In a year in which teachers and students worked to close the ever-widening academic and social-emotional gaps driven by the pandemic, the Research Institute for Learning & Development moved forward with one singular focus: helping students to learn how to learn.

Throughout our 30+ year history, our commitment to children, adolescents, and young adults has guided our work, and continually provided us with the inspiration and drive to develop new and innovative tools, particularly in the area of executive function strategy instruction.

Over the course of this turbulent year, educators have increasingly recognized the need for executive function strategy instruction, and the transformative power it offers them and their students. ResearchILD has been, and will continue to be, there for every educator who wants to help their students develop the flexibility, persistence, and resilience necessary for academic and life success.

Educators in 45 states, the District of Columbia, and 24 countries have implemented SMARTS and/or participated in our conferences and workshops.

**By the numbers ...**

- 160,000 students have received executive function strategy instruction via SMARTS.
- 3,400 teachers have used the SMARTS curriculum in their classrooms.
- 13,500 educators have attended our conferences, trainings, and workshops.
- 1,215 schools in 45 states and 24 countries have implemented SMARTS.
- 106% growth in SMARTS licenses from 2020 to 2021.

Students have received executive function strategy instruction via SMARTS.
Helping Students Understand Their Executive Function Strengths and Weaknesses

In 2021, ResearchILD developed MetaCOG Online, an interactive executive function survey tool. MetaCOG Online helps students develop an understanding of their learning profiles and is a practical tool for teachers to collect data on students’ EF strategy use at multiple points throughout the school year. Teachers can use this data to customize whole class instruction, as well as personalized strategies for individual students. In its pilot, we partnered with 26 schools, 34 teachers, and nearly 1,000 students. In order to solicit feedback from students, ResearchILD launched the SMARTS Student Ambassador Program, a group that meets bimonthly to ensure student-facing tools are meaningful and relevant for all students. MetaCOG Online is targeted for release in January 2022.

Leveling the Playing Field Through Executive Function Strategy Instruction

All educators play a key role in removing barriers and developing equitable approaches that support the success of every student. In the 2nd year of the Executive Function Equity Fellowship, ResearchILD welcomed an expanded cohort of educators and administrators from a variety of learning settings and grade levels. All fellows receive in-depth training, access to the SMARTS Executive Function curriculum, and coaching from SMARTS staff. Fellows take part in monthly gatherings to collaborate, learn from guest speakers and from each other, and deepen their knowledge of executive function as they pursue their goal of empowering students of color and those historically disadvantaged to succeed in school and in life.

SMARTS Elementary Introduces Exciting New Features

The SMARTS Elementary team introduced a number of exciting new key features, the first enhancements since launching the curriculum in 2019. These enhancements are designed to help educators customize executive function (EF) strategy instruction for greater personalization and impact. The Lesson Sorter allows teachers to curate lessons for their classes and individual students by EF area and academic tasks. Each of the 30 lessons now has Extension activities with over 100 mini-lessons to help integrate SMARTS strategies into day-to-day instruction. The SMARTS Elementary Workbook, now in its second printing, is in full color and includes 150 student handouts, creating a strategy notebook for students to reflect on and track their learning.

ResearchILD Conferences and Training Go Worldwide

Throughout 2021, ResearchILD offered many virtual trainings and conferences, including extended viewing time for participants via recorded format. Programming included free webinars that introduced educators to ResearchILD and the fundamentals of executive function, as well as in-depth training that took educators on a deeper dive into EF, covering such topics as metacognition, organization, flexible problem solving, motivation, engagement, and math and dyslexia. With record-setting sales of our SMARTS executive function curriculum, the SMARTS Summer Workshop also broke new attendance records. And the 36th annual Learning Differences Conference (re-branded as the Executive Function Conference) focused on executive function and equity and drew participants from across the US and the world.