

# Pre-service Educator Perceptions and Reflections on Using TeachLivE™

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## Purpose

This interactive paper will discuss perceptions of pre-service educator perceptions after experiencing the TeachLivE™ virtual learning environment. This virtual learning environment was embedded into a course as a required assignment. Each student was given the opportunity to experience the TeachLivE™ virtual environment over three separate sessions. Pre-service teachers used *Focusing Together* lessons, a component of the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM), during each session TeachLivE™ session. Perceptions were gathered via self-reflection questionnaires following each of the sessions that the participants were involved in. The methods shared are useful for faculty using TeachLivE™ and/or explicitly teaching SIM materials in their programs.



## TeachLivE™

TeachLivE™ is a virtual learning environment (VLE). TeachLivE™ provides novice teachers simulated learning, as participants in this VLE have a physical presence in the lab and the interaction is with virtual students, or avatars, responding in real-time (Dieker, Hynes, & Hughes (2008).

VLEs hold promise as the instructional technology to support educator development of the knowledge, skills, and application of these approaches. Pre-service and in-service teachers need more practical experiences incorporating evidence-based practices (Dieker et al., 2008).

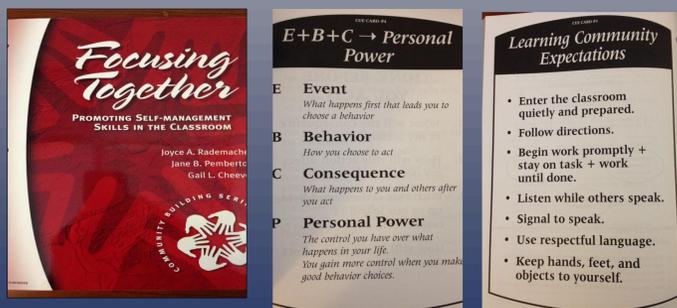
## Focusing Together

*Focusing Together* is a foundational program in the Community Building Series of the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) (Vernon, 2013). Specifically, *Focusing Together* teaches self-management behavior to students in association with a set of classroom expectations that defines responsible work habits, respect, and emotional safety (Rademacher, Pemberton, & Cheever, 2006).

The structured methods and procedures in *Focusing Together* can provide teachers with the tools to create a learner-friendly culture. A learner-friendly culture is about creating an environment in which student can flourish through co-construction of norms with students and reinforcing them when they act consistently within the norms (Knight, 2013).

In addition to *Focusing Together*, SIM includes two major categories of interventions that are known to be effective in teaching students with learning disabilities (LD) in a learner friendly culture. These include Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement Routines.

Learning Strategies are designed to provide the skills and strategies students need to learn the content. Content Enhancement Routines are designed to help teachers think about, adapt, and present critical content in an interactive way with students (University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, 2009).



## Pre-service Educator Reflections

Pre-service educator reflections following each of the TeachLivE™ sessions, yielded progressing and more in-depth thinking including valuable information regarding the overall utility of the TeachLivE™ virtual learning environment, as well as thoughts on individual use of specific teaching practices and areas of self-proclaimed areas of improvement.

Name _____	TeachLivE™ Summary	Name _____
Respond to both items below:	1. I attended ____ (number) of sessions. (3 available, 1 orientation and 2 teaching)	
1. Please circle the item that most reflects your experience.	2. The positive learning that occurred for in the TeachLivE™ was:	
I feel I am prepared to teach a lesson from Focusing Together.	3. Areas I struggle in during TeachLivE™ were:	
Strongly Agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly Disagree	4. Please describe how the TeachLivE™ experience will inform your teaching:	
Discuss: How so? If not, what do you feel you need to be more prepared to teach a lesson from Focusing Together?	5. What suggestions do you have for using the TeachLivE™ lab in the future?	



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## Adolescents with LD

For middle school students with learning disabilities, SIM helps support their access to the general education curriculum (Deshler & Shumaker, 2006). As reported by 70 educators, success in content-area courses depends on student mastery of content knowledge, in addition to basic skills and instructional strategies for learning (Bulgren & Lenz, 1996).

An important consideration in the preparation of educators who will be working with students with LD is the importance of emphasis on mastery of basic skills and strategies (Bulgren, 2006). Knowledge and application of these strategies and routines are important factors within teacher preparation.

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