

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & MENTORING PROGRAM

## Understanding the Impact of Executive Function on Writing: Strategies for Success

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### Agenda

- What is executive function?
- EF and writing
- Understanding EF challenges
- Best practices for teaching EF strategies
- BOTEC outlining strategy
- Q&A

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RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### The Research Institute for Learning and Development, (ResearchILD)

is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization committed to changing the lives of children, adolescents, and young adults with learning differences and executive function challenges.

As the nationally recognized experts in Executive Function, we transform students' lives with our Executive Function Coaching services and Educational Therapy.

**Educational Services**

- School and in-person availability
- Executive function strategic instruction and coaching
- Individualized academic support
- Remediation and specialized instruction

**Executive Function Programs**

- SMARTS Executive Function Curriculum for grades 3-5
- MARSIG Services and Toolkit
- SMARTS 8th Grade Executive Function Program

Our internationally acclaimed SMARTS Executive Function Curriculum is used in 47 countries and 28 countries.

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3

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BACKGROUND AND HISTORY SMARTS



**Lynn Meltzer, Ph.D.**  
 President and Director of the Institutes for Learning and Development (ResearchILD and ILD) in Lexington, MA.

Books include: Promoting Executive Function in the Classroom, 2010, The Power of Peers in the Classroom: Enhancing Learning and Social Skills, 2015, co-edited with Karen Harris, and the 2nd edition of her book, Executive Function in Education: From Theory to Practice.



4

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WHAT IS SMARTS? SMARTS

**S**TRATEGIES ...a research-based strategy instruction curriculum that promotes LIFELONG strategic and self-aware learning

**M**MOTIVATON

**A**WARENESS

**R**ESILIENCE

**T**ALENTS

**S**UCCESS



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ANNOUNCING... SMARTS@HOME! SMARTS

**SMARTS@HOME** is a collection of activities designed to help support students' executive function needs outside of school.

Working together, adults and children develop self-understanding and strategies to tackle any EF challenge, from time management to organizing to thinking flexibly.

SMARTS@Home is engaging, challenging, and a whole lot of fun!



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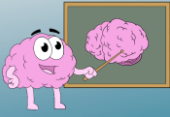
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**S M \* R T S**  
EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & MENTORING PROGRAM

What is executive function?



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WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTION? **S M \* R T S**

**Elements of Executive Function**



- Self-checking:** Recognizing one's most common mistakes
- Organizing:** Categorizing and sorting information
- Social Setting:** Working towards desired outcomes
- Problem Solving:** Accessing working memory; Juggling information in the brain
- Flexibility:** Looking again in a brand-new way

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WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTION? **S M \* R T S**

Executive function is essential for success in school.

We see it every day.

Let's develop our executive function skills.



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**SMARTS**

**For each round, enter 3-5 academic tasks that you feel heavily rely on this EF area.**

**You only have 30 seconds for each area, so think quickly!**

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**WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTION?**

**Elements of Executive Function**

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WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTION? **SMARTS**

**Executive function processes are adult superpowers!**

Think about the role EF plays in your day-to-day life—we couldn't live without it!

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WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTION? **SMARTS**

**Executive function processes are adult superpowers!**

Strong EF predicts a more successful, happy, and healthy life... as well as greater success in school from preschool through university."  
(Diamond, 2016)

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14

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**SMARTS**

**Key Takeaway**

Executive function is the key to successful learning.  
 EF demands are an everyday thing; they take place in and out of academics.  
 EF and self-understanding are linked.  
 There is nothing magical about it; you can see EF happening! (Or not happening).

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**S M A R T S**  
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Executive function and writing



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**S M A R T S**

**Is EF a part of writing? Yes! But...**

Writing instruction often targets skills that do not address EF, and EF strategies are not always explicitly part of writing instruction.

This is especially a problem when it comes to teaching fundamental writing skills.



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**S M A R T S**

**Components of Basic Writing Skills**

- Handwriting
- Spelling
- Keyboarding
- Capitalization
- Punctuation
- Sentence Construction

Effective Writing Instruction | Improving Adult Literacy Instruction: Developing Reading and Writing | The National Academies Press



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**SMARTS**

Successful writers must be able to shift between basic writing skills, specialized writing knowledges, and the various steps of the writing stages.

Executive function is essential!



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19

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**SMARTS**



**Basic Writing Skills**

- Handwriting
- Spelling
- Keyboarding
- Capitalization
- Punctuation
- Sentence construction

**Specialized Writing Knowledge**

- Attributes of good writing
- Textures of specific types of text
- Linguistic knowledge
- Awareness of the audience
- Topic knowledge
- Vocabulary knowledge

**Writing Motivation**

- Self-efficacy
- Writing apprehension
- Attitudes toward writing
- Attributes for success/failure
- Interest
- Intrinsic/extrinsic motivation
- Goal orientation

**Executive Control**

**Writing Strategies and Processes**

- Goal setting and planning
- Seeking information
- Researching
- Organizing
- Transforming
- Self-monitoring
- Revising
- Self-evaluating and revising
- Self-visualization
- Rehearsing
- Environmental structuring
- Time management
- Self-rewarding
- Rehearsing
- Seeking assistance
- Emulating

Effective Writing Instruction I: Improving Adult Literacy Instruction: Developing Reading and Writing. | The National Academies Press

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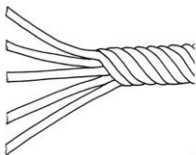
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**SMARTS**

**The Strands That Are Woven Into Skilled Writing**  
(Seditz, 2019)



**Critical Thinking**

- Generating ideas, gathering information
- Writing process: organizing, drafting, writing, editing

**Syntax**

- Grammar and syntactic awareness
- Sentence elaboration
- Punctuation

**Text Structure**

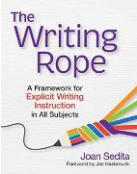
- Narratives, informational, opinion structures
- Paragraph structure
- Patterns of organization (descriptives, sequence, cause/effect, compare/contrast, problem/solution)
- Linking and transition words/phrases

**Writing Craft**

- Word choice
- Awareness of task, audience purpose
- Library devices

**Transcription**

- Spelling
- Handwriting, keyboarding



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21

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**Key Takeaway**

Successful writing relies heavily on engaging with EF.  
EF instruction is not typically part of the early writing instruction, but it should be!  
Writing instruction must teach EF strategies explicitly, even in the earliest grades.

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Understanding EF challenges



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SMARTS

**They may be smart...**



**...but they get stuck.**

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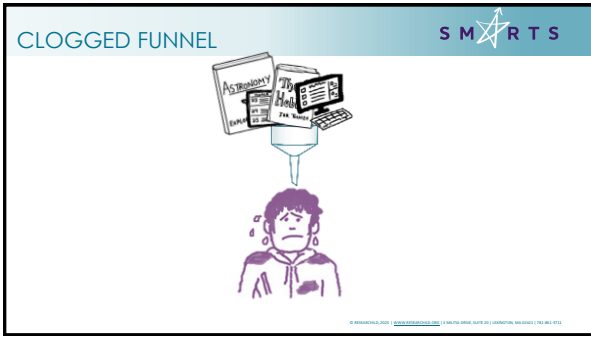
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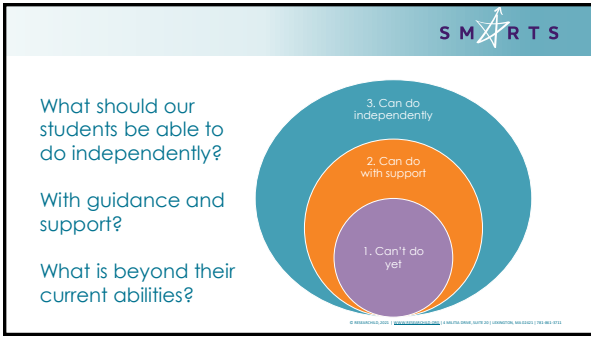
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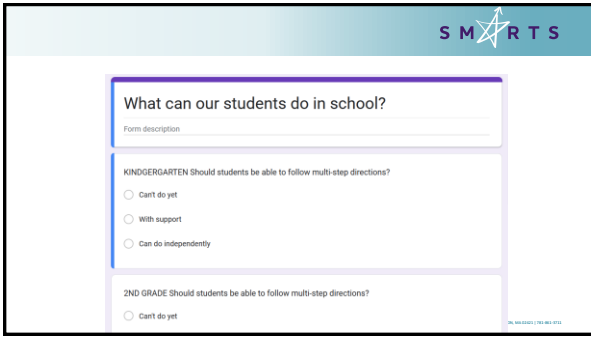
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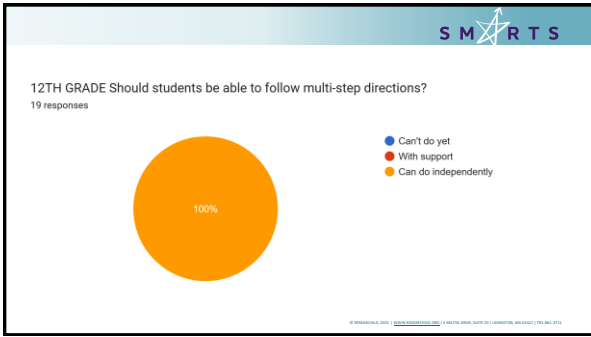
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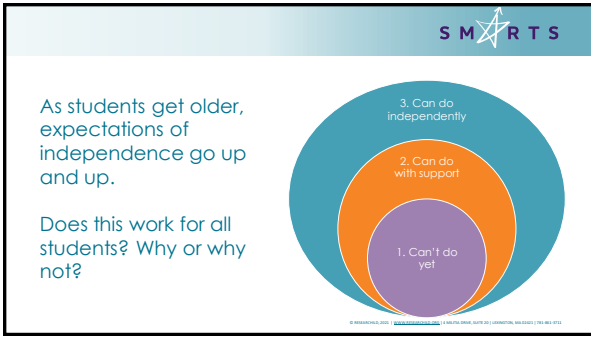
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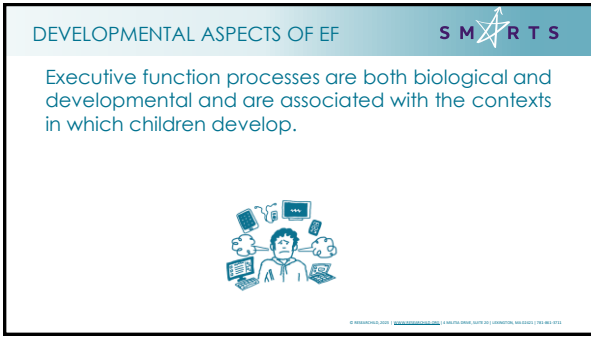
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DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF EF SMARTS

There are brain-based reasons why some students struggle with executive function.

- Learning or attention challenge (e.g., ADHD, SLD)
- Exposure to trauma
- Fetal alcohol syndrome



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31

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DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF EF SMARTS

For all students, EF abilities will improve as they develop and mature.



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DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF EF SMARTS

Developmental Factors:



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### Contextual Factors:

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34

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### Basic Writing Skills: Learning to Spell

Trask's Trask's Spelling Words (get your pencil by this word first!)	
blouse	break
cookbook	brush
egg	dash
shampoo	covered
pad	dash
wash	stepped
start	took
stand	spoon
phone	roof
group	nap

**Review**      **Challenge**

frail      cartoon  
 extra      offense  
 beach      airplane  
 include      bookstore

Spellings (get out it)
cancel
trovel
towel
squirrel
table
circle
candle
single
ankle
title

Now write some sentences with these words to help you to remember them in your writing.

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35

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### Mid-Level Writing Tasks: Mastering Writing Rules

**NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_**

**GRAMMAR WORKSHEET: PREPOSITIONS OF TIME**

AT	IN	ON
at 6:00	in the morning	on Monday
at the store	in the afternoon	on the weekend
at the bus stop	in the winter	on the table
at the airport	in the summer	on the bed
at the bank	in the east	on the wall
at the station	in the west	on the floor
at the office	in the north	on the ceiling
at the school	in the south	on the road

**How can I use this?**

**PERSUASIVE WRITING**  
building an argument

Circle Arguing

1. I think that... *arguing*

2. I believe that... *arguing*

3. I am sure that... *arguing*

4. I am certain that... *arguing*

5. I am convinced that... *arguing*

6. I am confident that... *arguing*

7. I am positive that... *arguing*

8. I am sure that... *arguing*

9. I am certain that... *arguing*

10. I am convinced that... *arguing*

11. I am confident that... *arguing*

12. I am positive that... *arguing*

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36

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**S M A R T S**

## Upper-Level Writing: Analysis and Critical Thinking

**PROMPT #1**

Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

**AP® World History Essay Questions**

The following are examples supplied by the College Board® that reflect old essay questions in the revised format and recent essay questions plus the more recent ones are the actual essay questions themselves.

**Question 2 - Continuity and Change-Over-Time Question (CCOT)**

2009 – Analyze contributions and changes that resulted from the spread of Islam into ONE of the following regions in the period between 600 C.E. and circa 1700:

- West Africa
- South Asia
- Europe

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37

**S M A R T S**

## DEVELOPMENTAL ASPECTS OF EF

When EF demands are matched by EF strategies, students develop the EF abilities they need to be successful.

To support EF across the grade levels, we need to teach strategies that meet the demands placed on students in their classrooms!



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38

**S M A R T S**

Explicit instruction, repeated practice, and reflection are the keys to improving EF



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39

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**Key Takeaway**

Struggles with writing tasks are often related to EF challenges (aka "clogged funnels")

When understanding clogged funnels, it's important to look at the context.

By matching demands with EF strategies, we create contexts that promote success.

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**Best Practices for EF Strategy Instruction**



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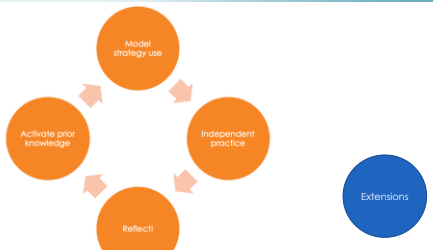
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TEACHING EF **SMARTS**



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42

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**SMARTS**

Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

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**SMARTS**      Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

**Learning Objectives**

- ✓ Sort and categorize information into groups
- ✓ Recognizing sorting and categorizing as a brainstorming strategy
- ✓ Use the BOTEC strategy to create organized paragraphs or essays

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44

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**EF ACTIVATORS**      **SMARTS**

Use activators that engage students and help them understand the point of strategy use.

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EFFECTIVE ACTIVATORS SMARTS

An effective activator is:

- Engaging (not just fun!)
- Non-threatening
- Connects to students' lives

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SMARTS Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

**Whose Pocket?**

What are some things that you might find in someone's pocket?

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47

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SMARTS Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

**Whose Pocket?**

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48

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**SMARTS**      **Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC**

**Whose Pocket?**



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49

**SMARTS**      **Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC**

**Whose Pocket?**



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50

**SMARTS**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**SIFTING AND SORTING**

**Directions:** There are 15 words listed below. In the boxes below, group the words together and create a category name that describes all of the words in the group. Write the category name on the line provided on the top of each box.

**Note:** Some words can be used correctly in more than one category. Try to think creatively about your categories to prepare to support your answers.

Triangle	Falcon	Granite	Penguin	Starfish
Coral	Shark	Parallelogram	Trapezoid	Bat
Eagle	Limestone	Scale	Heating	Snake

Category Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Category Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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51

GUIDED INSTRUCTION SMARTS

Model how to use the strategy successfully. Explicit instruction is crucial.

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52

GUIDED INSTRUCTION SMARTS

**Effective Guided Instruction:**

- Shows what success looks like
- Breaks down the steps
- Uses multiple formats (auditory, visual, etc.)

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53

**SMARTS** Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

**BOTEC**

Sorting and categorizing information makes it more USEFUL.

How can sorting and categorizing information help with our WRITING?

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54

**SMARTS**      Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

**BOTEC**

- Brainstorm
- Organize
- Topic Sentence
- Evidence (or examples)
- Conclusion

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**SMARTS**      Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

**BOTEC: Brainstorm**

**SUMMER**



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**SMARTS**      Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

**BOTEC: Organize**

Category #1: \_\_\_\_\_    Category #2: \_\_\_\_\_    Category #3: \_\_\_\_\_

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57

**SMARTS**      Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

**BOTEC: Topic Sentence**

Families can spend lots of time outdoors during the summer.



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**SMARTS**      Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

**BOTEC: Evidence (or examples)**



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59

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**SMARTS**      Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

**BOTEC: Conclusion**

Summer is my favorite season because I can take a break from schoolwork, spend lots of time outdoors, and go on vacation with my family.

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INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

SMARTS

Independent practice provides students with the opportunity to apply the strategy they are learning in a controlled context.

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61

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INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

SMARTS

**Effective Independent Practice:**

- Targets the strategy they are learning
- Is appropriately challenging
- Integrates scaffolds
- Uses multiple formats (auditory, visual, etc.) as needed

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62

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SMARTS

Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC

Module 3

Independent Practice

Lesson 5.1

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63

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**SMARTS**      **Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC**

**Your Turn!**



- B**rainstorm
- O**rganize
- T**opic Sentence
- E**vidence (or examples)
- C**onclusion

Lesson 5.1

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64

**SMARTS**      **Sorting & Categorizing Using BOTEC**

**Possible prompts:**

- What are the best toppings for a pizza?
- Who is going to win the Super Bowl?
- Which decade had the best clothes?
- What is the best snack food?
- What is the best pet to have?
- Come up with your own!

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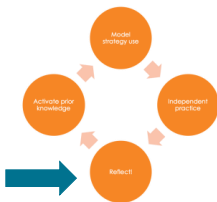
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65

**REFLECTION**      **SMARTS**

Reflection allows students to review how well the strategy worked. This step is crucial to long term growth in EF!



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66

**REFLECTION** **SMARTS**

**Effective Reflection:**

- Helps students understand their strengths and challenges
- Gives them a chance to assess their performance
- Asks them how they want to adjust their behavior in the future



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67

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**SMARTS**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**STRATEGY REFLECTION SHEET – PLANNING ESSAYS AND PROJECTS**

**PART A: Strategy Planning**

Select a strategy and create a plan for your essay or project.

<input type="checkbox"/> Use the ROTEC strategy for creating an outline.	<input type="checkbox"/> Use the assignment sheet or rubric to create a checklist of steps.	<input type="checkbox"/> Check your progress and adjust your timeline.
<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to your Top 3 H's (personalized editing checks).	<input type="checkbox"/> Write down each step for the project in your planner or calendar.	<input type="checkbox"/> Review the rubric and edit before you turn in your assignment.
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		

Why do you think this strategy will be helpful? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> It will save me time.	<input type="checkbox"/> It will make my work easier.	<input type="checkbox"/> It matches my learning profile.
<input type="checkbox"/> I have used it before.	<input type="checkbox"/> It will get me a better grade.	<input type="checkbox"/> It will make my work more fun.
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		

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68

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**SMARTS**

**PART B: Strategy Reflection**

How did your plan go? Please rate the strategy you picked:



Why did you pick this rating? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> It saved me time.	<input type="checkbox"/> I got a better grade.	<input type="checkbox"/> It was easier to do my work.
<input type="checkbox"/> It took too much time.	<input type="checkbox"/> I got a worse grade.	<input type="checkbox"/> It made my work harder.
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		

Next time I will:  Use the same strategy  Use a different strategy

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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69

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TEACHING EF SMARTS





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70

STRATEGY EXTENSIONS SMARTS

**Extensions are short (15-30 min.) activities that teach executive function strategies in the context of day-to-day class activities.**



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71

STRATEGY EXTENSIONS SMARTS

**A good extension is:**

- Short (15-30 min)
- Useful (easily applied)
- Adaptable (can be adjusted to various teachers' styles)
- Integrated (fits into the day-to-day rhythm of the classroom)



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72



**SMARTS**

**Extension ideas:**

- Create a 'junk drawer' filled with miscellaneous objects. How many ways can they sort the objects? **CHALLENGE** them to expand the number of categories they come up with.
- Play games that involve sorting and categorizing (e.g., Scattergories, Clustergories, 20 Questions, Guess Who, Code Names, or Set). Ask students to explain their strategies after each round.
- Have students review the errors they made on homework and classwork. Ask them to sort their errors into categories.
- Make time for a short (e.g., 5 minutes) brainstorming session when you first assign a project so that students can generate different ideas for the project.

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73

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angelina weld grimke - ☆ 📄

File Edit View Insert Format Slide Arrange Tools Extensions

Background Layout Theme Transition

2 | 3 | 4 | 5

2 **Why is Angelina Weld Grimké important?**

3 **Early life**

4 **Education**

5 **Harlem Renaissance**

**Angelina Weld Grimké**

Harlem Renaissance

74

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**SMARTS**

**Let's reflect**

1. What do you think about this strategy?
2. When and where can you use it?
3. How would you need to modify this lesson for your students/grade level?
4. What questions do you have?

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75

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**S M A R T S**  
EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & MENTORING PROGRAM

**Wrapping Up**



76

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**S M A R T S**

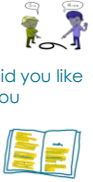


**Let's Reflect!**

What do you think of the activities today? What did you like or not like about them? When and where could you implement them?

**Remember to help students:**

- Understand their strengths and challenges
- Reflect on their performance
- Make plans for next time



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77

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**S M A R T S**

**Questions?**



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78

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SMARTS

**THANK YOU!**  
**Questions, comments, concerns?**



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79