



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.

Cindy brings thoughtfulness and enthusiasm to her work and to her interactions with others. She is confident and communicates with integrity. She is committed to the work that she does and the people with whom she works. I appreciate her creativity and her reliability because she doesn't just have bright ideas, she has the ability to bring them to fruition. I am proud to call her a SIM professional developer, and I am even prouder to be her friend as well as colleague.

*Patty Graner
Director of Professional
Development*

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.



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 very familiar and comfortable with. It is a true pleasure to see students request a device that they know will help them.

- Sean Strickland, Algebra Teacher

I teach Chemistry I Honors. Before I started using the routines, my test results were disappointing. This year, I have participated in facilitated planning which has provided time to develop new routines and perfect some used previously. I have used the routines consistently all year. My test results are much better, with averages at least one letter grade higher than in previous years. Content Enhancement has been the most useful and successful set of tools I have had the opportunity to use in over 30 years of teaching experience.

- Patrice Lussy, Chemistry Teacher

I would like to say that the environment in my classroom has greatly changed since I have started using *Content Enhancement*. Now that the students have more ownership in taking notes, reviewing, understanding their behavior and learning has grown a great deal. These tools help my students grasp knowledge they were unable to do in past years. The breaking down and reviewing in these techniques is making my students become successful where they couldn't be before. My students actually enjoy the *Unit Organizer*, *Concept Comparison*, and the *Concept Diagram*. They get excited when they are the one who gets their answer in the box. I really cannot say enough about the learning that happens in my classroom.

- Micheal Latimer, Environmental Science Teacher



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

Cindy's work as a professional developer, district administrator, and Professional Development Leader and manager of the SPDG grant has greatly impacted the lives of students, created sustainable change in schools and districts throughout the state of Florida and mentored more professional developers than I can name.

Janet Atallah
Resource Teacher
Florida Inclusion Network

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 Developer Institutes and three of those have completed certification requirements.

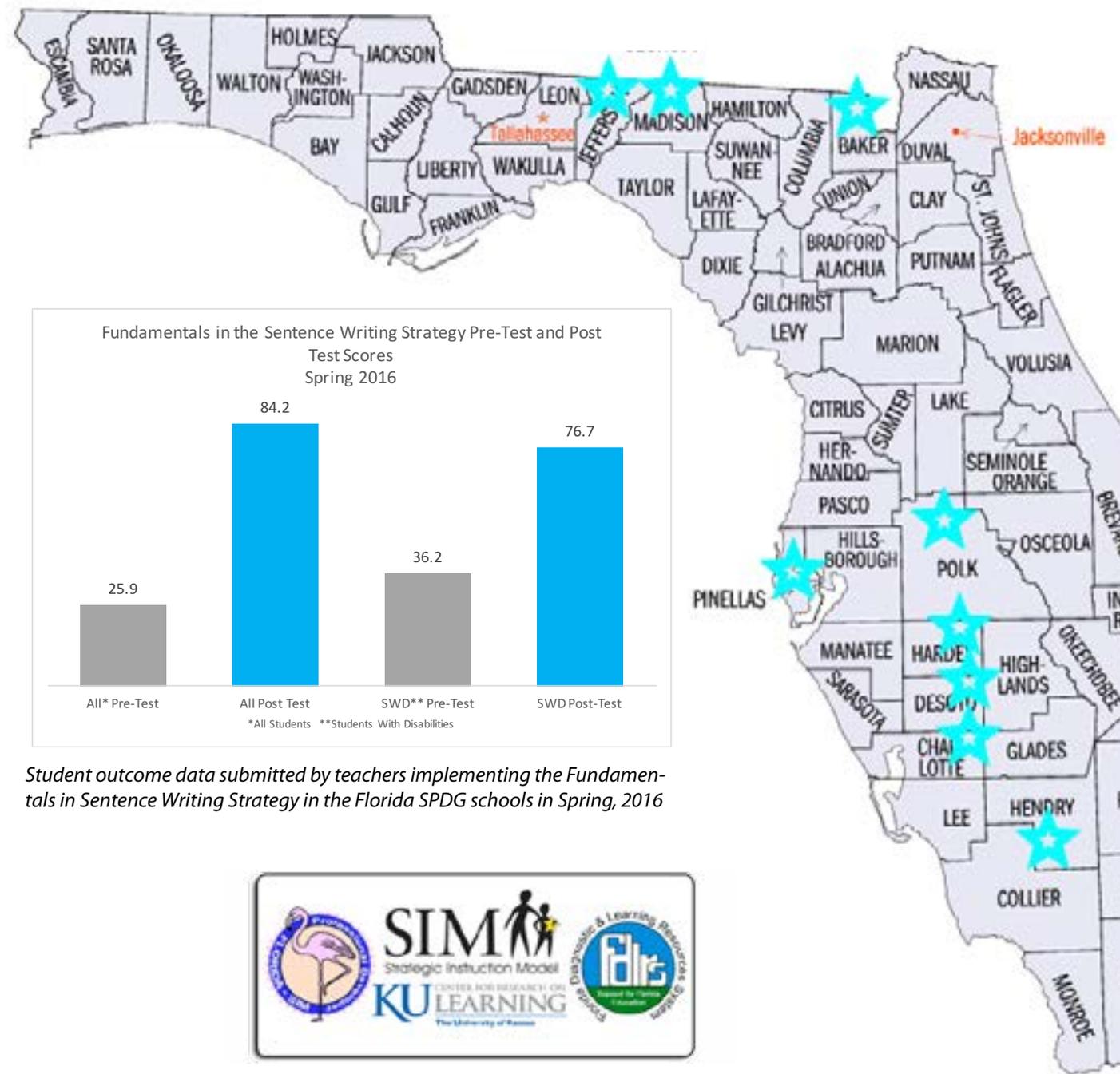
To further bolster community support of SIM, she has created tools to support the participation of parents in helping their students who are learning *Fundamentals in Paraphrasing and Summarizing* and using *The Unit Organizer Routine* by developing and providing overview videos online that can be accessed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

Two stories of success from Cindy Medici

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.

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.



Student outcome data submitted by teachers implementing the Fundamentals in Sentence Writing Strategy in the Florida SPDG schools in Spring, 2016

