

SIM Integration: Revisiting a Decades Old Conversation with Renewed Understanding and Expectations for Professional Development

SIM is an integrated model of evidence-based practices to address many of the needs of diverse learners, primarily focused on adolescents. This statement offered by Deshler, Schumaker, and Lenz has been present for decades. We have all seen it, used it in presentations, recited it, and now, are revisiting it.

Content Enhancement Routines (CERs) and the idea of integration first appeared in *Strategram*, Vol.17, No.2 in February 2005, with the title *Content Enhancement: The Power of Integration*, authored by Julie Tollefson, Communications Director of the Center for Research on Learning. The opening questions in the article, “How do we know when to use which routine? How do we know which one is going to be the most powerful?” reflected questions from the professional developer community as well as the teachers with whom they worked. In the article’s following paragraph, she stated that teachers may need to consider more than a single routine and then posed the question: “How can we integrate several Content Enhancement Routines (CERs) in a seamless package that meets the need of all students in a class?”

In 2021, that next statement probably rings all too familiar. As SIM Professional Developers, we know that integrating routines is critical and is the most efficacious method for ensuring student success. I present the pivotal point in the conversation that started over two decades ago by returning to the original statement... “*SIM is an integrated model of evidence-based practices to address many of the needs of diverse learners, primarily focused on adolescents.*” However, the integrated model is more than CER integration or Learning Strategies integration as we know it through Xtreme Reading, Stage 9. It is the integration of Content Enhancement Routines and Learning Strategies (LS). And, this integration is not just in the resource room, or just in the alternative group in the co-taught classroom, or even just in only Tier 2 or 3 in a tiered framework of supports. We need to integrate CER and LS in the way we work for ALL students.

Before we actually provide professional development, we must determine the SIM components, note the “s.” When providing professional development, using SMARTER (Lenz), the instructional planning process is already included in the R step- Reach instructional enhancement decisions. The question is: What routines, strategies, and /or devices will be most beneficial, effective, and efficient to use with students? Yes, we need to always provide a CER and LS. It is the synergy that creates the impact on student performance and deepens the pedagogy of the teacher. The LS provides the support students most often need to participate in the co-construction of the information in the unit.

Here are some get-started Dynamic Duos:

The Word Mapping Strategy and the Framing Routine

The Word Mapping Strategy and the Vocabulary LINCing Routine

The Word Mapping Strategy and the Clarifying Routine

The Paraphrasing and Summarizing Strategy and the Framing Routine

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The Paraphrasing Strategy and the Survey Routine

The Self- Questioning Strategy and the Question Exploration Routine

The Inference Strategy and the Question Exploration Routine

The Word Identification Strategy and the Unit Organizer Routine

We are calling up all SIM components to address the literacy needs of all adolescents. Recalling the building blocks for content literacy, as they first appeared in the December 2007 Strategram, we are reminded that the definition of literacy includes the processes of reading, listening, thinking, speaking, and writing. In the Figure_, one immediately recognizes the SIM components in action that are required for academic competency. The language and cognitive underpinnings include: focus and attention; memory; prior knowledge; organization of information; main idea distinguished from non-essential information; concept hierarchy; context identification; paraphrasing; text analysis; monitoring of comprehension; strategic orientation; and sentence and word level processing.

When reviewing the SIM components, one can easily see the organic nature of working with both CER and LS components to enhance student learning. I would go one step further and state the integration of the SIM components accelerates learning and also grounds both student and teacher in the knowledge and experience. I propose that when we promote the integration, we deepen understanding, and with purposeful selection of the components, schema is developed, hence, meaning occurs and sense is made of the new knowledge and experiences. The greater result being mastery of the strategies , but also mastery of competencies.

Here are final questions for a SIM Pder as a learning designer to consider: Why do we have micro-credentials for individual SIM components , but not for the integration of SIM components? IF, we had a micro-credential for SIM integration, consider how much more learning would be accomplished by both teachers and their students and isn't this how its necessity will be recognized? Isn't this the mission of SIM to increase learning for all adolescents across a lifetime?

Consider how SIM Professional Developers can actualize the challenge from the researchers:
"SIM is an integrated model of evidence-based practices to address many of the needs of diverse learners, primarily focused on adolescents."

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Additional add-ins to the article:

Integrate - to combine two or more things in order to become more effective; synergize

The FRAME

Student version- CUE Card

E: I will use MAPS to figure out the meaning of a word in my ?? class.

Key Topic

The Word Mapping Strategy
is about...

a strategy to help me predict the meaning of a word.

Main Idea

Morphemes are parts of a word that have meaning

Essential details

Prefixes, suffixes and roots are types of morphemes


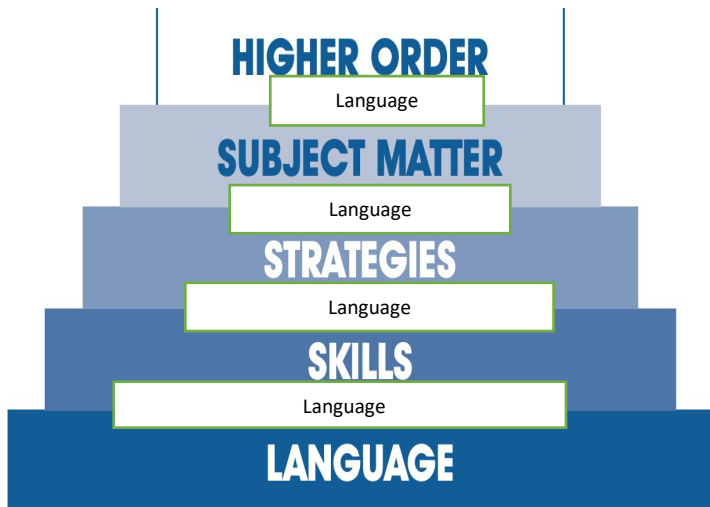
Step 1 Map the word parts- prefix, suffix, root. See lists

Step 2 Attack the meaning of the word parts. Look up and write it down.

Step 3 Predict the meaning of the word. Start with the root, add suffix, then the prefix.

Step 4 See if you're right. Put back in the sentence, check dictionary, or check with someone

So What? (What's important to understand about this?) Now I can figure out the meaning of a word and I don't have to skip the word. No more skipping words!

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A recent conversation of SIM Integration...

In his book, *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell speaks of 10,000 hours to achieve mastery, and in my hours, I have gained many insights, and in this article is one of those insights I wanted to share. The compelling force to share because SIM provides the components a student needs to become an independent learner and for a teacher, it is the road to master teaching.

Recently, I was asked to provide SIM professional learning to address students with and without IEPs and ELL learners who were struggling. The areas of reading and writing were falling below expectations at the school and district levels. Given what the research tells us about vocabulary, I recommended to the administration and thus started with the Word Mapping Strategy. Writing was the other area to address, but knowing they wanted a quick win, I started with the Framing Routine to provide an expeditious format for writing. But here is the pivotal point, in providing the professional development I modeled for them how to integrate these SIM components right from the beginning session. The Word Mapping Strategy was presented first, then I followed with the Content Enhancement Framing Routine. When it came time to demonstrate the co-construction component with the Framing Routine, I used the Word Mapping Strategy as my Key Topic. These were a perfect duo as the teachers had implemented the Word Mapping Strategy prior to learning how to implement the Framing Routine. During the learning session, the participants were engaged, in my opinion, due to first-hand experiences with the strategy and were able to engage in discourse with their colleagues and me. It was a win-win.

Before the professional learning was determined, my conversation with the leadership was to explain the purpose of this particular sequence and also how this could position the educators to fully realize the co-construction role with the Framing Routine. Having a common topic supported teachers to rise above the initial glance of another graphic organizer. Next, to address the components of the writing process, the participants could see the Framing Routine filling the need of both the planning and goal setting components of the writing process. In this case, the Framing Routine became explicit instruction of a writing strategy and served to encourage students to use strategic thinking.

The Word Mapping Strategy brought its own significance using the morphological approach to help students be able to predict the meanings of words and to create word consciousness. When students begin to increase their literate lexicon, this is reflected in their written language as well.

In a virtual world...

This professional learning experience was provided virtually with live instructor-led video conferences along with the following learning structures:

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1. Partners and small groups (3-5) assigned to breakout rooms with tasks.
2. Zoom meeting platform was used to record the session with a transcript.
3. Google classroom to view multiple contributing documents and to participate in co-construction in real time.
4. A closely monitored chat window for questions and comments.
5. Pre-learning activities were sent ahead including articles to read with an estimated time for reading.
6. Guiding questions accompanied the articles with the expectations that participants would be prepared to share answers during the session and a vocabulary activity with Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary using Beck's vocabulary tiers placed in the Google folder.
7. Shared folder in Google Drive for resources prior to sessions with individual folders per the SIM components and access to resources both synchronously and asynchronously.
8. Announced SIM PD and the sign-up for ZOOM coaching sessions with the SIM PDer/Coach at the time of the PD session.

References

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