SMARTS

Strategies, Motivation, Awareness, Resilience, Talents, Success

SMARTS

Peer Mentoring/Coaching

Executive Function
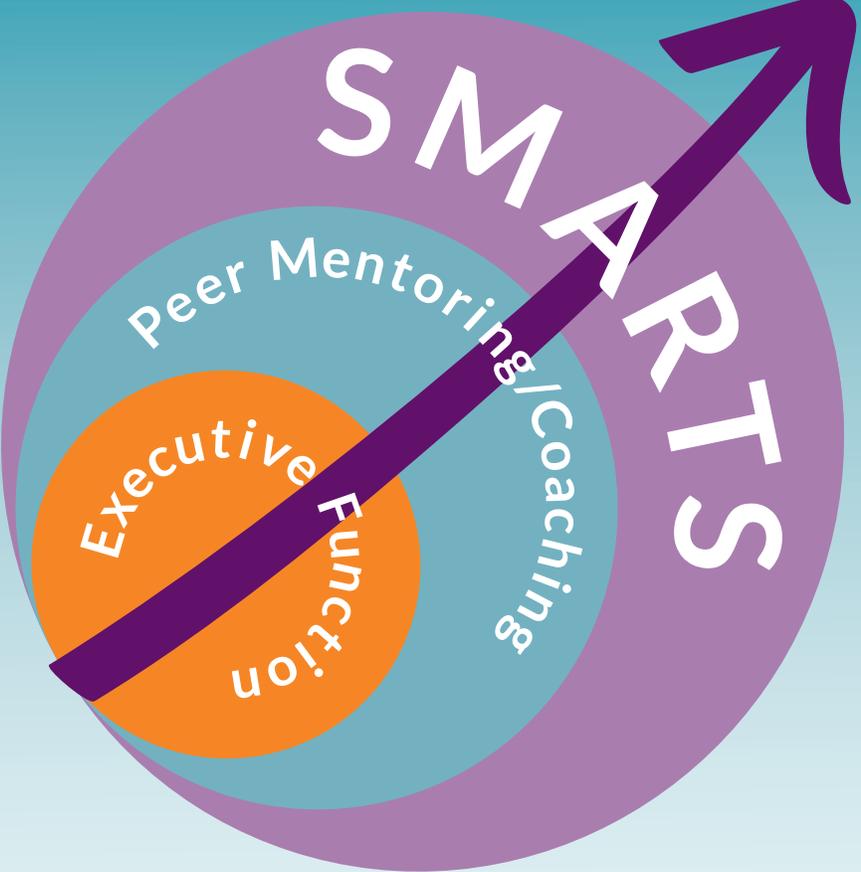
Executive Function & Mentoring Program

THE SMARTS ONLINE EXECUTIVE FUNCTION CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Welcome to SMARTS Online, an evidenced-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 sucessfully beta-tested in public, private, charter, and home schools across the United States.

SMARTS provides you with 30 lessons you can use to teach students strategies for accessing important executive function processes—goal setting, organizing, prioritizing, thinking flexibly, remembering, and self-monitoring. With SMARTS, 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 homework, to plan long-term projects, and to study for tests.

Designed for students in grades 6–12, SMARTS works with existing curricula in general education classrooms, special education classrooms, learning centers and tutoring sessions. You can teach SMARTS in its entirety or select key lessons to reinforce specific strategies. Your SMARTS subscription connects you to:

- 30 evidence-based lessons with supporting handouts, PowerPoint presentations, and videos.

- Surveys to help you and your students understand their learning profiles.

- SMARTS Digital Training Sessions to help you get the most out of the curriculum.

- SMARTS Educator Forum where you can exchange ideas with other SMARTS educators.

By fostering a culture of strategy use in your classroom, you can help your students do more than just improve academically; they will increase their 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.

What Is Executive Function?

Executive function is an umbrella term for the complex cognitive processes students use to set goals, plan their time, organize and prioritize, think flexibly, access their working memory, self-monitor, and self-check. The model of a funnel helps to explain the importance of executive function processes for learning. When students learn to use executive function strategies, they are able to coordinate (or "funnel") the various processes required to complete complex academic tasks such as taking notes or writing. When students have executive function weaknesses, the funnel becomes blocked and they are unable to produce work that reflects their true potential.

SMARTS lessons are grouped by five executive function processes that affect learning:

Goal Setting: Identifying short-term and long-term goals

Cognitive Flexibility: Switching easily between approaches; thinking flexibly

Organizing and Prioritizing: Sorting and ordering information based on relative importance

Accessing Working Memory: Remembering and manipulating information mentally

Self-Monitoring and Checking: Identifying and correcting personal errors

SMARTS Executive Function Curriculum

Unit 1. Introduction to Executive Function Strategies		
Learning Goals	**Lessons**	**Outcomes**
Students will understand their learning strengths and weaknesses and learn about executive function processes.	1.1 What is metacognition? Thinking about thinking 1.2 What is cognitive flexibility? Defining how to think flexibly 1.3 What is executive function? The EF Wheel 1.4 I-SEE a strategy: What makes a "strategy" a strategy?	Students will be able to: • Define metacognition • Understand the core executive function processes • Apply their knowledge of executive function strategies to their understanding of themselves as learners

Unit 2. Goal Setting—Identifying short-term and long-term goals		
Learning Goals	**Lessons**	**Outcomes**
Students will learn to develop appropriate goals with definable outcomes. Students will develop strategies for implementing their goals throughout the school year.	2.1 Identifying CANDO goals 2.2 Thinking through individual goals	Students will be able to: • Define CANDO goals • Describe the elements of "good goals" • Use a rubric to assess goals • Design CANDO goals that demonstrate reflective thinking

Unit 3. Cognitive Flexibility—Shifting problem-solving approaches; thinking flexibly		
Learning Goals	**Lessons**	**Outcomes**
Students will learn that multiple strategies can be used to solve a given problem and will, through repeated practice, develop a variety of strategies to support flexible thinking and problem solving. Students will learn how to distinguish the main ideas from the less important details.	3.1 Being flexible and shifting expectations 3.2 Shifting perspectives in writing 3.3 Skim and scoop strategy 3.4 Purposeful highlighting 3.5 Shifty math	Students will be able to: • Explain the importance of shifting approaches flexibly • Write according to multiple perspectives • Shift between the main idea and details

Unit 4. Organizing and Prioritizing—Sorting and ordering information based on relative importance		
PART A: Organizing Materials and Prioritizing Time		
Learning Goals	**Lessons**	**Outcomes**
Students will learn to organize their materials for school and schedule their time appropriately.	4A.1 The 4 C's strategy 4A.2 Developing an understanding of time 4A.3 Prioritizing time 4A.4 Monthly planning 4A.5 Weekly planning	Students will be able to: • Explain strategies for organizing belongings and the importance of planning • Use calendars and tools for daily, weekly, and monthly planning • Apply their knowledge of planning to breaking down assignments into meaningful parts
PART B: Organizing Ideas and Information		
Learning Goals	**Lessons**	**Outcomes**
Students will gain the knowledge and the strategies necessary to organize information for reading, writing papers, taking notes, and studying for tests.	4B.1 Sorting and categorizing using BOTEC 4B.2 Bottom-up vs. top-down thinkers 4B.3 Note-taking from a lesson 4B.4 Using the Triple-Note-Tote 4B.5 Studying with the PPCQ strategy	Students will be able to: • Describe strategies for organizing thoughts for note-taking, essay writing, and studying • Integrate memory strategies with organizational strategies to enhance understanding of topics
Unit 5. Remembering—Manipulating information mentally		
Learning Goals	**Lessons**	**Outcomes**
Students will learn and implement strategies to efficiently and accurately store and recall important information.	5.1 Why is working memory important? 5.2 Using cartoons and associations to remember 5.3 Using crazy phrases and stories to remember 5.4 Creating strategies for remembering	Students will be able to: • Define memory strategies including acronyms, cartoons, and crazy phrases • Apply memory strategies to important information across academic content areas

Unit 6. Self-Monitoring and Self-Checking—Identifying errors and self-correcting		
Learning Goals	**Lessons**	**Outcomes**
Students will learn to monitor their behavior in the moment to ensure that they stay on task. Students will become aware of the types of errors they often make and learn strategies to avoid repeating these mistakes in the future.	6.1 What is self-monitoring? 6.2 What is self-checking? 6.3 The Top-3-Hits strategy 6.4 Breaking down directions 6.5 Stop, review, reflect: completing checklists of all the executive function strategies	Students will be able to: • Identify strategies for self-monitoring and self-checking • Explain and reflect upon their use of executive function strategies