WRITE CENTER

Using Self-regulated Strategy Development to Teach Writing to Children with ASD

1 What is the Writing Process?

The writing process usually consists of the following:

- planning
- composing
- revising, and
- editing.

How do self-regulatory skills support writing?

Self-regulatory skills, such as goal setting, planning, and self-monitoring, help writers make a plan and work the plan.

2 Unique Needs of Our Writers with ASD

Some students with ASD may have difficulty with these skills. Some members of this group may lack theory of mind—the ability to recognize and understand mental states, such as thoughts, feelings, and motives.

Language can be another challenge for some students with ASD where it's hard for them to put their ideas down on paper. As a result, some students with ASD display difficulties with the writing process.

3 What is SRSD?

Self-regulated strategy development (SRSD)

- SRSD provides a range of strategies for students to train their self-regulation abilities.

- **Key aspects of SRSD are:** scaffolding, explicit instruction, motivating students, individualizing instruction, supporting students to move at their own pace, promoting maintenance, and generalization of the acquired strategies.

4 Steps of SRSD

- **Develop background knowledge:** set up the ground before actually teaching the strategy. What needs to be prepared before applying the strategy? What knowledge do students need to grasp to use the strategy?
- **Discuss it:** The teacher walks through a well-written essay with students in detail: what writing strategies are used? What self-regulation skills are needed throughout the process?
- **Model it:** The teacher thinks aloud as they use the strategies. For example, use of self-regulatory strategies such as self-talk (e.g., "what should I do next?"), goal-setting (e.g., "these need to be done before I start writing")

- **Memorize it:** Make sure students can remember how to correctly apply the strategies.
- **Support it:** From this stage, students start to take on the active role. Teachers' role is to support students as they work out the process. Teacher can prompt, use graphic organizers, and visual mnemonics, but supports gradually fade and students take on the responsibility to finish the writing process
- **Independent performance:** Students are ready to be independent writers when they master both writing and self-regulatory strategies.

*Goals of SRSD: help students master higher-level cognitive skills; help and motivate students to monitor and manage their writing process; assist students to develop positive attitudes towards writing and them as writers

Why is SRSD a Good Match for Students with ASD?

- SRSD promotes self-management and offers strategies to self-monitor.
- Modeling and prompting are key elements of supports for students with ASD
- SRSD encourages visual support that are more appealing and less cognitive taxing

The Study

A multilevel meta-analysis was conducted to determine the effectiveness of SRSD to teach writing for students with ASD.

The Findings:
- SRSD was an effective approach to teach writing to students with ASD. Students benefit significantly on both number of words and writing quality.
- Students benefit more from longer intervention. But a limited number of sessions can also improve writing outcomes

Teaching Suggestions

- Teachers of students with ASD should consider using an SRSD approach to teach writing, especially for upper elementary and middle school students
- There is variability in students' improvement, so it's important to individualize the approach to make it more effective.
- Using the approach longer can be more beneficial for writing outcomes.

Reference: Asaro-Saddler, K., Moeyaert, M., Xu, X., & Yerden, X. (2021). Multilevel meta-analysis of the effectiveness of self-regulated strategy development in writing for children with ASD. Exceptionality, 29(2), 150-166.

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