

### Content Enhancement “Course First!”

“There has to be this pioneer, the individual who has the courage, the ambition to overcome the obstacles that always develop when one tries to do something worthwhile, especially when it is new and different.”

—Alfred P. Sloan

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who'll decide where to go...”

— Dr. Seuss, Oh, The Places You'll Go!

#### What is the "Course First" approach?

A differentiated approach to SIM professional development that supports a shift in instructional planning from periodically adding Content Enhancement Routines (CERs) into classroom practice to designing a “Content Enhancement Course” where CERs are intentionally planned for and strategically integrated throughout the learning process. This course approach not only more deeply integrates use of CERs but also expands teacher use of best practices such as SMARTER Planning and Cue-Do-Review into daily instruction.


#### Why are we here?

First and foremost, we want to help you as a teacher get some of your power back, to feel that you are in the driver's seat when it comes to figuring out the best ways to teach your students.

Secondly, we want to honor adult learning principles such as:

- Adults have a drive toward competence, which is linked to self-image and efficacy.
- Learning is enhanced when adults are active, involved and self-directed.
- What is to be learned must hold meaning; it must connect with current understandings, knowledge, experience and purpose.

Thirdly, while there is much evidence that SIM Content Enhancement can have tremendous positive impact in the classroom, the approach to SIM professional development hasn't changed much in the last 30 years. Since we are asking teachers to branch out and design differentiated learning to meet the needs of all their students, the SPDG SIM Project feels it is time to explore and model that and shift professional development accordingly. In 2014, Dr. Keith Lenz, author of many of the Content Enhancement Routines, started to work with a different approach to SIM professional development. He was concerned, based on feedback from students whose teachers were implementing, that Content Enhancement wasn't really impacting the overall approach to teaching in every classroom and was rather just being inserted as an activity here and there. Students shared that teachers who embraced Content Enhancement as a philosophy as well as an approach did a better job of helping students understand, while teachers who did not actually, in the students' words, made things worse. In response, Dr. Lenz began asking teachers to develop a Content Enhancement Course which required



them to really examine, from a big picture perspective, the ultimate goals for student learning and then to develop a systemic approach to achieving this with SMARTER Planning and Content Enhancement as a primary driver. After initial work and promising work with teacher in Montana, Dr. Lenz began sharing his philosophy with the SIM Network and we, as the SPDG SIM Project, made the decision to develop this learning approach.

### **What are we asking of you?**

- An open mind – change can be stressful
  - Honesty about where you are with the process, what is and isn't working for you and what will help you be more comfortable in trying this new approach
  - A willingness to embrace “Cue-Do-Review” as daily practice
  - A willingness to work collaboratively with your instructional coach
  - A willingness to participate in support activities such as
    - Facilitated planning\*
    - Debriefing and further planning follow-Up\*
- \* dates and times will be decided with the group and sessions can be virtual

### **What are we going to do in return?**

- Work with you as partners in learning (honoring the partnership learning principles of voice, choice, equality, dialogue, reciprocity, praxis and reflection)
- Be available outside of “normal business hours” for brainstorming, support, etc.
- Be timely, honest and constructive in providing effective feedback
- Provide you with coaching support from SPDG SIM personnel

### **Need Support? Reach out to one of us!**

Janice Creneti, [crenetij@pcsb.org](mailto:crenetij@pcsb.org), 727-588-6523 (office)

Cindy Medici, [medicic@pcsb.org](mailto:medicic@pcsb.org), 727-588-6523 (office)