

SMARTS Online is an evidence-based curriculum for teaching executive function strategies. The current curriculum is based on ten years of research and in-school studies completed by ResearchILD staff under the direction of Dr. Lynn Meltzer. The SMARTS Online curriculum has been successfully beta-tested in public, private, charter, and home schools across the US.



SMARTS provides elementary grade teachers with 30 lessons that they can use to teach students strategies for accessing important executive function processes—goal setting, organizing, prioritizing, thinking flexibly, remembering, and self-monitoring. Students develop the self-understanding to know which strategies work best for them as well as why, where, when, and how to use those strategies to complete their work.

The SMARTS Elementary School Curriculum works with existing curricula in general education classrooms, special education classrooms, and learning centers and is designed for students in grades 3-5. Since each lesson is divided into four 20-minute sessions, teachers have the flexibility to integrate lessons into the daily practice of their elementary school classroom.

Unit 1: Introduction: Building a Community of Metacognitive Learners

- **Lesson 1: How do I think about my thinking?**
 - Students engage in a discussion about “metacognition” and identify their personal strengths and challenges and the strategies they use in their everyday lives.
- **Lesson 2: How can I complete tasks?**
 - Students complete an activity that introduces them to the five executive function processes and helps them to identify their strengths and challenges in three of these processes.
- **Lesson 3: How can I think flexibly?**
 - Students discuss the concept of cognitive flexibility and its importance for strategy use. They complete an activity that illustrates how words can have multiple meanings.
- **Lesson 4: How can I use strategies to help me?**
 - Students identify how to make strategies individualized, systematic, efficient, and effective (I-SEE). Then, they examine their own strategies, refining them to ensure they fit the I-SEE model.

Unit 2: Goal Setting: Understanding the Big Picture and Breaking it Down

- **Lesson 1: I CANDO my goals!**
 - Students learn to create personalized and achievable goals that are Clear, Appropriate, Numerical, Doable, and with Obstacles considered (CANDO).
- **Lesson 2: Setting Goals**
 - Students review common obstacles that prevent them from achieving their goals. Building off of Lesson 2.1, students take the goals they have already set and develop strategies to achieve these goals (e.g., students break goals into steps and think about the obstacles they may face when trying to achieve their goals).

Unit 3: Thinking Flexibly

- **Lesson 1: Being flexible and shifting expectations**
 - Students explore shifting between multiple perspectives in reading and writing.
- **Lesson 2: I'm wearing your shoes**
 - Students explore shifting between multiple perspectives in social situations.
- **Lesson 3: Skim and Scoop**
 - Students learn how to comprehend what they read efficiently and how to differentiate between the main ideas and details of a text.
- **Lesson 4: Purposeful Highlighting**
 - Students use highlighting to identify multiple perspectives when reading and taking notes. This strategy also helps students highlight effectively and to avoid over-highlighting (the "yellow page syndrome").
- **Lesson 5: Same difference! (Shifty math)**
 - Students identify multiple methods for solving a problem and understand how the same problem can be analyzed in multiple ways.

Unit 4A: Organizing Materials and Time

- **Lesson 1: The 4 C's and backpack relay**
 - Students learn the 4 C's strategy for organizing and then apply the strategy to the organization of their own belongings.
- **Lesson 2: Developing an Understanding of Time**
 - Students examine their understanding of time and see the importance of measuring time.

- **Lesson 3: Estimating Time**
 - Students learn to improve their ability to estimate time while completing tasks, as well as gain an understanding of the importance of time estimation.
- **Lesson 4: Prioritizing Time**
 - Students learn to think in terms of Have To's (obligations) and Want To's (aspirations) while expressing their intentions visually in a daily planner.
- **Lesson 5: Planning Production Time**
 - Students employ strategies to practice short-term planning and to identify 'production time' then apply them for use in their own planners/calendars.

Unit 4B: Organizing Information

- **Lesson 1: Sorting and Categorizing using BOTEC**
 - Students learn strategies for organizing information to improve their writing. The BOTEC strategy will help students learn to brainstorm, organize, write topic sentences, provide evidence, and reach a conclusion.
- **Lesson 2: Note-taking**
 - Students learn why taking notes is important and how to effectively organize information from a text.
- **Lesson 3: Triple-Note-Tote**
 - Students learn "Triple-Note-Tote," a three-column strategy for note-taking and organizing information, which can be used across content areas.
- **Lesson 4: Summarizing Stories**
 - Students learn to create summaries using the Star strategy, which helps them to understand the "who, what, where, when, why and how" of a text.

Unit 5: Remembering

- **Lesson 1: Why is memory important?**
 - Students will identify their own strengths and challenges in working memory and learn how memory connects to following directions and completing school related tasks.
- **Lesson 2: Using Cartoons and Associations**
 - Students learn two mnemonic strategies that help support working memory, using pre-existing knowledge to create cartoons and associations to remember important information.

- **Lesson 3: Acronyms and Crazy Phrases**
 - In this lesson, students learn to use acronyms and phrases in order to lock information into long-term memory.
- **Lesson 4: Visualization and Storytelling**
 - Students will practice remembering unfamiliar processes or information through visualization and storytelling.

Unit 6: Self-monitoring and checking

- **Lesson 1: Monitor your Focus**
 - Students discuss and define what it means to be focused and not distracted. They will identify the situations that do and do not help them focus, and they will practice monitoring their behavior to stay on task.
- **Lesson 2: Check your Sources**
 - Students learn the definition of self-checking and participate in activities to help them understand when and how to use self-checking strategies, including the STOPS strategy to help them check tests and compositions.
- **Lesson 3: Top 3 Hits**
 - Students use their own work to check for their most common errors. Students generate a list of their personal Top-3-Hits for checking their own future assignments.
- **Lesson 4: Manage your Mood**
 - Students learn to develop an awareness of their mood in different situations and the impact it has on learning.
- **Lesson 5: What Hat are you Wearing?**
 - Students will check their behavior to ensure that it matches the situation they are in and the task at hand.
- **Lesson 6: Wrap-Up: Stop, Review, Reflect**
 - Students review the SMARTS strategies they have learned and then they create a Strategies for Success sheet they can use in the future.

By fostering a culture of strategy use in their classrooms, teachers can help students do more than just improve academically; they will increase their students' academic self-confidence as well as their effort and motivation to succeed in school. As our research and clinical work has shown, increased self-understanding and use of executive function strategies are critically important for a student's success in school and beyond.