

StoryCorps #1: April 2021

Ignited by Student Success and Fueled by Shared Passion

Audio file - [TralliWashburnSIMcorpsMar2021.mp4](#)

Transcript

00:00:00 Jocelyn Washburn

SIM Story Corps is a candid conversation between 2 SIM professional developers about what's really important in the field of education, students, connections, hope, success. How did SIM contribute to attaining what matters most? Listen to these. Stories of the educators' hearts to find out. Then we invite you to find a partner. And tell your story. In this very first SIM story corps, we'll hear Rosemary Trolley, a SIM professional developer in Connecticut and Joslyn Washburn, director of professional development at KCL and SIM professional developer from Virginia talk about their memories for their very first introduction to SIM. How SIM became an integral part of their careers. And what message they would like to pass along to current and future SIM professional developers?

00:00:48 Jocelyn Washburn

Hi Rosemary, what grabbed you about SIM? What was your first introduction to SIM?

00:00:53 Rosemary Tralli

When I was a new educator, I did not have the expertise to address the motivational and learning issues of high school students with special needs. When I had the opportunity to attend my first SIM workshops, my confidence increased greatly. As a result, my students experienced success and for many of them, that was the first time in all their years of school.

For example, one student transferred from the Midwest where he was failing high school. He was then sent to live in Connecticut with his dad. And at first when he entered my class, he resisted learning any of the strategies. However, he finally agreed to learn the word identification strategy, and from that point on he was hooked. He continued to learn the reading and writing strategies of SIM and he moved from a fourth-grade literacy level to a high school level.

I met his mom at graduation. Three years later he turned to her and said, this is the teacher who finally believed in me, and she taught me everything I know, and that really was because

we had the SIM tools to support us on that teaching and learning journey together. So that's my story, how about you?

Right so, what did you love about SIM Jocelyn?

00:02:11 Jocelyn Washburn

Well, I was literally grabbed out of the hallway. It was a paraphrasing strategy professional development. I was lucky. It was October and I had just started teaching in September. I liked the professional developers focus on using research to make decisions and teaching.

The paraphrasing strategy was exactly what I needed. I was teaching English 9 and English 10 in a self-contained setting with students with mild disabilities. They wouldn't be in a self-contained class if that were today. The paraphrasing strategy allowed me to tailor instruction so they could both work on their IEP goals, while using text that was relevant to the grade level literature curriculum. Their learning was visible. I watched their reading skills grow. I knew I was making a difference. And later on, as I learned as many learning strategies as I could and taught as many as I could, my students were noticing too.

One particular student was my star. He started passing his standardized tests in all subjects. He told his teachers it was because of what Miss Washburn was teaching him with learning strategies. He said this to me too one day and asked me why hadn't anyone taught him like this before?

00:03:28 Rosemary Tralli

What kept you going in SIM after that? What kept you moving forward?

00:03:34 Jocelyn Washburn

Well, because of my involvement with the SIM network, I have worked closely with many amazing educators. Having conversations with others who truly enjoy analyzing what works best for students brings me much satisfaction in my career. Educators who are drawn to SIM are also those who are intrinsically driven to make a difference and to be a literacy leader in their career. Our shared passion has kept me dedicated to SIM.

What about you? You've been a SIM PDer for a long time. What kept you connected to SIM all these years?

00:04:09 Rosemary Tralli

Being a member of the SIM network is one of the most rewarding opportunities I ever could have imagined professionally. SIM colleagues are like-minded. They share a passion for teaching and for the students that they educate. And this whole group of people have fueled my professional growth. For almost 4 decades, when you're part of the network, you feel a true sense of community. There's the sense of empowerment to do greater things than maybe you could have even accomplished on your own.

This is a group who problem solves together. They encourage each other and everyone celebrates each other's accomplishments. It's just a wonderful journey together. Many of us from across the country have conducted professional development sessions with each other and we've instructed students together. As we've modeled for teachers in various schools, we share expertise with each other at conferences and many of us have worked on grants and research projects across the nation.

You know, teaching is such a challenging profession and when you finally find colleagues who are like you, who believe in value and the passion of SIM and teaching through that process, you find inspiration and support. That's truly rare in the field today.

00:05:36 Jocelyn Washburn

Thanks, Rosemary, it was a real pleasure for us to share our stories with each other.

00:05:41 Rosemary Tralli

Thank you, Jocelyn.