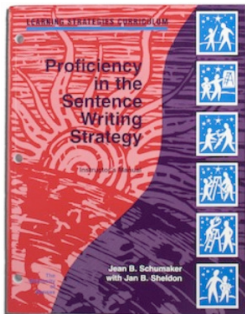
sim.ku.edu

The Sentence Writing Strategies

The *Sentence Writing Strategy* comprises two parts: Fundamentals in the Sentence Writing Strategy and Proficiency in the Sentence Writing Strategy. Together, these components constitute a strategy for recognizing and writing 14 sentence patterns with four types of sentences: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. Each part consists of an Instructor's Manual and Student Lessons Manual(s). The Instructor's Manuals feature a systematic sequence of instructional procedures; the Student Lessons Manuals feature exercises that correspond to instructional procedures. As one example from a research study, results showed that students wrote an average of 65 percent complete sentences on the pretest and an average of 88 percent complete sentences on the post-test.
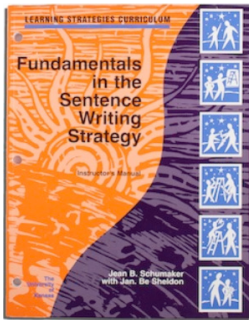
Fundamentals in the Sentence Writing Strategy helps student writers understand basic concepts of a complete sentence and terms, such as "subject," "verb," or "infinitive" by:

- identifying the five requirements of a complete sentence.
- identifying and understanding the role of linking verbs, infinitives, prepositional phrases, adjectives, main subjects, helping verbs, complete verbs, and adverbs.
- composing four types of simple sentences.

Proficiency in the Sentence Writing Strategy helps student writers learn advanced sentence writing skills, including writing simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences by:

- identifying and distinguishing the requirements of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.
- composing simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

> I have implemented Fundamentals in Sentence Writing. My students quickly improved from rarely using punctuation and capital letters to almost always using them. Also, they now better understand nouns and verbs.

SIM Writing Strategies

- A progression of writing skills
- Timely, descriptive feedback
- Explicit instruction
- Progress monitoring
- Scaffolded instruction
- Generalization across content classes

Professional Learning

KUCRL is committed to finding solutions to educational challenges and placing our research findings into the hands of practitioners, students, and researchers in the field. Our expansive network of dedicated professionals —the SIM International Professional Development Network — shares our values and goals for delivering high-quality professional learning with a partnership approach to educators around the world. These experts offer professional development, instructional coaching, and technical assistance to establish the necessary infrastructure support for educators to implement evidence-based practices.

The Paragraph Writing Strategy

The **Paragraph Writing Strategy** consists of an Instructor's Manual and a Student Lessons Manual. The Instructor's Manual features a systematic sequence of instructional procedures; the Student Lessons Manual features exercises that correspond to the instructional procedures. Research showed that students earned an average of 40% of the points available when writing a paragraph on the pretest and an average of 71% of the points available when writing a paragraph on the post-test.
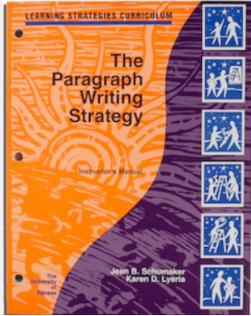
The Paragraph Writing Strategy helps student writers learn to write a well-organized paragraph by:
- listing ideas related to a topic.
- planning the point of view and verb tense to be used.
- planning the sequence in which ideas will be expressed.
- writing a variety of topic, detail, and clincher sentences.

The Theme Writing Strategies

The SIM Theme Writing series encompasses four Instructor's Manuals that prepare students for writing-competency exams as well as the writing demands of general education courses. Before instruction begins, students must have mastered several foundational writing skills such as writing complete sentences, understanding basic concepts and terms like topic, detail, clincher sentences, point-of-view, tense, sequence, and transitions. These terms are used throughout Theme Writing Strategy instruction, and new concepts are built upon them as instruction proceeds.
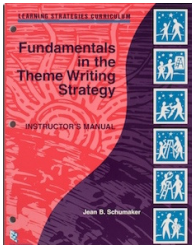
Fundamentals in Theme Writing helps student writers focus on the fundamental skills associated with writing themes by:
- explaining the parts of a theme.
- finding and adding subtopics.
- brainstorming, planning, and writing the concluding paragraph.
- writing detail sentences and graphics.
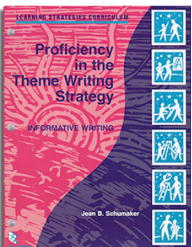
Proficiency in Theme Writing: Informative Writing enables student writers to write a research paper by showing them how to:
- conduct research, take notes, create reference lists, and write short multi-paragraph research essays that include in-text citations and quotations.
- organize information in multi-paragraphs.
- write a variety of research papers.
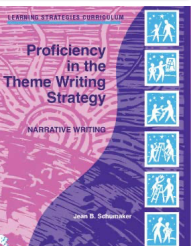
Proficiency in Theme Writing: Narrative Writing enables student writers to plan and write non-fiction stories, such as personal stories, biographical stories, journalistic stories, and historical stories by teaching:
- the elements of stories and analyzing the parts of stories.
- how to plan and write nonfiction and fiction stories.
- how to write based on research.
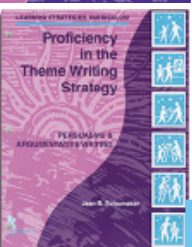
Proficiency in Theme Writing: Persuasive and Argumentative Writing enables student writers to be persuasive and also use evidence to support their arguments by teaching how to plan and write
- basic persuasive and argumentative themes with counterclaims.
- themes with examples garnered through research.
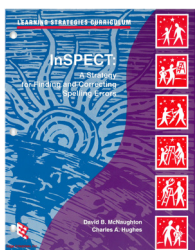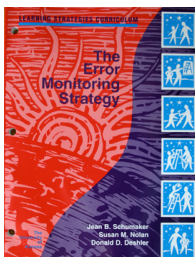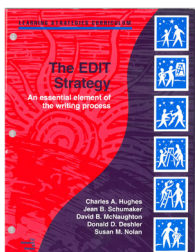
Strategies for Checking for Writing Errors

Edit Strategy helps student writers find and correct errors in capitalization, appearance, punctuation, and spelling by:
- learning to enter their first draft into a word processing program.
- performing spell check.
- running through questions related to capitalization, overall appearance, punctuation, and substance of the paper.
- making needed corrections.

Error Monitoring Strategy helps student writers learn to independently detect and correct errors in their hand-written work to increase the overall quality of their final product by:
- proofreading for content and mechanical errors.
- eliminating errors before work is submitted.
- developing personal strategies to avoid future errors.

InSPECT Strategy helps student writers detect and correct spelling errors using spellchecker by:
- learning to run spellchecker.
- selecting the correct suggested spelling or making a guess about the correct spelling.

Multi-Media Strategies

Writing Mechanics: Capitalization, Commas, and Punctuation Strategies
For each of these three interactive digital programs, teachers correct students' application of the strategies in their written sentences at the end of each lesson. Otherwise, the programs are self-paced and self-correcting.

Star Writer Programs: Fundamentals and Proficiency in Paragraph and Theme Writing
These interactive digital programs teach individual students skills associated with writing paragraphs and themes by seeing examples, hearing authors think aloud as they plan and write, and by practicing, planning and writing. They require the teacher to score sentences, paragraphs, and/or themes at the end of some lessons. Otherwise, they are self-paced, and self-scoring. Each is embedded within a Space Odyssey plot.

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