A Step Up Academy's

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RESEARCH ROUND-UP

Staff Spotlight
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Strategy: Positive Language

Why do you use this strategy?
I think it's important to use positive language because it helps our kids focus and learn from positive language instead of negative language that tends to be used for some of their behaviors. Outside of our building, the community doesn't always know how to respond to the behaviors we deal with on a daily basis, so sometimes the response can be negative. I hope that my use of positive language can teach them that they are capable of making great choices, and also teach them that there is a different and more positive way to respond.

How have the students responded?
You will definitely get the most attention from the kids when they have a good relationship with you and you take the time to get to know them and give them praise. I think the use of positive language only reinforces the nurturing relationship, and it can help boost their self-esteem as well.

Is there anything you would change in the future?
I wouldn't change anything about this strategy. Who doesn't love hearing something positive about themselves or towards themselves every now and then? I know personally that when I'm having a rough day just a simple compliment or positive feedback can brighten it! I know the same must apply to our kids.

Click here to **NOMINATE** a co-worker for Staff Spotlight!

Sentence Frames

Rationale

Writing is a necessary form of communication. Researchers have found that functional writing skills for students with moderate to severe disabilities are lacking. Difficulities in this area can hinder opportunities for inclusion in general education settings and access to more complex communication in the community.

One strategy to help with written expression skills for students with more intensive needs is the use of sentence frames with simulataneous prompting. Sentence frames are defined "scripted portion[s] of a sentence that can be completed to produce a targeted written or spoken response" (Pennington et al., 2018, p. 143).

Research

Pennington et al. (2018) conducted an intervention study with three middle school students with ASD. The authors used pictures to help prompt students to write. The teacher told the student, "We are going to write sentences. A sentence names a character and tells more." The students were taught three different types of sentence frames (i.e., I want_____, I see_____, The___ is _____).

Using a multiple baseline across sentence type design, the research team showed a functional relation between the use of sentence frames and prompting on the percentage of correct sentences written by the students.

Steps to Implement

1. Choose up to three sentence frames.
2. Decide what the prompts for each sentence frame will be. (i.e., "Write a sentence to tell me what you want," "Write a sentence telling me about _____.")
3. Decide the method of student response (e.g., pre-printed cards with visual supports, written text).
4. Teach students using the appropriate teaching method. Pennington et al. (2018) used a constant time delay procedure and a system of least prompts.
5. Provide reinforcement (e.g., what they wanted or verbal reinforcement).

I want _____ .

I see _____ .

The _____ is _____ .

Social Narratives

Rationale

Students with Autism struggle with social skills. Not only are social skills important for developing relationships among peers, but they can significantly predict post-secondary success for students with Autism (Nasamran et al, 2017). Nasamran and colleagues (2017) found that students with higher social skills had higher rates of college graduation, gaining competitive employment, and living independently from parents, guardians, or assisted care facilities.

Social narratives are an Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) in which a target behavior is featured and the story or narrative provides examples of appropriate responding. More specifically, "social narratives are aimed at helping learners adjust to changes in routine, adapt their behaviors based on social and physical cues of a situatiotn, or to teach specific social skills or behaviors" (Steinbenner et al., 2020).

Research

Social narratives are an EBP in Autism research, meaning that numerous research studies have met rigorous and high quality criteria and show effective and desirable results for the targeted population.

Delano & Snell (2006) investigated the effects of a social stories intervention for three elementary students with ASD on the frequency of their seeking attention, initiating comments, initiating requests, making contingent responses, and duration of social engagement. The intervention consisted of reading individualized social stories, answering comprehension questions, and then particpating in a 10-minute play session. The number of targeted skills increased for all participants and two of the three participants were able to generalize their skills to the classroom setting.
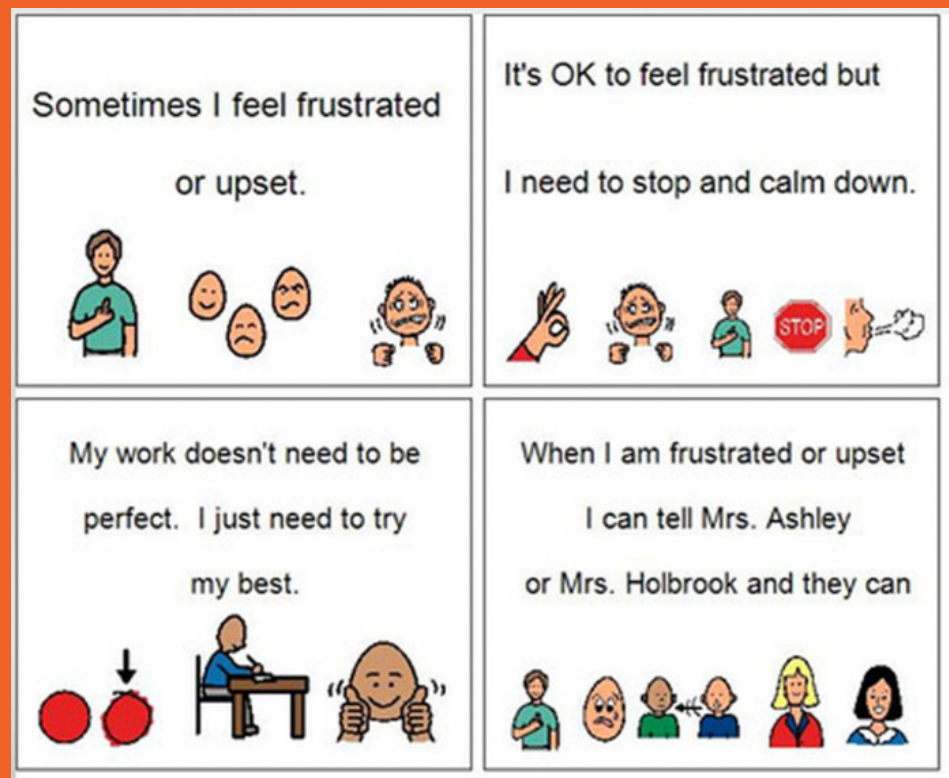
Steps to Implement

1. Identify target social skill.
2. Develop individualized story for student or class-room.
3. Read story and ask comprehension questions to students.
4. Provide opportunities to practice the target social skill directly after reading the story.
5. Reinforce use of targeted skill through specific language (e.g., "I really appreciate how you let your friend have a turn like we learned about in our story.")

Sometimes I feel frustrated or upset.

It's OK to feel frustrated but I need to stop and calm down.

My work doesn't need to be perfect. I just need to try my best.

When I am frustrated or upset I can tell Mrs. Ashley or Mrs. Holbrook and they can

Image from https://fasdtoolkit.weebly.com/social-stories.html

RESEARCH 101

Topic: The Structure of a Research Article

There is a lot of research out there. It can be difficult to know what to look for and what to focus on when you are reading articles of interest. The Research 101 series will feature a different aspect of educational research each month to help you navigate all the information available to you and make an informed decision about what to use and not use in your classroom.

Section	What will I find here?	Example Root, J.R., Browder, D.M., Saunders, A.F., & Lo, Y. (2017). Schema-based instruction with concrete and virutal manipulatives to teach problem solving skills to students with autism. *Remedial and Special Education, 38*(1), 42-52.
Literature Review	• A description of the problem or issue the study is addressing. • A summary of previous research done on the topic • Limitations or gaps in previous research that justifies the current study being done • Research Questions	• Math problem solving skills are necessary for success and students with ASD struggle with them. • Using virtual manipulatives for problem solving has been shown to be effective. • No research has compared using virtual and concrete manipulatives for this math skill. • Which type of manipulative is most effective for teaching students with ASD and ID to solve math word problems?
Methods	• Description of the particpants, setting, and materials • Description of the measures used to determine if the study was effective • Detailed description of the intervention or strategy being tested. You should be able to replicate the intervention from the description • Description of the research or statistical design used	• Three elementary students with ASD-ID (ages 7, 9, and 11) in a public school. All materials are described in detail. • The authors measured the percentage of independently completed steps in a word problem solving task analysis. • Detailed description of teaching steps is included in procedures • Multiple-baseline across participants design
Results	• Narrative explanations of the results from the study • The results section should only contain the fact and not interpretations.	• A clear graph of the results is provided and student results are presented narratively. • "All participants showed an immediate increase in level and/or ascending trend for both concrete and virtual manipulative conditions" (p. 48).
Discussion	• Interpretations of the results stated in the previous section • Analysis of how the study is consistent or inconsistent with the previous research described in the literature review.	• Both types of manipulatives were effective, but virtual manipulatives were preferred by the students, therefore, increasing independence. • These results are consistent with previous research.
Limitations	• No research study is perfect. This section describes the ways in which the study could have been better. • It also indicates how the limitations may impact the interpretations of the results.	• Only one type of problem (i.e., subtraction) were used. • No generalization was assessed.
Practical Implications	• Descriptions of how the strategy can be used in the classroom or other settings.	• Use systematic and explicit instruction when teaching these skills. • With the appropriate supports, students with ASD-ID can have access to critical thinking skills and apply math strategies to real-word situations.

Is there a strategy or practice you want to know more about? CLICK the box to make a suggestion.

IDEAS