

Reflection on the SIM CER Apprenticeship Experience to Become a Professional Developer in Content Enhancement Routines

Having been a SIM Professional Developer in Learning Strategies for more than ten years, the rigorous requirements of becoming a professional developer (pd'er) were familiar to me. All of the requirements are designed to prepare the pd'er with the experience to respond to requests and demands for those becoming representatives of the Strategic Instruction Model™ (SIM™). Both the learning strategies and the routines are based in explicit and systematic instructional practices, and it is critical that the pd'er possess deep knowledge of the explicit and systematic instructional characteristics of both. The pd'er must be able to create using data and manage a plan on whatever level is required, teacher level, school-wide level, division-level, or even state-level (commonwealth-level in Virginia) for implementing learning strategies or routines. Given the requirements around federal (ESSA and IDEIA) and state/commonwealth (VLA), an understanding of the research or evidence basis supporting the use of learning strategies and routines is also critical, even given the revised federal definition of “[evidence-based literacy instruction](#)”.

Given all of the above thoughts, I appreciate that the apprentice is assured to be grounded in the SIM™ communities work and theoretical base, and this certainly happens through the Institute and the prescribed readings. I might expand the readings to include resources from more current repositories and from researchers grounded in scientifically based reading research and scientifically based instructional research. With my work, I am required to be familiar with these bodies of research, but others are not required to have this level of knowledge. Tiering this portion of the apprenticeship might be considered depending on the level of interaction the apprentice has within this area.

Practice with a skilled mentor is so important as well. I was honored to work under the guidance of Dr. Judith Fontana. Her support in understanding the process of a co-constructed device with student input or “we do” portion helped me to craft solid questions during the co-construction. Judith was always available for support and mentorship regarding the structure of any given routine. Continual feedback was provided and so appreciated.

Given all that has been said, my wondering is around perhaps tiering the approach to being a certified professional developer might be considered.

Those who operate within schools and divisions, those who operate in the technical assistance provision world, and those who deliver professional development all require different knowledge foci; adjusting the requirements to fit those diverse needs might be considered.