Integrating Project CRISS Strategies into the Reading/Language Arts Curriculum

By Sara L. Stone

While considered a rural community, the Elkhorn Area School District in Southeastern Wisconsin has been growing and changing in the last ten years. One constant has been Project CRISS—the district began using CRISS strategies in 1998. As part of teacher training, every other year I train teachers in CRISS who are new to the district. Additionally, I have conducted follow-up trainings at our middle school, offered high school after hours “look and see the new book and what it has to offer” sessions, shared newsletters from CRISS for K-12, provided classroom modeling K-8, and created a “check it out” letter for our K-8 staff when they adopted the new math curriculum.

The most recent change in our district is our Reading/Language Arts (RLA) curriculum. During this round of curriculum examination, the committee looked at best practice and research. Because CRISS has the research to support the benefits of its implementation with students, the committee embedded CRISS strategies into the teachers’ curriculum map. In the beginning, the strategies were broken into a grade level scope and sequence (see page 3). The scope and sequence were put into place to ensure the students would be able to access the strategies as needed. Even though each grade level has assigned strategies, any strategy can be taught, reviewed, and practiced by staff at any grade level.

This fall the RLA curriculum changes began. Elementary staff in all three buildings attended follow-up in-service sessions using the current CRISS manual. At a staff meeting, teachers were divided into two groups—kindergarten through second grade and third grade through fifth grade. Specialists (reading, music, etc.) joined one of the two groups. First, staff members looked at the scope and sequence requirements for their grade level. In a Content Frame, which listed the strategies on the left and “page number” and “comments” across the top, staff recorded where the strategies were found in the book. Next, each teacher picked a strategy from the scope and sequence. While reading about the strategy, teachers used Read-and-Say-Something to discuss the specific strategies within their group. As the discussion commenced, assigned staff recorded individual comments in the
Content Frame. After the discussion, staff members selected a strategy to try in their classrooms and used an evaluation sheet to report on how the specific strategy worked. They were also required to include student samples for verification of strategy use. Follow-up at a later staff meeting included discussion of the strategy tried and sharing of the student samples. (Below are the categories for the evaluation.)

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The examples that follow show how the same strategy was used at different grade levels. I have also included samples from the media specialist or librarian and the music teacher to show the flexibility of the CRISS strategies for use in various content areas.

ABC Brainstorming

In **Kindergarten**, before investigating a new social studies topic, the teacher gave each small group of students five letters from the alphabet. Students worked together to write at least one word that related to the topic for each letter. After five minutes they regrouped as a whole and shared the lists. During this discussion, students were able to add to their lists. The teacher then read a book related to the topic the students were investigating and compared/contrasted the words from the book to the list the students created. The instructor reported she enjoyed this strategy because it integrated reading, language arts, and social studies. She felt it was a quick, easy way to activate and assess prior knowledge, and it was extremely effective. **First grade** integrated this strategy with a Step-up to Writing lesson—specifically on animals. The teacher wanted students to think about their letter sounds, so they used the posters and resources around the room to draw from as they completed the ABC Brainstorming as a group. The teacher discovered that the students who normally struggled were able to succeed, and all students were enthusiastic and excited about their brainstorming. **Second grade** implemented the ABC Brainstorming activity in a social studies lesson about holidays. Once the chart was complete, the class referred to it each time they researched a new holiday custom from around the world. Students were able to use this resource to help with note taking during the research of a custom (e.g., Christmas trees came from Germany, so the class made note of that information on the ABC chart).

Carousel Brainstorming

**Third grade** combined two classes and had students Carousel Brainstorm different types of information about Pilgrims prior to beginning a unit of study. The teachers discovered what information the students were lacking so they could front-load that information to solidify concepts prior to adding new information. **Fourth grade** explored the human body systems through the use of Carousel Brainstorming. The teacher enjoyed the student conversations, especially when they disagreed and had to defend the items listed. Although she observed student cooperation and ownership were increased with this activity, the teacher commented the next time she used this strategy she would selectively group the students together for the discussions. **Fifth grade** used this strategy to brainstorm the science topic “space” before learning. The teacher told me she had a better understanding of the concepts the students understood and could then move forward in a more focused manner than if she had just started the unit. She also felt having posters for each of the specific topics allowed the class to have a deeper discussion of the topics than they normally would have.

Venn Diagram

**Music:** The music teacher used a Venn Diagram (see figure 1) to compare and contrast two different arrangements of one song. This was completed as a group project. The Venn Diagram made a clear visual representation of the similarities and differences of the same song performed by two separate groups. This analysis tied nicely into the Wisconsin state music standards.

**Conclusion-Support Notes**

**Library:** The librarian used Conclusion-Support Notes with students when she introduced them to a new book, which was bound upside down. She asked students, “Was this a mistake by the publisher or part of the author’s plan for presenting the story?” Students drew from their previous knowledge of the author and his works. They looked for clues in the story as well as physical clues in the book. Their discussion led to the librarian presenting other books. The students listened with a purpose, refining their listening and thinking skills. Support was found in the book through illustrations and context clues. Conclusions drawn by classes were divided and the students were passionate about their reasoning behind the conclusions made. The librarian noted that the discussion worked well with her younger students and could easily be adapted to a written assignment for older students. After reflecting on the activity, she
determined that when she repeated it, she would physically chart the responses from each class on transparencies or the Smartboard, so students from several classes could see the evidence and conclusions drawn. This would allow sharing and analyzing in a larger group, which further promotes thinking, discussion, and autonomy of learning.

In follow-up discussions of strategy implementation, the teachers were enthusiastic about what students did with the strategies. As the staff continues working with the Reading/Language Arts curriculum, I believe they will find many ways to embed CRISS strategies across different content areas.

Elkhorn Area School District / K-12 Instructional Strategies–Scope and Sequence
Project CRISS–Third Edition

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About the Author: Sara Stone is an elementary principal in Elkhorn, Wisconsin. She taught middle school for eight years in the Milwaukee Public School system and has fourteen years of K-12 experience in the field of gifted and talented education. Sara’s adventure with Project CRISS started in 1996, and her enthusiasm for the project has continued into her role as an elementary principal. Sara is a CRISS National Trainer.

THE WINNERS ARE . . .

Fall 2008 CRISS Survey Drawing Winners
Congratulations to the following CRISS teachers and trainers who received $20 Amazon.com gift certificates. These lucky ten were selected from over 3,000 respondents. We extend a big THANK YOU to all of you who completed our survey.

Kim Rice, OH  
Jennifer Lancaster, IL  
Sheila Whitmore, NV

Lydia Bouk, NC  
Amanda Willis, FL  
Mirtha Dickerson, TX  
Anne Taylor, AL

Debra Bartlett, FL  
Tim Baughman, IA  
Susan Rubel, CT

All gift certificates were sent via e-mail December 12.
If your name was drawn, but you did not receive your e-mailed certificate, contact Deb Franciosi at dfranciosi@projectcriss.com in the CRISS National Office.

CRISS for Administrators

CRISS for Administrators provides guidance to administrators and their CRISS planning teams on how to obtain effective implementation of Project CRISS at the school or district level. We created this administrator’s guide in two versions, elementary and secondary. Both versions work in conjunction with the CRISS training manual and parts 1-3 of the Video Journal of Education’s video set “Reading in the Content Areas with Research-based CRISS Strategies.”

For more information about the CRISS for Administrators program and a look at the table of contents and introduction, click here, or visit the “Publications” area of the CRISS Web site.
By Mary Jane Barton

Gilmer Elementary in Gilmer, Texas, places tremendous focus on small group reading instruction, instruction that can easily last 90 minutes each day. My most formidable challenge in implementing such instruction in my 2nd grade class was creating in-depth assignments for the 15 or 16 students working independently in pairs at Literacy Workplaces while I worked with four to six students at the reading table. I struggled with this problem until, as always, my CRISS manual came to the rescue!

Strategy Introduction

I began the process by introducing a strategy to the whole class. As students understood the purpose of the strategy, I gradually turned over ownership. For example, if I used Content Frames in a whole group science or social studies lesson, I also used Content Frames in reading groups that week. The following week Content Frames were used in the Literacy Workplaces.

Literacy Workplaces

For 90 minutes each day, my class was divided into four groups based on their reading abilities. While I worked with group 1 (the lowest readers), their “partner” group (group 3) sat at their desks preparing for their small group reading instruction. Group 3’s activities ranged from re-reading the selection to finishing a strategy we had begun the previous day. I was left with half of the class (groups 2 and 4) in need of an activity and that’s where Workplaces came in.

Literacy Workplaces in my room consisted of three activities daily. One activity was completed by the students individually at their desks while their partner group worked on small group reading instruction with me (see above). The other students worked with their assigned partners using activities that were labeled and placed in plastic tubs. Students had a list of their rotation and knew where they needed to be at all times. We rotated four times—three times to a Workplace activity and once to the Reading Table for small group reading instruction. These rotations occurred roughly every 15-20 minutes.

Literacy Workplace activities varied and were a time for my students to practice previously learned strategies. One of my students’ favorite Workplaces was “magazines.” My students created Venn Diagrams comparing animals featured in different issues of My Big Backyard or on topics they were interested in with help from magazines at the table. Students became comfortable creating Main Idea-Detail Notes and writing One-Sentence Summaries about articles they enjoyed. During “Buddy Reading,” in which partners would take turns reading to each other from a book and then talking about it, they often used Read-and-Say-Something. I would follow up a whole class lesson by reinforcing strategies such as Pattern Puzzles, Vocabulary Maps, and Picture Notes.

Reading Table

While the other three groups worked independently using Literacy Workplaces, I was able to provide 20 minutes of uninterrupted small group instruction. I regularly used Read-and-Say-Something and Sticky-Note Discussions at the Reading Table. Frequently, groups started a graphic organizer or informal writing with me and finished the assignment later at their desks. As work was finished, students brought their work back to the Reading Table to share with the group.

Sitting with my small group, I could glance around the room and see kids on task. With three-fourths of the class working on thought-provoking assignments, I was able to focus on the four to six kids who were in need of my full attention. This made my job much easier.

About the Author: Mary Jane Barton is a CRISS National Trainer from Gilmer, Texas. Previously she was the 2nd grade Instructional Specialist at Gilmer Elementary School, but now teaches 11th grade American History at Gilmer High School. She describes American History as her “true love.”
Paul Bunyan/Sky Bright Axe

(A week long unit to kick-off an exploration of American Tall Tales)

Content area: Language Arts—Tall Tales

Enduring Understandings:

Process: To introduce and assist students in applying new and already practiced transformation strategies before, during, and after reading e.g., Content Frames, Vocabulary Map, and Story Plan.

Content: To introduce students to both the oral and written tradition of folklore, in particular the American Tall Tale.

Assessment:

• Students will create a portfolio of their best samples of work done during guided practice throughout the full unit. At the beginning of the unit the teacher will provide a list of representative strategies to be included.
• Students will demonstrate application of transformation strategies with projects completed during a final week of self-selected, independent Tall Tale reading at the end of the full novel unit.
• Students will demonstrate knowledge of the Tall Tale genre by creating their own Tall Tale at the end of the complete unit using the writing process of plan, rough draft, revise, edit, and final draft.

Content (written text, video, lecture, visuals, etc.):

• Song: “The Frozen Logger”
  Follow this link for the tune http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/song-midis/Frozen_Logger.htm
  (Once you learn the tune and lyrics, speed up the tempo.)
• Story: “Paul Bunyan/Sky Bright Axe” from American Tall Tales by Adrien Stoutenburg
  (Other versions can be used to meet the needs of students with various reading levels.)

Preparing for Understanding (bringing out and building background knowledge, setting purposes for learning):

1. Think-Pair-Share—Qualities of a Super Hero today
2. Discussion—What is exaggeration?
3. Teacher sings: (with much bravado and humor) “The Frozen Logger”
4. Record information from song in Two-Column Notes: Exaggeration Facts
5. Build class chart of unit vocabulary using a Two-Column Note format. Students work in partners to look up vocabulary or jigsaw the list with individuals presenting words and adding them to the class chart.
6. Vocabulary Mapping on index cards using selected vocabulary from the Paul Bunyan story.

Engaging Students with Content and Transforming Information:

1. Continue adding terms to Two-Column Notes for unit vocabulary.
2. Model and then have students practice Read-and-Say-Something as they read the story aloud in groups of 4.
3. Students then re-read silently or with a partner using Sticky Notes to mark exaggerations, main character qualities/traits, and appearance.
4. Content Frame—Model transferring sticky note information from the story to a content frame. When students are comfortable with expectations and the process, facilitate guided practice back in their small reading teams. See student sample here.
5. Story Frame—“Sequence Paper” (Using the completed story frame to retell the story emphasizes the oral tradition of tall tales).
6. Mini-lesson: What is a Hyperbole? Students will be able to add the term and definition to the unit vocabulary list, identify hyperboles in the story, and make up and illustrate some of their own.
Content area: Language Arts

Enduring Understandings:

Process: The students will make connections and transform information before, during, and after reading a new text.
Content: The students will explore the history of early movies; how movies as we know them come about.

Assessment: One-Sentence Summary

Content: Mack Made Movies by Don Brown

Preparing for Understanding:

• Anticipation Guide—students work individually to complete
• You Ought to be in Pictures—Students look at the cartoon and answer the question, “Pretend that you are the man hanging from the pole or the woman in the window. How did you get there and what will you do next?”

Engaging Students with Content and Transforming Information:

Whole Group
• Read—the whole class reads Mack Made Movies by Don Brown
• 3-Minute Pause—Students work at table groups and follow these prompts:
  - One person summarizes
  - Everyone tells an interesting part
  - Anyone can ask the group questions about the story
• Main Idea/Detail Two-Column Notes

Whole Group, Literacy Workplaces, or Small Group
• Opinion-Proof Poster
• Pattern Puzzle
• Vocabulary Maps
• Venn Diagram

Extensions:

• Social Studies: Map locations of Paul Bunyan’s life and exploits across the U.S. using pictures or symbols to represent events; can be used to retell the story later.
• Music: Learn or create a Tall Tale ballad—present to class.
• Research: Logging, trees, oxen, Maine, or other factual information from the story and present to the class orally or with an information poster.
• Illustrate and write a caption for your favorite exaggeration/hyperbole in the story.
Call for Articles

Are you or someone you know doing great things with CRISS and wanting to share them with others? Perhaps you’ve dreamed of being a published author?

We are always looking for new authors to include in the newsletter. Articles should be about 1-1½ pages in length. We also like to include a short biography and a picture of the author next to the article. Articles should focus on CRISS and how a particular topic work together for student growth. Data and student samples are welcome. Oh, and did I mention that Comments is sent out to 60,000 educators?

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If you’re interested in submitting an article for one of the topics above, please send an abstract, one paragraph in length, of what you have in mind to Jenny Martin at jmartin@projectcriss.com.

Classroom Presentation Materials: great in the classroom, great for follow-up!

The reviews on our latest product are excellent! The Project CRISS® Classroom Presentation Materials is a CD-ROM containing backline masters for all strategies in the CRISS manual in both Microsoft® Word and PDF format. Also included are PowerPoint® slides explaining all principles and strategies and, for many of the strategies, we have included classroom-friendly examples. The CD-ROM is enclosed in a handy 5½” square book that contains thumbnail sketches of all BLMs and PPT slides. In addition, you will find a complete PPT lesson on the CRISS Principles and Philosophy called “Recipe for Learning.”

While this product is intended for the classroom, we encourage you to use it with your follow-up sessions, too. Most of us, at one time or another, have had participants request a specific strategy that was not part of our original training. Keep track of these requests and build them into support sessions. Having these explanatory PowerPoint® slides available on your computer will make introducing these new strategies simpler for you.

The price is $29.95, plus S & H (see order form for shipping rates).

Follow this link for more information and to order.
http://www.projectcriss.com/order_support_materials.php
By Jeff Means

High Springs Community School, located in rural northwestern Alachua County, Florida, is quite a gem. Over the past five years, the Pre-K to 8th grade school of 950 has evolved from two separate schools into one, to become the district’s sixth largest and the only school of this elementary/middle grades configuration. Although challenging, the evolutionary change process is producing awesome results.

As a part of the “re-culturing” process, CRISS plays an important role. CRISS Principles and Philosophy are embedded across the campus, starting at the very earliest grades. Every teacher is offered and encouraged to take part in formal CRISS training, as well as participate in ongoing staff development opportunities, most of which center on student engagement. Routine walk-throughs and weekly lesson plan reviews provide evidence of a CRISS-rich learning environment.

In addition to our own professional efforts, the school partners with the University of Florida’s College of Teaching and Learning as a Professional Development Community (PDC) and hosts approximately 20-25 pre-interns and interns each semester. These pre-service teachers bring added enthusiasm and up-to-date expertise in the areas of learner engagement and instructional practice. Ongoing inquiry is also a major part of the PDC partnership.

All of the above-mentioned pieces come together to produce what I’ve come to call an “accumulating effect.” The kindergarten teachers engage their eager learners immediately by using the CRISS language and vocabulary on a daily basis. They constantly think out loud, using the CRISS principles to “set our purpose for learning,” and to ask their students how they are going to “activate your brain” with what they know. Even at the kindergarten level, teachers are introducing the QAR concept when teaching with Big Books. Students enter first grade knowing there are “In the Book” and “In My Head” types of questions. By the end of second grade, students are creating their own QAR questions.

Through the intermediate elementary grades, teachers add a variety of strategies to the students’ academic arsenal. They also hone in on teaching students to be more aware of their own learning styles and processes. As you can see from the following excerpts from some fifth graders’ learning logs, they are very aware of when they are learning and when they are not and are incorporating strategies into their learning, as well.

Brandon—5th Grade
RAFT assignment: Use science vocabulary (highlighted) in a letter to introduce a new student to the class.

Dear Girell,
I want to welcome you to our ecosystem at HSCS. Our classroom population is 22, and we are part of a community consisting of grades PreK-8th grade. Our community population is approximately 1,100. My niche in our ecosystem is to help new organisms find their way around the community. Our habitat is located in the middle school area. We share a building with the 4th grade . . .

Caleb—5th Grade
Learning Log Entry: Relating science vocabulary to school.
The lesson went great. Because I like how you compared the school and the classroom to an ecosystem. Also, I liked how you went through the words slowly and explained it very clearly. Another thing that I like is how you can relate the words to a lot of things. It helps me understand the words more clearly.

Kayla—5th Grade
Learning Log Entry
Math: Review the basics of fractions and decimals when adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing.
The lesson was fine. I understood it, but it went too fast. I can add decimals, but I need help in multiplying them.
With a core set of beliefs, i.e., CRISS Principles and Philosophy, these students are engaging in new structures of learning (strategies), whereby they create new experiences in their own learning process.

By the time students at High Springs Community School reach the middle grades, this metacognitive awareness evolves into some very sophisticated learning. After years of strategic teaching and learning, our eighth grade achievement scores are typically the highest in our district in the areas of reading, writing, science, and math. This “accumulating effect” produces very positive results and has become an integral part of our school’s culture.

About the Author: Jeff Means’ career has revolved around education for 27 years at the elementary, middle, high school, and college levels. He became the principal at High Springs Community School in High Springs, Florida, six years ago. Jeff’s past experience includes assistant principal, behavior resource teacher, reading coach, hospital/homebound teacher, and migrant education teacher. Jeff is a CRISS Master Trainer who has conducted CRISS trainings all across Florida and in six other states. Jeff’s wife, Valerie, is a middle school teacher. They have two sons, ages 20 and 21.
I love children’s literature and rediscovered it when my children were young. As an elementary art teacher, I choose books for their pictures as much as for their words. Like a good book, a piece of art takes us on a journey. It’s a silent story that often does not get told out loud. In my first CRISS training, I realized the story is worth telling.

I started with the tried and true books of my childhood, first with my children and then with my students. Rhymes are particularly appealing as a tool for exploring rhythm and word families. Using well-illustrated rhyming activities, I worked with students to finish the second line of couplets, reinforcing their comprehension and creativity through an adaptation of One-Sentence Summary Frames.

When I read aloud to them, we always talk about the artwork. I model questioning by asking probing questions, such as “Why are these good illustrations for this story?” One book I use often is *Little Blue and Little Yellow* by Leo Lionni, a story about friends who become green when they play together. The artwork consists of simple blobs of color and yet, because of its simplicity, is very well received. It sends a message that art needn’t be elaborate or for the talented only.

*Harold and the Purple Crayon* by Crockett Johnson is a perfect accompaniment to line drawing. A model I often use is, “Why did Harold choose the color purple in particular?” Some delightful comments I’ve received from students are, “Maybe it’s a magical color.” “It probably was Harold’s mother’s favorite color, and he used it because he knew she’d be angry with him being out so late at night drawing.”

To check metacognition, I always use a question, such as, “How did the story help you understand the art concept we are working on today?” But I just as easily could ask, “How did the art concept help you understand the story we are working on today?” Since a goal of CRISS is “the development of expert, strategic readers,” the accompanying imagery of a story is a strong tool.

The authors of the Project CRISS manual suggest that students transform their thoughts about images into words by using strategies such as You Ought To Be in Pictures and Learning Logs. The creativity involved in producing visual art is a tool that can surely be carried through to creative writing, as art is wonderfully interpretive. *Word and Image* is a local art exhibition that combines both images and stories. A child may begin with the artwork and write a story to accompany it or begin with the story and illustrate it. The youngest students tell their stories orally, which are then recorded by adult volunteers.

For a young student, the strength of the written word and the images provoked are very powerful. I had a student years ago who adored the Harry Potter books, but was not interested in seeing any of the films, because she had her own vision of those characters and would not accept someone else’s. She learned that the written word can be so personal that the image created may not work for everyone. I work with my students so they can mentally paint their own pictures when no images are available. For every picture, there’s a story, and for every story there’s a picture. Literature and art go hand in hand.

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**About the Author:** Mered Lawson is an art teacher for four elementary schools in Pinellas County, Florida. Prior to her current position, she lived in Greece for 29 years and ran a small English language school for ESL students, as well as bilingual students. She notes she often incorporated art into her literacy lessons then as she incorporates literacy into her art lessons now!
Learning from the CRISS Teacher Survey

By Deb Franciosi

This Fall, over 3,000 CRISS-trained teachers and trainers from 41 U.S. states, 3 American Protectorates, 9 Canadian provinces, and Norway responded to surveys about how CRISS is being implemented in schools, perceived needs, and current trends in education. While a survey can tell only part of the picture, those who responded were very candid in what is and is not happening with CRISS. English/Language Arts/Reading (ELAR) teachers were in the majority (39%), and followed by Special Education (15%), Mathematics (14%), Science (13%), and Social Studies (13%). All other subjects were represented to varying degrees, making up 18% of respondents, and specialists and administrators made up a further 11%. Given the variation in school size and student population needs, it’s not surprising that many of our CRISS educators have several roles in their schools. Levels also had significant overlap, with 44% working at the high school level, 36% in middle schools, and 38% in elementary. The fact that the highest percentage of teachers responding teach ELAR demonstrates the continued need to communicate the importance of thinking skills and strategies to teachers in other curriculum areas. The best practices embedded in Project CRISS apply across the boundaries of school subject areas.

When asked about Level I training, the majority of teachers (62%) were trained by certified CRISS District Trainers, and almost half work in schools where the majority of teachers are trained. Surprisingly, a full 65% indicated they never participated in any CRISS Level I follow-up activities. Given what we know about effective professional development needing to be embedded and consistent, the fact that teachers go through a two- to three-day training and then are left to themselves is unfortunate. Certainly, the cost of subbing teachers out is prohibitive in an economic climate that has not been kind to public education, but there are a variety of ways trainers can provide support. And if trainers are not available, then you as teachers can find support in your colleagues and put pressure on administrators to create structures to support collaboration. How can you accomplish this? It depends on the school/district in which you work, but consider some of these options:

- Allot one prep period or morning a week/month to meet with other CRISS-trained teachers in your building to share CRISS Strategic Learning Plans (CSLP) and/or student work, or troubleshoot implementation issues and share successes. If your school implements Professional Learning Teams (Critical Friends, etc.), CRISS can provide the common language and instructional strategies and goals (student self-direction).

- Meet regularly with subject-alike teachers to create CSLPs, share student work, etc. For schools developing Common Assessments (Reeves), common CSLPs can achieve the same thing. Teachers with different strengths can learn a tremendous amount from each other by using a common CSLP, then comparing student work and performance and discussing what worked and what didn’t.

- Visit each other’s classrooms during your preps to observe CRISS implementation, or guest-teach for each other, introducing students to a new strategy.

- Seek administrative support for a day or an afternoon (or compensation for after-hours work) for a team of interested CRISS-trained teachers to meet and plan. While subbing out 30 teachers at a time may break the bank, sometimes funds can be found when 3-5 energized teachers want to collaborate to improve instruction.

- Take turns facilitating e-mail chats on CRISS topics. The facilitator picks the CRISS Principle, strategy, or possibly a CSLP and a prompt to generate some thoughtful e-discussion.

- Take turns hosting CRISS Brown Bag lunches, where participants take turns sharing how they are implementing CRISS.

- Take turns hosting CRISS Teas for Teachers—afternoon socials focused on effectively implementing CRISS, complete with tea and treats!

- Consider using the CRISS Cornerstones video CD and workbook to guide your implementation. It can act as a handy refresher if it’s been a while since your Level I training. It’s inexpensive ($35), and can be a useful tool in your school’s professional library.

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When it comes to implementing CRISS in the classroom, 91% of teachers are actively using CRISS. Most focus on the strategies for student learning (84%), and over half are teaching students how to learn and be metacognitive, the key to student self-direction. Continued focus on how the CRISS Frameworks for Learning and Teaching support deeper student learning, reflection, and critical thinking beyond the Level I is key to moving your instructional practice to mastery and students to lifelong achievement.

Additional resources:
Critical Friends Groups info: http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/11-01 CFG/
International Reading Association (IRA): 54th Annual Convention West  
February 21-25, 2009  
Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Arizona  
**Title:** Engaging Adolescent Readers in Lively Discussions about Academic Texts  
Speaker: Lynn Havens, CRISS Director  
**Date/time/location:** Wednesday, February 25, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Rm N2294  
This is a Ticketed Session (ID# 144466) with openings!

34th Annual Texas Middle School Association Conference  
March 5-7, 2009  
Galveston Island Convention Center at the San Luis Resort, Galveston, Texas  
**Title:** The Keys to Unlocking Comprehension  
Speaker: Carol Avery (CRISS National Trainer)  
**Date/time/location:** TBA

53rd Annual Michigan Reading Association Conference  
March 14-16, 2009  
DeVos Place Convention Center, Grand Rapids, Michigan  
**Title:** Helping Struggling Teens Reinvent Themselves as Learners  
Key Note Speaker: Dr. Carol Santa, CRISS Founder/Developer  
**Date/time:** Saturday, March 14. 2:30 p.m.-3:45 p.m.  
**Title:** Teaching Middle and High School Students How to Take Responsibility for Their Own Learning  
Speaker: Dr. Carol Santa, CRISS Founder/Developer  
**Date/time:** Sunday, March 15. 1:00 p.m.-2:45 p.m.  
**Title:** The Lifelong Learning Tree: An Analogy  
Speaker: Diane Cole (CRISS National Trainer)  
**Date/time/location:** Monday, March 16. 8:00 a.m.-9:15 a.m. in Room GGO-C

Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development (ASCD) 64th Conference  
March 13-16, 2009  
Orange County Convention Center, West Building, Orlando, Florida  
**Title:** Project CRISS: Successful Strategies for Adolescent Learners  
Speaker: Peggy Clark (CRISS Master Trainer)  
**Date/time/location:** Sunday, March 15. 8:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m.; Level Two, W203A  
**Exhibit:** Project CRISS Booth #938

**CRISS Hits the Road**  
Come learn more about CRISS, see the new products, and support the project by attending one of the upcoming conferences at which CRISS will be exhibiting and/or trainers will be presenting.
North Carolina Department of Education
“Raising Achievement and Closing Gaps” 2009 Conference
March 30-April 1, 2009
Four Seasons/Joseph S. Koury Convention Center, Greensboro, North Carolina

Title: Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century
Speaker: Joan Smathers (CRISS National Trainer)
Date/time/location: TBA

International Reading Association (IRA): 54th Annual Convention North Central
May 3-7, 2009
Minneapolis Convention Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Title: Engaging Adolescent Readers in Lively Discussions About Academic Texts
Speakers: Dr. Carol Santa, CRISS Founder/Developer and Lynn Havens, CRISS Director
Date/time/location: Tuesday, May 5. 2:15 p.m.-3:15 p.m., Auditorium 2

Title: Literacy Leadership That Goes from Coach to First-Class: How Data-Driven Observation Techniques Are Used in Literacy Coaching
Speaker: Ray Jones (CRISS National Trainer)
Date/time: Wednesday, May 6. 9:00 a.m.-11:45 p.m.
Exhibit: Project CRISS Booth #811

* * * * * *
(Pre-Conference Institute)
While not specific to CRISS, some of our trainers* are involved, and it promises to be enlightening:

Title: Engaging Adolescents in Academic Literacy
Speakers: *Carol Santa (CRISS Master Trainer), Doug Buehl, Janet Allen, John Guthrie, Carol Hryniuk-Adamov, Judith Irvin, Emily Swan, *Kathy Theis (CRISS National Trainer), Cynthia Greenleaf
Date/time: Sunday, May 3. 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Description: This Institute draws from a rich background of research in adolescent literacy and literacy engagement. As literacy scholars have pointed out, successful learning within a discipline is dependent upon being able to read and write in that discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). A number of reports and significant national initiatives have focused on the needs of adolescent readers (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Advocacy for adolescent literacy has surfaced from a disparate chorus of influential voices: the National Governor’s Association, the National School Boards Association, National Council for Teachers of English, International Reading Association, and the National Middle School Association. Engaging students in academic literacy has been the focus of major research efforts (Engaging Adolescents in Reading, John Guthrie, 2008). Researchers and practitioners suggest the need to reconceptualize adolescent literacy—to move from generic strategy instruction to instructional approaches more congruent with the literacy demands presented in different disciplines.

Project CRISS Midwest Regional Conference
Saturday, March 7, 2009, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
University of St. Francis-Extension
3033 West Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois
$65 registration fee, limited to first 125 participants.
For more information, please contact Chuck Kobliska at:
c.kobliska@comcast.net
Project CRISS would like to congratulate Christine J. Lynch, principal of Shaw Middle School in Spokane, Washington, for being named Washington’s middle level principal of the year. Her motto is “powerful instruction for all students” and she is getting the results to back it up! This isn’t Christine’s first award. Last year Shaw middle school received a state award for maintaining adequate yearly progress in all categories. In 2006 Shaw was recognized by the federal government for closing the math achievement gap among kids of different races and economic situations. Many of the teachers at Shaw are CRISS-trained. Well done Shaw Middle School and Principal Christine J. Lynch!

Just Read, Florida! presented fourteen Literacy Leader awards to educators representing districts and schools throughout the state of Florida. Project CRISS would like to congratulate two CRISS District Trainers who were named 2008 Reading Coaches of the Year. Mary Kris Schirmer of Lecanto Middle School was named the Middle School Reading Coach of the Year and Lori Sue Grieb of Leon King High School was named High School Reading Coach of the Year.

The following CRISS-trained educators were finalists for the 2008 Literacy Leader awards.

Reading Teacher of the Year
Misty Elkins
Janet Greathouse
Sandra Southerly
Robin J. Emery

Reading Coach of the Year
Suzanne Kruger
Consuela Reeder (CRISS District Trainer)
Mary Kathleen Stackhouse

School Literacy Leader of the Year
Jonetha Maness
Lisa Slover (CRISS District Trainer)
Susan Wilson (CRISS District Trainer)
Irwin Adler
Ginger Featherstone (CRISS District Trainer)

Congratulations to the above reading leaders! Thank you for all you are doing to help students succeed.

Project CRISS for Students: It’s a Brain Thing ~ Learning How to Learn!

Project CRISS for Students: It’s a Brain Thing ~ Learning How to Learn! is a semester-long learning strategies class for students (appropriate for grades 6-9). The semester class guides students through a series of CRISS Strategic Learning Plans, some based on the content in Tough Terminators by Sneed B. Collard III (a trade book about predators) and some based on a DVD from the Critterman’s World series (informational videos about animals in northwest Montana). Other learning plans are based on the CRISS principles of learning. As students progress through the book, they are exposed to more and more of the CRISS strategies.

For more information about the CRISS for Students program and a look at one of the chapters in the student workbook, click here, or visit the “Publications” area of the CRISS Web site.
Winter 2009 Issue

For your convenience, we have listed the complete URL addresses used in this newsletter. You may want to print this page for future reference.

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Frozen Logger
Two Column Note Format
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Student Sample
Story Frame
Map

CSLP Mack Made Movies (page 7)
Anticipation Guide
You Ought to be in Pictures
Cartoon
http://www.projectcriss.com/newslinks/Comments/W-09_YouOughtToBe-Pictures_CARTOON.jpg
Opinion-Proof Poster
Pattern Puzzle
Vocabulary Maps
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CRISS Cornerstones (page 12)

Teacher Survey (page 12-13)
Professional Learning Teams
http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html
Critical Friends Groups
http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/11-01/cfg/
Common Assessments
http://www.tepsa.org/Publications/PDF/FAQArticle.pdf

Look what’s new & improved at CRISS! (page 13)
Project CRISS Reference Guide for Teachers
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International Reading Association: 54th Annual Convention West
http://www.reading.org/association/meetings/annual_program.html
34th Annual Texas Middle School Association Conference
http://www.tmsanet.org/conferences/annual.html
53rd Annual Michigan Reading Association Conference
Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development 64th Conference
http://www.ascd.org/conferences.aspx
North Carolina Department of Education 2009 Conference
http://www.ncpublicschools.org/racg/conference/
International Reading Association: 54th Annual Convention North Central
http://www.reading.org/association/meetings/annual_mn.html

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http://www.projectcriss.com/criss_for_students.php