

Gordon R. Alley Partnership Award

Randy Sprick, Safe and Civil Schools

Gordon R. Alley, one of the founders of the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning in 1978 when it was known as the Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities, was a master at mentoring the young and inexperienced assistant professors who were assembled to conduct the institute's first research studies. He generously shared his expertise and time to enable others to reach their goals and taught that partnership is vital to successfully conducting large-scale research and development efforts. Dr. Alley passed away in 1997 as a result of a tragic accident several years earlier. To honor his legacy and ensure that the trail he blazed never be forgotten, we give the Gordon R. Alley Partnership Award to other professionals who contribute to the work of the Center in the same spirit. This year's recipient, Randy Sprick, embodies the generosity and collaborative nature the award is intended to honor.

Julie Tollefson
KU-CRL

Early in the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning's Pathways to Success project, instructional coaches found that teachers who struggled with classroom management issues also struggled to achieve results. While Pathways director **Jim Knight** considered the implications of that realization, a mutual friend brought the work of **Randy Sprick** to his attention. Thus began a loose partnership that has benefited not only the Pathways project but the Center as a whole.

Sprick's Safe and Civil Schools series has shaped how the Center looks at classroom management issues. "I think we already have a lot of good things for classroom management—the Community Building materials are great—but we needed more basic nuts and bolts and needed a big picture," Knight says. Sprick's CHAMPs: A Proactive and Posi-

tive Approach to Classroom Management lays a foundation for teaching students how to behave responsibly and attend to tasks, making it possible for teachers to focus more of their energy on content instruction and, in the Pathways project, on teaching and using Strategic Instruction Model™ components. "Without the classroom piece, we weren't getting anywhere with the teachers who were trying to instruct [students] using Content Enhancement or Learning Strategies because too many kids were off task," says Lynn Barnes, instructional coach. Since forming the partnership with Sprick—an "awesome asset" to the project—and adopting his classroom management techniques as part of the Pathways project, coaches have seen classrooms move from 70 percent on task to an exceptional 92 percent on task.

Sprick calls behavior and academics "the ultimate chicken



Randy Sprick

and egg question." If students experience academic frustration despite a classroom's good behavioral strategies, they will rebel or shut down. If teachers don't have good behavioral strategies, academic achievement will suffer. "If expectations are not clear or the overarching tone of the classroom is not

He's turned what previously had probably frightened me a little—the idea of classroom management—into what I really want to do with my life,

—Tricia McKale, instructional coach and co-author (with Sprick, Knight, and Wendy Reinke) of the new *Coaching Classroom Management*. The book offers practical tools for establishing effective classroom management and student behavior expectations.

invitational, welcoming, and respectful, then you won't be able to engage kids with that great curriculum," Sprick says.

The instructional coaches of the Pathways project use words such as generous, gracious, compassionate, funny, humble, and warm-hearted in describing Sprick and the value of his work to their own. "Even when I know he's a busy man, and he has a million other things going on, he'll take time to listen to a situation that I'm having with a teacher and give me feedback and give me suggestions and comments, which I think is amazing," says **Stacy Cohen**, instructional coach.

Sprick has met with Center staff members numerous times in the last few years, both in Kansas and on his home turf in Oregon. He set aside time to meet with the Pathways instructional coaches in Portland, he's attended instructional coaching institutes and conferences sponsored by the Center, and he's brainstormed

with Center staff on topics relevant to both his work and that of the Center. Sprick describes this collaboration in yin-yang terms. "It is so stimulating to be bouncing ideas off of people that are already doing such incredibly impressive work and to have a synergism between some areas that they maybe have not thought about quite as much as I have had the opportunity to do," he says.

Call it synergism or profound good fortune for the Center, our collaboration with Sprick has complemented the effective practices of SIM and raised our professional development work to a new level. "I've never been as welcomed in schools as I have been when I've come to talk to them about classroom management using the tools that have been provided by both he and the Center," says Tricia McKale, instructional coach. "The work that Randy and the Center have done has made professional development something to look forward to."

Stratopedia: An online resource

Stratopedia, a new addition to the Center's online presence, engages SIM professional developers, teachers, and students in collaborative, interactive learning. Stratopedia is organized into "learning labs" that foster discussions focused on specific topics.

FEATURED LEARNING LAB: VIDEO IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This lab is devoted to sharing information, questions, comments, and ideas about the use of video in professional development.

To become a member of the Video in Professional Development learning lab, you must be registered to use the Stratopedia site. Registration is free and easy.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Go to www.stratopedia.org
- Click on "Stratopedia Learning Labs"
- Scroll down to "Video in Professional Development" under Workgroups and click on that option

If you haven't yet signed in, you will be asked to do that here. If you haven't registered to use the Stratopedia site, you will have the opportunity to do that.

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