

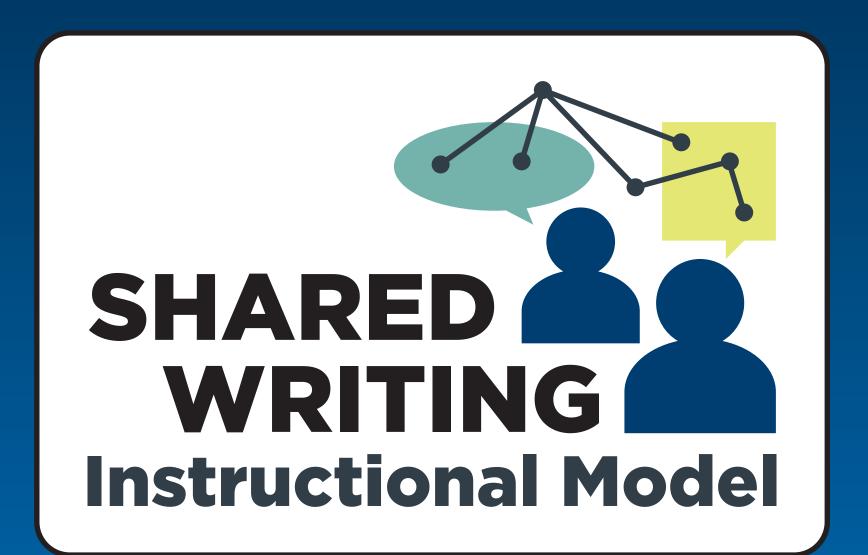
Accessible Teaching, Learning,

& Assessment Systems

Shared Writing Instruction for Students with Intellectual Disabilities An Evidence-Based Approach for K-6 Writers

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Abstract

The Shared Writing Instructional Model (SWIM) is an OSEP funded model demonstration project focused on writing instruction for students with intellectual disabilities. SWIM includes a suite of materials for teachers to use when teaching writing. These materials include professional development in the SWIM system, an evidence-based instructional sequence, research-based learning maps, and teacher guides to shape instruction to support students' development as writers of informational, explanatory and opinion texts. Additionally teachers receive coaching as they teach using SWIM.

Writing as a Component of **Comprehensive Literacy**

An integral component of comprehensive literacy, writing is a critical learning and communication tool that significantly aids in reading comprehension and learning across the curriculum (Graham & Hebert, 2011). Good writing is the product of a complex set of processes in which students translate and organize their ideas into a text that is understandable to others. (Abbott, Berninger, & Fayol, 2010; Koppenhaver & Williams, 2010).

Model Components

1. The SWIM Sequence

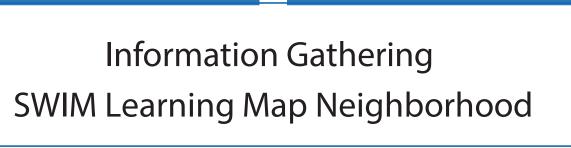
Teachers work with students individually or in small groups on the 5 steps in the SWIM sequence. The five steps provide a research-aligned structure for achieving writing goals at a variety of levels of complexity depending on the needs of individual students. Steps one and two are focused on building and presenting knowledge for the reader. Steps three, four, and five are focused on developing text for different purposes. Teachers work through the sequence with students, modeling and guiding the processes of choosing topics, organizing information, setting goals for text type and purpose, writing, and revising. Teachers learn strategies for formative assessment in order to make instructional decisions. As they teach, teachers reflect on student access, engagement, student writing processes, and characteristics of student writing products.

SWIM Instructional Sequence













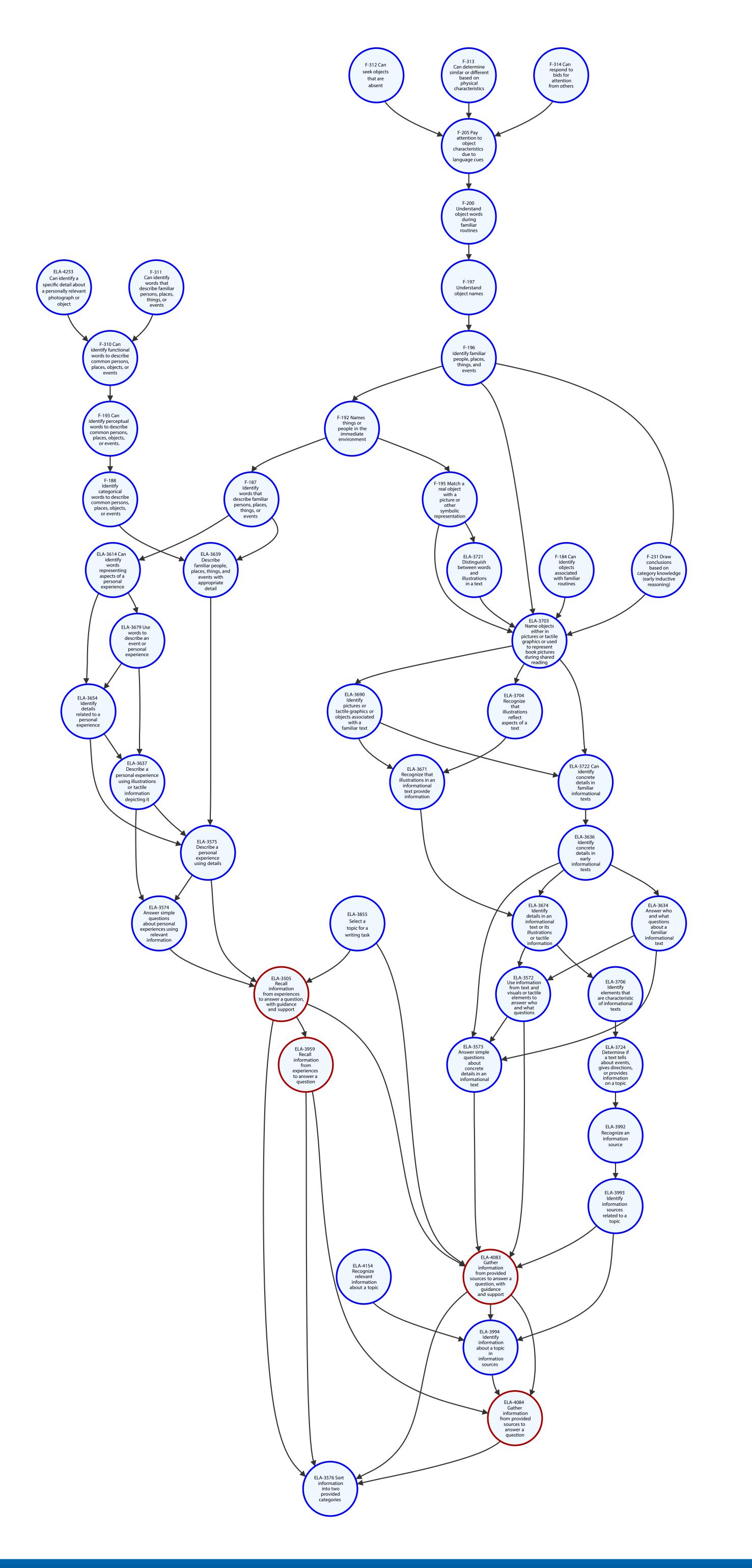


Informative & Explanatory Writing; Opinion Writing SWIM Learning Map Neighborhood

2. Research-based Learning Maps

Our model uses large-scale, research-based learning maps to identify conceptually rich, appropriate instructional targets for individual students. Knowledge skills, and understandings (KSUs) are represented as nodes in the map. Connections between the nodes show the order of acquisition between KSUs. Not all students start in the same place. Learning maps help teachers pinpoint instruction that is matched to students current needs and goals. SWIM uses multiple learning map neighborhoods that show many pathways by which students acquire KSUs in writing.

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3. Customized Instructional Guides for Each Student

Teachers access customized SWIM Sequence Instructional guides aligned to the SWIM Learning Maps that include resources and relevant evidence-based practices. Each Instructional guide supports teachers in delivering instruction for the SWIM sequence for a targeted cluster of nodes in the learning map. Each instructional guide includes the relevant information from the learning map, student success criteria, and tailored formative assessment strategies to evaluate students' writing processes and products. Instructional guides are available in an online dashboard system called Navigator which also allows teachers to track student progress over time.

Pilot Study & Results

A pilot study with eight participating teachers in Johnston Community Schools in Iowa concluded in March, 2020. Participating teachers participated in professional development, implemented the SWIM sequence with students as part of regular writing instruction, and received individual coaching over the course of eight weeks. The pilot evaluation was designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data to address participants' acceptance of the SWIM intervention, teachers' fidelity implementing the SWIM intervention, teacher and student outcomes, and the influence of site context on SWIM implementation and outcomes.

Selected Pilot Study Research Questions

- What are stakeholder (teachers, students, parents) reactions to the SWIM model and its impact on students?
- SWIM implementation: To what extent do participants implement the SWIM intervention as intended?
- 3. What impact does the pilot SWIM have on teachers' design and delivery of writing instruction?

Results

Evidence collected during the pilot study evaluation demonstrated that teachers reacted positively to the SWIM system, implemented the intervention with fidelity and showed preliminary evidence of a positive effect on writing instruction for students with intellectual disabilities.

SWIM Teacher Survey Results

Statement	Strongly Disagree % (N)		Agree % (N)	Strongly Agree % (N)	Not sure
The SWIM model improved my students' writing skills.	0	0	62.5 (5)	25.0 (2)	12.5 (1)
I would recommend the SWIM model to other teachers.	0	0	37.5 (3)	62.5 (5)	0
The SWIM routine is feasible to implement in my classroom.	0	0	50.0 (4)	50.0 (4)	0
The total time required to implement the SWIM procedures is manageable.	0	0	62.5 (5)	37.5 (3)	0
The SWIM system easily fits in with my current practices.	0	0	50.0 (4)	50.0 (4)	0
I understand the procedures for the SWIM model.	0	0	50.0 (4)	50.0 (4)	0

A few teachers also described parents' reactions to the SWIM model:

. . . at conference time, I was able to kind of bring out some of the things that we were working on, and I kind of explained it in more detail with them in person during our conference time. And yeah, both parents were very receptive and excited about it and they're definitely on board. So yeah, it was good.

Mine [parents] were impressed too. It's like I had one parent that's like, "Oh, I can't believe she's doing that." It's like, yeah. So just kind of impressed with the work that she's been doing and others are just curious about the sequence. And so I just kind of explained it out and they're like, "Oh, okay, well that makes

. . . I shared one of the [writing] pieces at conferences with my parent and she was like, "that's really cool. She did this for how long?"

Current and Next Steps

• Full Year Implementation in 2021-2022 in our pilot district



- Full Year Implementaiton in 2022-2023 in multiple districts
- Current site continuing
- Large Urban District
- A cohort of small rural districts
- Continued Development of Navigator, the online platform teachers use to access SWIM materials

Acknowledgments & References

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of ATLAS staff to work presented in this poster including Chelsea Bohnstedt, Meagan Karvonen, Jennifer Kobrin, Ronda Layman, and Jonathan Schuster.

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The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant (H326M180010) from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.