

2021

Designing an Expressive Writing Unit for Students with ASD in Mind: The Synthesis of Social-emotional Learning and Writing Strategy Instruction

Maya Govea
University of Central Florida

 Part of the [Elementary Education Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/honorsthesis>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the UCF Theses and Dissertations at STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Undergraduate Theses by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Govea, Maya, "Designing an Expressive Writing Unit for Students with ASD in Mind: The Synthesis of Social-emotional Learning and Writing Strategy Instruction" (2021). *Honors Undergraduate Theses*. 979. <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/honorsthesis/979>

DESIGNING AN EXPRESSIVE WRITING UNIT FOR STUDENTS WITH ASD
IN MIND: THE SYNTHESIS OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND
WRITING STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

by

MAYA GOVEA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Elementary Education
in the College of Community Innovation and Education
and in the Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term
2021

Thesis Chair: Dr. Norine Blanch

ABSTRACT

In general education classrooms across the United States, students with Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) learn how to write and cultivate their writing skills. Teachers of students with ASD have the unique responsibility of carrying out effective instruction to all students. However, the growing body of research around evidence-based practices and approaches for students with ASD is limited. Two effective practices that have shown positive statistical significance for students with ASD are the self-regulated strategy development model (SRSD) and the social-emotional learning (SEL) framework. General education instruction faces a research-practice gap because of the widespread lack of strategy instruction and lack of evidence-based practices implemented in the classroom. The purpose was to design an integrated strategy instruction tool with an SEL framework, to provide potentially more feasible and equitable writing instruction for elementary students with ASD in general education classrooms. Therefore, a relationship skills themed expressive writing unit aligned with fifth grade language arts Florida State Standards was developed. Specifically, the researcher integrated the SRSD model into a five-day themed writing unit that teaches mnemonic writing strategies. The writing unit utilizes high-quality, SEL themed children's literature, cooperative learning practices, writing stations, and many formative assessment opportunities. In the future, the researcher's next step is to implement the writing unit in a general education classroom with a substantial ASD population to examine its efficacy and effectiveness. Hopefully, the feasibility of this innovative writing unit will decrease the research-practice gap that general education teachers face.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Dr. Blanch, my thesis chair, completing my thesis would not have been possible without your valuable expertise and guidance. Thank you for always believing in me, as well as keeping me grounded and pushing me to my greatest potential.

To Dr. Little, thank you for being on my committee. Your expertise and insightful suggestions have greatly assisted me through this process.

I'd also like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Sherron Killingsworth Roberts for encouraging me to challenge myself and opening the doors to the world of educational research. For that, I am eternally grateful.

I'd like to acknowledge the efforts of Megan Lambert, my freshmen ENC professor, for teaching me how to write research papers and igniting my passion for writing.

To my family, I want to express my deepest gratitude for their profound belief in my work. Your unwavering support propelled me through each step of the process.

Table of Contents

<i>ABSTRACT</i>	2
<i>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</i>	3
<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	6
Writing Instruction and Intervention for Students With ASD	8
Social Emotional Learning for Students with ASD	9
Rationale.....	10
Implications	11
<i>LITERATURE REVIEW</i>	14
Writing Instruction	15
Writing Instruction for Students with ASD.....	17
<i>Self-Regulated Strategy Development</i>	19
Educational Practices	22
<i>Social-Emotional Learning Framework</i>	24
Intervention Support for Students with ASD	26
Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices	27
<i>METHODOLOGY</i>	33
<i>RESULTS</i>	36

Step 1: Establishing Learning Goals and Choosing ELA Standards.....	36
Step Two: Relationship Themed Text Set Selection.....	37
Step Three: Pre and Post Assessment.....	39
Step Four: Designing the Body of the Unit.....	39
Step Five: Reflecting on <i>The Idea Generation Machine</i> Design	42
<i>DISCUSSION</i>	43
Limitations.....	43
Future Research.....	44
<i>CONCLUSION</i>	45
<i>APPENDIX A: Learning Goals and ELA Florida State Standards</i>	47
<i>APPENDIX B: TEXT SET ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY</i>	49
<i>APPENDIX C: PRE/POST ASSESSMENT</i>	53
<i>APPENDIX D: BODY OF THEMATIC UNIT DESIGN</i>	63
<i>REFERENCES USED FOR CHILDREN’S LITERATURE</i>	94

INTRODUCTION

Being the stereotypical child intrinsically motivated to achieve academic success, the researcher's passion for education has been a constant. It was the college experience that solidified the researcher's desire to follow an education path as service learning, and side-job experiences included authentic opportunities to interact with ELL students, gifted students, students at Title 1 schools and private schools, and students of all socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. The researcher was least prepared to teach students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) out of all teaching experiences.

ASD refers to a group of individuals with a broad range of conditions related to communication, social interaction, and flexibility of behavior and thought (Iovannone, 2003; IRIS Center Peabody College Vanderbilt University, 2020; Marshall & Goodall, 2015). The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has well documented the number of children diagnosed with ASD in the United States: 1 in 110 students in 2006, 1 in 68 in 2010, and 1 in 54 in 2016 (“Data and Statistics on Autism Spectrum Disorder”, 2020). Further, approximately 91% of students with ASD ages six to twenty one years of age receive the majority of writing instruction in general education classrooms (IRIS Center Peabody College Vanderbilt University, 2020). General education teachers must consider evidence-based practices (EBP) while designing instruction when students with ASD are present in the classroom

The researcher first encountered students with ASD working at a private school serving students with learning disabilities, dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD),

and ASD, and gained access to a small group of students with ASD. The researcher's teaching style quickly adapted to best suit students who are traditionally underserved in the general education classrooms. She learned that not every student appreciates direct eye contact, repetitive behaviors require increased patience, and most importantly, the researcher solidified the notion that not every student learns the same.

At the researcher's workplace, the teacher gave students daily writing prompts to engage with the expressive writing genre through journal writing. The students' writing time in the classroom is focused mainly on guided journal writing. The researcher quickly noticed an inconsistency between *what* students with ASD would respond to the journal prompt and *how* they analyzed and interpreted their personal experiences to answer the prompts compared to the students without ASD. The students with ASD displayed a disconnect when planning their ideas, which included generating and organizing their ideas when responding to the guided journal writing.

The researcher also observed discrepancies in the writing process of students with ASD in the classroom, including a misunderstanding of the writing prompt, inability to transcribe ideas in an organized and cohesive way, a lack of consideration for the audience, and difficulty correcting and revising conventions and content. The researcher took note of these writing discrepancies when examining the work and learning behaviors of the students with ASD. She generalizes how some students with ASD took great care in perfecting their transcriptions, often mis-prioritizing the preciseness of how each letter looked over the ideas and content in their

writing. During expressive writing, the ideas of students with ASD would often contain off-topic details that were mismatched, in disarray, connected loosely together without a focus on one singular detail. The submissions also fell short on the length of writing.

Writing Instruction and Intervention for Students With ASD

Writing instruction is an integral component of the elementary education curriculum because it poses the primary communication method of supporting, facilitating, assessing, and extending student learning. Writing as an extended response, like guided journal writing, has been shown to produce more significant comprehension gains, found by Graham, Harris, and Herbert (2011), to strengthen the recursive benefits that writing to read offers. Beyond the classroom context, "writing has become part of the basic fabric of life in the United States" because of its central use to social, community, and civic participation (Graham et al., 2011, p. 10). Pennington and Delano (2012) defined writing as a social-communicative act that requires the writer to simultaneously manage cognitive, linguistic, and motor processes that rely on oral language development and the consideration of different perspectives. Researchers Graham and Hebert (2011) also understood the social and individual value writing brings to a young one's personal life because without the ability "to transform thoughts, experiences, and ideas into written words, "a writer may risk losing touch with the joy of inquiry, the sense of intellectual curiosity, and the inestimable satisfaction of acquiring wisdom that are the touchstones of humanity." (p. 1). The characteristics of ASD can result in deficits in the areas of social communication, language use, and executive functioning (Asaro-Saddler et al., 2017; Delano,

2007; Pennington & Delano, 2012; and Spencer et al., 2016), all of which have major implications for developing written language skills.

The growing body of research surrounding ASD is limited and has struggled to produce effective practices and approaches regarding curriculum and implementation (Iovannone, 2003; Lushin et al., 2020; Spencer et al., 2016). Likewise, the gap of research in effective writing practices for students with ASD is narrow. Pennington and Delano (2012) were only able to identify 15 peer-reviewed studies that met inclusion criteria out of 421 articles related to ASD and writing composition skills. The inclusion criteria of peer review, variable measures, and participants with ASD help determine if writing practices and interventions are effective for students with ASD. However, Graham and Harris' use of the SRSD model has consistently indicated a positive impact when used as a writing intervention for students with disabilities (Delano, 2007; Gillespie & Graham, 2014). The self-regulation strategy development (SRSD) is defined as a process writing approach designed to incorporate self-regulation and goal setting into instructional practices (Graham & Harris, 1993).

Social Emotional Learning for Students with ASD

The codification of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990) required schools to provide students with disabilities access to a free and appropriate education. Adams (2013) argues for the explicit attention to students' social-emotional development, especially when considering students with disabilities. The Collaborative for Academic, Social,

and Emotional Learning (CASEL) spearheads the social-emotional learning, SEL, framework and defines it as:

“the processes through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” (CASEL, 2017, as cited in Eklund et al., 2018, p. 317)

The increased prevalence of ASD diagnoses “warrants educational agencies to consider and understand the strengths and needs of students with ASD from a social-emotional framework.” (Adams, 2013, p. 105). The behavioral and social-emotional aspect is deeply interrelated to how the child learns and ultimately influences their academic achievements. The macro goal of an SEL framework is to aid students through learning the skills, deemed valuable by higher education and the workplace, of “individual responsibility, self-esteem, a liability, self-management, and integrity” so they are prepared to become “a productive member of society.” (Adams, 2013, p. 115).

Rationale

If the end goal of instruction is for students to acquire the writing skills and knowledge to navigate through writing, students must self-regulate the strategies needed. To self-regulate a strategy or skill, students must perceive themselves as capable of achieving success and have a positive outlook on themselves as writers (Graham & Harris, 1993). The thoughts and feelings of

students can influence their efforts and commitments to the learning process. Writing can be an extremely processed approach if quality writing is to be achieved. Students must be willing to struggle by generating ideas, organizing ideas, and exploring the possibilities of their ideas—the willingness to practice writing hinges upon how they feel about themselves as writers. The self-regulated strategy development model consolidates the learning process into an effective approach that individualizes the student's specific needs by celebrating their progress at each step of the process until self-regulation is achieved (Graham & Harris, 1993). The key components are goal setting, self-talk, and self-monitoring. Carving out a clear but individualized goal for the student to strive towards acts as a road map for the steps of the SRSD model. Positive self-talk plays a role in the willingness of the student to move past creative thought blocks when writing and their overall effort.

Additionally, self-regulation cannot occur without self-monitoring, which manifests as self-check-ins as students' writing process develops. The self-regulation aspect of the SRSD model aligns with the social-emotional goal of students being self-aware and perceptive to their thoughts and emotions (Eklund et al., 2018). Therefore, the researcher can advocate for pairing SEL with the SRSD model because the reflective nature of SEL aids in self-regulation abilities.

Implications

Marshall and Goodall's (2015) call to action was succinctly summed as, “discrimination against children with ASD is not being provided with a meaningful education experience is an abuse which denies such children their basic human rights and undermines the very concept of a

'universal right.'" (p. 3160). To combat this discrimination, Marshall and Goodall (2015) argue for mainstream inclusion where the educational setting considers the perspective of students with ASD and Asperger Syndrome (AS). According to the, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), decision making in education is influenced by the parents, business leaders, expert practitioners, principals, and teachers (Fleischman, 2016). All those involved in the education process must advocate for accessible and meaningful writing instruction for students with ASD.

Notably, a high prevalence of students with ASD (CDC, 2020) existentially skewed considering the disparity in early intervention and identification of our Black students (Maenner et al., 2016). In the United States, most of the ASD student population are in the general education classroom settings. Differentiating the learning for students first requires teachers to know their students' interests, learning behavior, and academic learning preferences. Strategy instruction, specifically the SRSD approach, has demonstrated positive writing outcomes for students with ASD but has traditionally been implemented in self-contained classrooms (Asaro-Saddler et. et al.17) and one-on-one interventions (Delano, 2007; Graham & Harris, 1993). Infusing SEL into the ELA core curriculum allows both students with ASD and non-ASD to target the necessary academic skills because the SEL framework incorporates the social-emotional aspects of students. Synthesizing the SRSD model and the SEL framework into an ELA thematic unit considers the perspective of students with ASD while simultaneously meeting the needs of all students. The researcher was reminded of Marshall and Goodall's (2015) call for considering the perspective of students with ASD to create a more inclusive mainstream

education setting where all students can truly succeed. The following research question (RQ) helped guide the research and creation of a themed writing unit for general education teachers to integrate a strategy instruction approach for students with ASD:

- *RQ: How can general education teachers integrate the demands of writing strategy instruction and incorporate SEL to provide a feasible and equitable writing curriculum for all students, but specifically keeping in mind students with ASD?*

Therefore, the researcher explored the benefits of writing strategy instruction and the SEL framework within the context of students with ASD to design an expressive writing unit that is feasible and comprehensive for teachers to implement. Expressive writing was chosen because of the anecdotal generalizations noted by the researcher when observing students with ASD as they engaged in guided journal writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing instruction is an integral component of the elementary education curriculum. Writing is a means of communication that is one of the primary methods of supporting, facilitating, assessing, and extending student learning. If a student's writing skills are shaky, it may permeate other content areas and result in an inability to demonstrate content understanding fully. Within the last twenty years, the academic community has explored writing instruction to address student writing needs and identify the most effective writing strategies and practices. Unfortunately, most research has focused on identifying evidence-based practices or EBPs for students without disabilities (Graham & Perin, 2007; Graham, McKeown, Kiuahara, & Harris, 2012). Students with ASD, which includes Asperger syndrome (AS), have traditionally been excluded, isolated, and underserved by research with respect to identifying EBPs for writing interventions for students with ASD. While the educational agencies wait for the research to discover and validate EBPs for students with ASD, students with ASD need meaningful, inclusive, and accessible writing instruction. To gain a better understanding, the researcher will explore the literature on writing instruction, educational practices, and implementation of evidence-based practices.

Writing Instruction

In 2003, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) revealed that adolescents do not reach grade-level competency in their written language (Graham & Perin, 2007). Graham and Perin (2007) engaged in the conversation of writing instruction to find instructional practices that enhance the quality of adolescent students' writing. They examined the relationship between the overall quality of the research studies and the magnitude of their respective effect sizes to determine if the overall quality of a study predicts the students' writing quality (Graham & Perin, 2007). They implemented a standardized procedural approach while assessing all the studies included in prior meta-analyses to reduce variability in comparing writing treatments. Graham and Perin (2007) outlined ten writing interventions that positively impact adolescents' writing quality. The ten writing interventions focused on implementing a process writing approach. Graham and Perin (2007) recommend providing teachers with professional development on implementing a process approach to writing as their findings concluded, “a moderate effect on the quality of students’ writing.” (p. 461). Their recommendations encompass explicit instruction on planning, revising, and editing with oral language skills, peer collaboration, goal setting, sentence combining, inquiry activities, and good writing models.

In 2012, Graham continued his research on writing treatments with McKeown, Kiuahara, and Harris to identify which treatments improve elementary students' writing quality. The purpose of the meta-analysis was to evaluate elementary level writing instruction on its ability to improve writing strategies, knowledge, or skills (Graham et al., 2012). After reflecting on their findings,

Graham et al. (2012, made twelve recommendations for writing instruction encompassing explicit instruction, scaffolding, alternative modes of composing, increasing allocated writing time, and a comprehensive writing program. Most recommendations focused on process writing and self-regulating teaching strategies like goal-setting and self-assessment (2012). Graham and colleagues' contribution was critical because no researchers had conducted a meta-analysis of writing treatments specific to elementary students before their study.

Graham (2014) further developed his research on writing interventions with Gillespie by conducting a meta-analysis to review the body of research on writing interventions specifically related to students with a learning disability (LD). At the time of publication in 2014, "only Gersten and Baker have conducted a meta-analysis synthesizing the research on writing interventions for students with LD." (Gersten & Baker, 2001, as cited in, Graham & Gillespie, 2014, p. 455). Different from Gersten and Baker's meta-analysis, Gillespie and Graham only assessed studies that included a measure of writing quality because it allows for a basis of comparison on writing performance. By including a measure of writing quality, Gillespie and Graham had access to a broader and more extensive research body. They were able to evaluate if explicit instruction in writing processes presented any variability in effect (2014).

Gillespie and Graham (2014) aimed to identify if writing interventions were effective for students with LD, and if so, what are the specific interventions that can increase their writing quality. Strategy instruction focused on planning, writing, and revising improved students' quality with LD writing, highlighting SRSD as the most effective strategy instruction. Gillespie

and Graham (2014) also found that “teaching students with LD to plan, write, and revise using strategy instruction is an effective method for improving their writing.” (p. 468). More specifically, “these effects are more pronounced if strategies are taught via SRSD.” (Gillespie & Graham, 2014, p. 468)

Writing Instruction for Students with ASD

When considering the best writing interventions for students with ASD, the research body can only point us in the right direction. The fields of psychiatry and psychology have extensively researched students' needs with AS; however, little to no research has explored the academic needs of students with ASD, especially concerning writing instruction (Delano, 2007). There is a lack of empirical evidence on instructing writing interventions to improve students' writing quality with AS (Delano, 2007). To date, no writing interventions for students with ASD have been established as an evidence-based practice (Pennington & Delano, 2012). Yet, educators still have to guide students with ASD in their development of written language. In general, research has focused on writing instruction for students with mild disabilities and conducted studies in special education settings (Pennington & Delano, 2012). A gap in research exists when assessing what writing interventions are effective for students with ASD across the spectrum and the least restrictive environment.

Delano and Pennington (2012) addressed this gap in research surrounding EBPs for students with ASD by exploring the literature in the body of research on writing instruction for students with ASD. The purpose of their article was to identify the targeted writing skills and

writing interventions researchers have investigated and assess if those interventions have proven effective with students with ASD. For an intervention to be considered an evidence-based practice, it must meet multiple criteria that range from objective measurability, effect sizes, participant sizes, geographical locations, and measure of quality (Horner et al., 2005, as cited in Pennington & Delano, 2012). Pennington and Delano began by contemplating the challenges of written language development students with ASD may face. When students write, they engage in a social-communicative act that requires them to consider different perspectives, simultaneously manage cognitive, linguistic, and motor processes, all while relying on the relationship between oral and written language development (Pennington & Delano, 2012). Researchers and educators must prioritize these challenges when constructing a writing intervention for students with ASD.

Pennington and Delano (2012) were unable to identify any of the interventions they reviewed as an EBP because none of the studies met quality criteria. However, they acknowledge that multiple interventions may be promising for students with ASD and compiled a list of frequently researched strategies that could point researchers and educators in the direction needed to address written language development for elementary students with ASD. These interventions include the regulation strategy development, computer-assisted instruction, various forms of modeling, prompting responses through visual support, and immediate reinforcement (Pennington & Delano, 2012).

Self-Regulated Strategy Development

The self-regulated strategy development model, or SRSD, can be used as a writing intervention that uses explicit strategy instruction to guide students into self-regulating their writing process through goal setting. Self-regulation is a term widely and primarily used in psychology. Cynthia Yoo (2018) defined self-regulation as, “the ability to manage our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors when we are feeling overwhelmed.” (*How to Support Self-Regulation Difficulties in Children*). The use of the SRSD model for writing interventions has shown to have a positive effect on students with writing difficulties (Delano, 2007; Gillespie & Graham, 2014; Graham & Harris, 1993; Graham et al., 2012; Pennington & Delano, 2012; Spencer et al., 2016). A student's ability to self-regulate writing strategies and the writing process itself hinges upon their beliefs about writing and themselves as writers because of the influence on their compositions' content and frequency (Graham & Harris, 1993). The foundational structure of the SRSD approach is made on the assumptions that (a) cognition and affect mediate behavior, and (b) students will become active participants in their learning (Graham & Harris, 1993). Goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-talk are the cornerstones of the SRSD approach because they guide the writer to self-regulate their cognitions, which puts the writer in the driver's seat of their writing process (Graham & Harris, 1993).

Implementation of the SRSD model should align with the three major goals of Graham and Harris (1993), “(1) students master higher-level cognitive processes that involve composing, (2) students develop autonomous, reflective, self-regulated use of effective writing strategies,

and (3) students form positive attitudes about writing and themselves as a writer.” (p. 170). The end goal of writing instruction conducted through the SRSD model is to self-regulate writing strategies and their overall writing process. To achieve these goals, Graham and Harris outlined seven recursive and flexible stages when using the SRSD model: (1) pre-skill development, (2) initial conference: instructional goals and significance, (3) strategy discussion, (4) strategy modeling, (5) strategy memorization, (6) collaborative practice, and (7) independent use of strategy. Although the SRSD approach has been used in mathematics and reading” (Graham & Harris, 1993, p. 170), it has shown to be an EBP writing intervention for students with learning disabilities (Delano, 2007).

In 2005, Graham, Harris, and Mason contributed to the conversation of the SRSD model's effectiveness as a writing intervention. Their study focused on the SRSD model's impact on the writer's knowledge and self-efficacy. They taught genre-specific strategies for planning compositions for narrative and persuasive writing to third-grade students, mainly from low-income households. The researchers' findings reaffirmed Schunk and Zimmerman's (1998) stance that, “goal setting and self-reflective practices, such as monitoring and evaluating performance, enhanced students' motivation and informed them of their writing capabilities.” (as cited in Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005, p. 209). However, Graham, Harris, and Mason (2005) were unable to determine if the SRSD model impacts students' self-efficacy. The research participants presented a mismatch between their writing performance and their perceived capabilities, as demonstrated in their generally positive responses in both the pre-and post-

intervention questionnaires (Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005). Graham, Harris, and Mason (2005) recommended further research on the impact of the SRSD model efficacy towards student writing improvement.

The development of writing skills for students with ASD was explored using Graham's self-regulated strategy development approach (Delano, 2007). Delano's purpose of investigating this case study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Graham, Harris, MacArthur, and Schwartz's (1991, as cited in Delano, 2007) SRSD model as an evidence-based writing intervention for students with AS. The SRSD model is a form of, “interactive learning between teacher and student, and instruction is scaffolded” to gradually release students into self-regulate their writing process (Delano, 2007, p. 253). The experimental research followed the SRSD instructional process over eight sessions to explicitly teach vocabulary and revision strategies to a 12-year-old boy with AS. The focus was on brainstorming action, describing words to use in a story, and then applying revision strategies to strengthen its content. The implementation of SRSD relies heavily on the educator as they must provide meaning and rationale for brainstorming ideas and using revisions. The educator then guides the student through collaboration to identify the best action and description words and revisions needed. The educator needs to model sentences, provide explicit examples, and provide concise goals for the student.

Delano (2007) discovered that the boy made considerable improvements in his writing and maintained those gains two weeks after. Before writing instruction with SRSD, the 12-year-

old boy wrote about 11 words per story, composing short and straightforward sentences, and was not making any revisions. After being instructed with the SRSD model, the boy's writing increased in length, averaging between 77 to 95 words per story. His writing quality also increased as he consistently included both action and descriptive words in his stories (Delano, 2007). Lastly, the incorporation of goal setting improved the participant's engagement with the revision process (Delano, 2007). Delano identified the positive impact the SRSD model has as a writing intervention for students with AS. Her contribution paves the way for other researchers to explore the SRSD model for writing interventions. The model proves effective for students with AS; however, Delano (2007) recommends further research before the SRSD model is considered an evidence-based intervention for students with ASD.

Educational Practices

Iovannone, Dunlap, Huber, and Kincaid (2003) reviewed studies conducted over a ten-year period from 1992 to 2002 that attempted to identify the essential components of effective instruction for all students with ASD. The researchers can suggest which core components are critical to education geared towards students with ASD by reviewing the reports' findings. At the time of publication, no other researcher had made efforts to identify core components necessary for effective instruction for students with ASD. Students with ASD are a heterogeneous population with varying behaviors, preferences, interests, and learning styles and require “individualized instructional support needs.” (Iovannone et al., 2013, p. 153). Identifying specific strategies or treatments is complicated due to the spectrum's nature because a "one size

fits all" approach may not be practical or equitable. Iovannone et al. (2013) discovered that the prior research focused on general practices rather than specific treatment or strategies and that researchers agree on the six common areas. While a single program, support, or service cannot alone meet all students' needs on the spectrum, the need to include essential core components is necessary to ensure an effective educational program. Iovannone et al. (2013) identified what they believe to be six core components necessary for making an educational program useful for students with ASD and providing specific methods to support those components.

The six common areas in the body of research examined were: early intervention; individualized services for both student and family; systematically planned instruction, specialized curriculum, the intensity of engagement, and family involvement (Iovannone et al., 2013). Individualized instruction effectively increased student engagement when “students' unique preferences, needs, and learning characteristics along with the family’s preferences” are considered. (p. 157). Systematic instruction is an essential component when curating an educational program for students with ASD. Iovannone (2013) outlined the components of a systematic and well-planned instruction as, “carefully targeting meaningful skills to be taught, planning specifically when and how to provide instruction based on the unique characteristics of the specified student, determining data collection methods to gauge student progress and instructional effectiveness, and using data to make sound instructional decisions.” (p. 158). Students with ASD benefit from a specialized curriculum that provides opportunities to explore and strengthen communication and social interaction skills (Iovannone et al., 2013). Lastly,

family involvement is a crucial component of an effective program as “families are essential partners in educational planning and delivery of supports and services.” (p. 161). It is imperative to mention that Iovannone et al. (2013) concluded that educational practices work in combination with each other, not in isolation. One effective way of specializing curriculum that targets communication and social interaction skills is to implement a social-emotional learning, or SEL, framework.

Social-Emotional Learning Framework

Social-emotional learning, SEL, was defined by Zins et al. (2004, p. 194, as cited in Dominguez & La Gue, 2013) as, “the process through which children enhance their ability to integrate thinking, feeling, and behaving to achieve important life tasks.” (p. 17). The SEL framework is comprised of these five competencies: “self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills.” (p. 18). Self-awareness is the ability for students to understand and recognize their strengths and weaknesses, possess high confidence and self-efficacy, and recognize and name feelings. The social awareness component involves recognizing and understanding the feelings of others. Students who are responsible decision-makers practice ethical, moral, and reflective thinking when problem solving. The self-management components encompass the ability to control stress and emotions, self-motivate, and understand and practice goal setting. The last component involves managing relationships in a healthy, engaging, and cooperative way while appropriately exercising conflict management skills. The goal of infusing an SEL framework into an existing curriculum is to

integrate the five components into students' values and belief systems so they are well equipped to overcome academic, social, and emotional challenges they may face in life (Dominguez & La Gue, 2013). The current literature surrounding SEL demonstrates positive student outcomes as a result of SEL infused curriculum (Zines et al., 2007, as cited in Eklund et al., 2018; Dominguez & La Gue, 2013). Some of these positive student outcomes include improved: "academic engagement, positive behavioral outcomes, positive attachment to school." (Eklund et al., 2018, p.317). More specifically, gains in social-emotional skills that provide protection for at-risk students (Elias & Haynes, 2008, as cited in Eklund et al., 2018).

The SEL framework examines the role of the teacher as the facilitator of improving students' academic achievements and must recognize the direct impact the social and emotional aspect of a child has on their academic achievement (Dominguez & La Gue, 2013). Teachers must also recognize that their students with ASD face social communicative challenges that directly impacts their academic achievements. Implementing and integrating an SEL framework into their curriculum allows teachers to address and teach the necessary social communication skills students with ASD need to thrive in school environments while simultaneously providing numerous benefits for their non-ASD students (Adams, 2013). Adams (2013) analyzed the impact of implementing an SEL framework to schools in NYC's school District 75 and found positive significances. A high school, within District 75, with a 76% ASD population, increased the percentage of students meeting their social-emotional goals written in their 2011-2012 IEP from 76% to 98% in their 2012-2013 IEP after implementing the SEL framework (Adams,

2013). It is important to note that the existing body of research on the SEL framework is relatively new but nevertheless necessary and important, especially with regards to our students with ASD.

Intervention Support for Students with ASD

The researchers Moore and Calvert (2011) have categorized interventions that support students with ASD into three areas: complementary approaches, biomedical and dietary approaches, and behavioral and communication approaches (as cited in Spencer et al., 2016). However, in general, a lack of research addresses students' academic skills with ASD within the school's content areas. Spencer et al. (2016) conducted a literature review to summarize research-based strategies and interventions focused on pre-academic and academic skills from 2000-2012. This comprehensive literature review included 28 studies focused on academic instruction within the content areas for students with ASD or AS who ranged from first grade to twelfth grade.

From the 11 studies focused on the elementary grades, 3 were specific to writing and studied the use of self-regulated strategy development (Spencer et al., 2016). From the focused elementary studies, the SRSD instruction increased students with ASD use of action and description words, use of mnemonic prewriting strategies, number of revisions, length of writing, and overall story writing quality (Asaro-Saddler, 2009; 2010, as cited in Spencer et al., 2016; Delano, 2007). Delano (2007) used the SRSD model via video self-modeling to instruct persuasive and expository essay writing to adolescents with AS. In this study, students increased the number of words written and time spent writing but made no gains in functional essay

elements (Delano, 2007, as cited in Spencer., 2016). Through their assessment, Spencer et al. (2016) were able to identify the positive impact the SRSD model has within the writing area for students with ASD. Their findings opened the door further for other researchers to study the effectiveness of the SRSD model with the hopes of it one day established as an evidence-based writing practice.

Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices

Educational instruction for students with ASD has been highly focused on discovering EBPs, but EBP also requires consistent and effective classroom implementation. The role of the teacher is arguably the most influential and determining factor in a student's success as they have the unique responsibility of carrying out effective instruction. In 2009, Graham and Harris suggested considering the teacher's role when developing evidence-based written interventions for students with ASD (as cited in Asaro-Saddler, Arcidiacono & Deyoe, 2017). Determining the effectiveness of an instructional practice requires considering the delivery and instruction of the teacher. Asaro-Saddler et al. (2017) examine the teacher's role and apply it to writing instruction delivery to elementary students with ASD. Asaro-Saddler et al. (2017) conducted a qualitative research study on two self-contained classrooms to examine writing instruction delivery to elementary students with ASD. Their purpose was to assess the variable of the teacher when evaluating the writing practices used to develop written language skills of students with ASD, to determine if those practices are consistent with research-based practices implemented to the general student population.

Ten themes emerged from their observations of each teacher's instruction. These themes were constructing sentences, scaffolding, visual support, often writing, modeling, technology, allowing multiple forms of writing, creating meaningful writing opportunities, dictation/copying, and necessary writing skills and mechanics (Asaro-Saddler et al., 2017). Asaro-Saddler et al. (2017) found the most effective practices were goal setting, implementing technology; using prewriting and inquiry activities; modeling good examples of writing; writing for a specific purpose, increasing student writing time, teaching necessary writing skills and genre-related skills. These findings (Asaro-Saddler et al., 2017) findings demonstrate that teachers can effectively apply writing practices recommended for students without disabilities to students with ASD. Teachers should consider their students' developmental levels to help determine the best instructional practices and modifications necessary to ensure that students with ASD receive effective writing instruction.

In 1993, Graham and Harris discussed the lack of widespread use of classroom strategy instruction. The reasons for the lack of classroom strategy instruction are related to the role of the teacher. Strategy instruction is prevalent in separate classrooms where students are pulled out from their general education classroom to receive the additional strategy instruction by a specialist. This pull-out program has reinforced the idea that strategy instruction is outside the scope of the teacher's responsibilities and perpetuated the notion that only some students benefit from strategy instruction, so it isn't necessary to integrate into the general education curriculum programs (Graham & Harris, 1993). However, the existing body of research surrounding the

SRSD model demonstrates statistical improvements in the writings of students who are typically underserved in the general education classroom, such as the students with LD and ASD. Graham and Harris (1993), however, understood the cognitive demands integrating strategy instruction places upon general education classroom teachers and, therefore, called for further research on teachers' implementation of strategy instruction with an emphasis on meeting and managing the demands of strategy instruction implementation placed on teachers.

Unfortunately, educators are not consistently implementing EBPs for students with ASD, leading to a research-practice gap (Corona, Christodulu, & Rinaldi, 2017). One factor contributing to the research-practice gap may be burnout. Special education teachers who work with students with ASD are experiencing higher burnout levels than other teachers (Coman et al., 2013, as cited in Corona et al., 2017). Generally, the body of research indicates teacher training and teacher self-efficacy as positive preventative measures against teacher burnout (Jennett, Harris, & Mesibov, 2003, as cited in Corona et al., 2017). Researchers have linked teacher self-efficacy to a wide range of beneficial teaching practices and improved student outcomes (Ross, 1998, as cited in Corona et al., 2017). Corona et al. (2017) attempted to address the research-practice gap of EBPs for students with ASD by examining the predictors of self-efficacy for school professionals and assessing the impact of knowledge and self-efficacy training. Their methodology included a survey for school professionals to complete and follow the implications of a series of training sessions of the PTR model, which focuses on student behavior through prevention, teaching, and reinforcing behavioral strategies (Corona et al., 2017).

The researchers discovered preliminary evidence of increased self-efficacy for school professionals due to training in EBPs (Corona, Christodulu, & Rinaldi, 2017). Consistent with the research that calls for high-quality training to school professionals who work with students with ASD (Asaro-Saddler et al., 2017; Fleischman, Scott, & Sargrad, 2016; Gillespie & Graham, 2014; Graham et al., 2012; Pennington & Delano, 2012; Graham & Harris, 2009; Graham & Perin, 2007; Iovannone et al., 2003). Corona, Christodulu, and Rinaldi (2017) argued that "knowledge alone is not sufficient to enable school professionals to feel efficacious in working with students with ASD." (p. 97). In an attempt to close the research-practice gap, Corona et al. (2017) offer some recommendations. School professionals should receive direct coaching and feedback in their professional development training rather than the traditional lecture-based seminar (Corona et al., 2017). Providing practical training on educational strategies and practices and limiting implementation barriers can maximize "both the educational experience of students with ASD and the efficacy which school professionals believe they are able to provide these experiences." (p. 98).

Implementing an EBP is a two-fold challenge. It requires educational agencies to determine what qualifies as effective practice, strategy, or approach and determine the appropriate implementation process. In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The ESSA's new provisions shifted educational authority away from federal to state and local and emphasized evidence-based practices (Fleischman, Scott, & Sargrad, 2016). Fleischman, Scott, and Sargrad's report focuses primarily on the evidence-based

element of the ESSA. Their report's overall goal was to provide state education agencies an effective framework for implementing evidence-based school practices.

Fleischman, Scott, and Sargrad (2016) compared ESSA's evidence-based practices to NCLB's scientifically based research and found significant differences. The NCLB Act determined if evidence was scientifically based research if the evidence came from a well-conducted randomized control trial and high-quality quasi-experimental designs. This narrow set of criteria proved problematic as it excluded high-quality studies simply because of research design (Fleischman et al., 2016). In contrast, the ESSA Act implements a three-tiered system that categorizes evidence into the quality of evidence. This approach is more inclusive of research findings and provides greater flexibility for decision-makers when considering the best local and state needs (p. 4).

The researchers attempted to address the complex challenges of implementing evidence-based approaches by compounding eight recommendations for state and local education agencies to follow (Fleischman, Scott, and Sargrad, 2016). The eight recommendations are (1) define roles in the policy implementation process and create a theory of change; (2) support the use of evidence clearinghouses to identify promising approaches, rather than creating new state-approved lists; (3) encourage robust decision-making processes; (4) help ensure high-quality services from improvement providers; (5) promote and provide frequent, accurate, and timely communication; (6) partner with intermediaries to promote and support effective implementation; (7) facilitate effective implementation in districts, schools, and classrooms; (8)

promote continuous improvement and collective learning. Their framework requires objective and rigorous decision making, a combination of adaptability and consistency from the school practitioners, and continually monitoring and evaluating implementation. Fleischman et al. (2016) validate using evidence-based practices to meet all students' needs, especially those traditionally underserved, on the principle of morality and practicality. Fleischman, Scott, and Sargrad's (2016) report on the ESSA could contribute to closing the research-practice gap schools are experiencing with evidence-based approaches and practices for students with ASD. Fleischman et al. (2016) strongly believe their eight recommendations framework could help state and local educational agencies reap the maximum benefits of ESSA to make evidence-based school improvements.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher began her literature review by examining the existing literature on writing instruction in the elementary and middle school grades. She also reviewed the current literature on writing treatments and writing interventions for students with learning disabilities (LD) related to improving student writing quality and overall writing experience. Lastly, the researcher examined the current literature on writing treatments and interventions for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The researcher also examined the specific learning strengths and needs of students with ASD concerning writing instruction. The intent was to develop a sense of what the literature had procured about writing instruction for students in the general education classroom setting and students with LD to make a comparison to what the literature has stated about writing instruction for students with ASD. The purpose was to find commonalities in the writing instruction and interventions to develop an inclusive approach to writing instruction for students with ASD in the general classroom setting. The researcher found the commonality in the self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) model, as it proved to be an evidence-based writing practice for both general education students and students with LD (Gillespie & Graham, 2014; Rouse & Kiuahara, 2017) and demonstrated positive significance for students with ASD (Delano, 2007; Pennington & Delano, 2012).

The researcher continued her literature review by exploring the current literature on the SRSD approach to writing instruction. The researcher then examined the current literature related to the best educational practices for students with ASD, including SEL, to curriculum

instruction. Finally, the researcher explored the current literature on implementing evidence-based practices (EBP) for students with ASD, which included federal policy and the teacher's role. The researcher used the university library collection for her search of peer-reviewed journals and utilized Google Scholar to discover journal articles related to writing instruction, students with ASD, and SEL. The researcher's goal was to provide general education writing and language arts teachers (who teach students with ASD), comprehensive teaching tool. The following describes a writing unit design that explicitly integrates strategy instruction and social emotional learning. The thematic unit encourages expressive writing idea generation and writing organization to potentially strengthen idea generation, writing organization, and encourage student self-perception of their writing ability with the purposefully chosen children's literature promoting SEL. The researcher designed a five day ELA unit called, *The Idea Generation Machine*, using the relationship skills component of SEL as the theme and integrating the SRSD model into the writing instruction.

The following steps were taken by the researcher to design the comprehensive text set thematic unit: (1) The researcher reviewed and selected fifth grade ELA Florida State Standards with an emphasis on writing standards (see Appendix A). The researcher chose to focus on upper elementary because that was about the age range of the students with ASD from her anecdotal experience. The researcher focused solely on ELA with a heavy emphasis on writing instruction; (2) The researcher then developed a text set by reviewing high-quality children's literature related to relationship skills. She selected children's literature that related to relationship skills

and could act as mentor texts for the writing genre (see Appendix B). (3) The researcher created an introductory and concluding activity that directly aligns with the chosen Florida State Standards. Both activities constitute the pre and post-assessment for the writing unit (see Appendix C); (4) The body of the unit was created next. Writing prompts, activity materials, Daily lesson plans, and anchor charts were designed primarily for students with ASD while providing opportunities for all students to access the knowledge and skills at their instructional level. For this purpose, the researcher integrated the SRSD model into the daily lesson plans (see Appendix D); and (5) The researcher reflected on *The Idea Generation Machine* to ensure that the best educational practices such as high-quality children’s literature, cooperative learning, and student interest were present throughout the unit. She reflected on her lesson plans to ensure that the SRSD model was integrated appropriately, connected to the Florida State Standards, and connected to the theme.

Examining the current literature related to writing instruction, educational practices, and implementation of educational practices for students with ASD provided the researcher with the necessary knowledge to propel her into designing *The Idea Generation Machine*. To organize her design process, the researcher outlined five steps to design the expressive writing *The Idea Generation Machine* unit. The results are reviewed in more detail in the following section.

RESULTS

After examining the current literature surrounding writing strategy instruction and evidence-based practices for students with ASD, the process of designing the expressive text set writing unit entitled, *The Idea Generation Machine* began. A backward design method was used in the design of *The Idea Generation Machine* and started with the establishment of learning goals (Appendix A), followed by the purposeful selection of the appropriate Florida State Standards (Appendix A), and the creation of the assessments based on the Florida State Standards that would demonstrate student growth (see Appendix C). Each step in the creation of *The Idea Generation Machine* unit is discussed in this section in more detail.

Step 1: Establishing Learning Goals and Choosing ELA Standards

The writing unit is focused on the expressive writing genre. The expressive writing genre is defined by the writer's expressed personal opinions, values, and beliefs. The main characteristics of the genre are first-person pronouns, expressive purpose, informal grammar, and common language (Skrabanek, 2012). Before selecting the Florida State Standards, the researcher curated three learning goals specific to *The Idea Generation Machine* unit as a guide to keep the focus of the unit aligned. These learning goals were centered around students self-regulating the mnemonic prewriting strategies that were integrated into *The Idea Generation Machine*. A mnemonic device is a learning technique and tool that encodes information in a way that aids retention and retrieval. The researcher integrated the mnemonics PAST (purpose,

audience, subject, and type), POW (pick my idea, organize my idea, and write more), and TREE (topic, reason, explanation, and ending) into *The Idea Generation Machine* to aid students through the planning process of expressive writing. Graphic organizers were utilized to help students through the learning process and can be found throughout the body of the unit (Appendix D).

As the researcher began planning her unit, she went to the CPALMS website to choose the best Florida State Standards that align with expressive writing. CPALMS is a vetted resource tool for Florida educators to review the Florida State Standards and access activities that align with those standards (“Welcome to CPALMS,” 2019). The researcher chose fifth grade writing and reading standards to align with her learning goals because the students with ASD from her anecdotal experience were in the age range of the fifth grade.

Step Two: Relationship Themed Text Set Selection

The next step was to focus the content theme on relationship skills by carefully selecting children’s literature that reflects the relationship skills component of the SEL framework. According to CASEL (2020), the relationship skills component of the SEL framework is defined as the “ability to establish and maintain supportive relationships while effectively navigating diverse individuals and groups.” (Relationship Skills). Cultivating healthy relationship skills requires effective communication, cultural competency, and collaborative problem-solving. The researcher chose to integrate the relationship skills component of the SEL framework because it addresses social interaction, communication, and language use which can be areas of needs for

students with ASD. Integrating SEL components into the academic curriculum can be easily implemented through content theming and literature. When examining children's literature and creating activities, the researcher always aligned the resources and activities with the relationship skills component.

The researcher developed a text set of children's literature that could be used to explore relationship skills but also provide students mentor texts for expressive writing. She wanted her text set to include fiction and autobiographical accounts (Appendix B). The researcher utilized a teacher-made resource (Scully, 2020) to examine children's books focusing on relationship skills. The researcher also utilized the website Epic because it is a free digital library resource for educators and students. She was able to search books using their social emotional learning topic tab. It was also important for the researcher to include a book written from the perspective of an individual with autism to bring awareness and acceptance to the Autistic community and fulfill the cultural competency portion of the relationship skills component. The researcher discovered the book *How to Human: Diary of an Autistic Girl* by Florida Frenz (2013) by Epic publishers. The author is autistic and formatted the book as autobiographical diary entries from her school experience. The researcher also wanted to include a book that introduces the concept of ideas as it is the instructional focus of the unit. She discovered Kobi Yamada's (2019) *What Do You Do with an Idea?* while pursuing children's books on the internet about idea generation. His book received the 2015 Gold Independent Publisher Book Award.

Step Three: Pre and Post Assessment

After finalizing the learning goals and Florida State Standards, the researcher then created the post-assessment activity. The post-assessment requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and self-regulation of the writing strategies learned in the unit by utilizing them to read and respond to a journal writing prompt related to managing relationships. Students will be expected to plan and organize their ideas using the PAST, POW, and TREE strategies. The researcher then designed her pre-assessment activity to model the post-assessment without incorporating student use of mnemonic strategies. She also created a perceived writing attitudes and capabilities questionnaire for students to complete at the post- and pre-assessment to determine if implementing the SRSD model has a positive effect on their attitude towards their writing capabilities and themselves as writer.

Step Four: Designing the Body of the Unit

Following the development of the text set, the researcher began creating the unit lesson plans (Appendix D). The researcher sequenced her lesson plans to follow the six steps of the SRSD model and utilized activities and literature to guide students. The first step is to develop background knowledge. The researcher incorporated an anchor chart in the beginning of the unit to review the expressive writing genre. She also utilized the book *Planning Isn't my Priority and Making Priorities Isn't in my Plan* by Julia Cook (2015) to introduce the planning process. The researcher then used a speedboat + anchors activity where students could explore the anchors, they experience during the planning process that weigh them down.

The next step of the SRSD model is to discuss the strategies being taught. This step also integrates goal setting, so the researcher utilized an action plan template for students to set their own goals for the unit. Students were to create an individualized goal for the unit based on a prewriting elements checklist included within their action plan. Throughout the unit, students were to reflect on their goal and how they are achieving it via exit slips. During the rotation of the writing centers, students have an opportunity to discuss and reflect on their goals with the teacher at the teacher conference center. To introduce the mnemonic strategies, the researcher utilized anchor charts and whole group discussion. The discussion step of the SRSD model occurred for each mnemonic strategy taught.

After a discussion is held about the mnemonic strategy, it is crucial for the teacher to model using the strategy through think alouds. Teacher modeling is present throughout the unit and for each mnemonic strategy discussed. The unit also utilizes the text set as mentor texts that the teacher can explore the mnemonic strategies with. The next step of the SRSD model is for students to memorize the strategies being taught. The unit calls for displaying the anchor charts of the strategy in the class to act as visual support for memory retention. The researcher also created a mnemonic song for students to sing to help them remember the strategy.

The fifth step of the SRSD model is to support students using the strategies. Instruction at this stage utilizes cooperative learning structures, partner work, writing centers, and student-teacher conferences. The activities used for the writing centers are social stories, writer's theatre, freewrites, and correcting incomplete or incorrect TREE organizers. During the social story

center, students will create a social story comic that explains a problem they had and how they solved it. They can create their comic strips digitally or on paper. The researcher utilized the website Make Beliefs Comix as a resource for the social story writing center. Zimmerman's (2006) website is full of digital comics that can be used to write social stories. At the writer's theatre center, there will be cue cards with roles to act out related to a relationship problem. Students will act out the problem and come up with a solution. They will then write out how the problem was solved. The freewrite station will give students an opportunity to write freely about a writing prompt they chose. At the TREE center, students will examine incomplete or incorrectly completed TREE organizers. Students will either complete the organizer by incorporating their ideas or fix the incorrect sections. Engagement activities for the students will consist of choose the picture, brainwriting, and a this or that relationship problem edition. The images used for the choose the picture activity were sourced from the website Unsplash. Unsplash provides freely usable licensed images for anyone on the internet to use (n.d.). Each activity was designed or incorporated to provide students with multiple opportunities to practice expressive writing, prewriting strategies, and relationship skills.

The sixth and final step of the SRSD model is to establish independent practice. The unit incorporates daily freewriting that goes with the choose the picture activity. Freewriting is instructional technique coined by Peter Elbow (1973) where a person writes about a topic for an unspecified amount of time without stopping to edit or reflect. Students will select a photo that resonates with them and do a free write on the photo and why they chose it. The overall goal for

the unit is for students to independently write expressive writing entries using the prewriting strategies taught. Some students will reach this stage earlier than others and this is okay. The sequencing of the SRSD model is meant to be flexible and individualized based on student need. The unit provides accommodations that are more or less challenging for students.

Step Five: Reflecting on *The Idea Generation Machine* Design

After *The Idea Generation Machine* unit was designed, the researcher's final step was to reflect on the components. First, the researcher looked to see if each step of the SRSD model was present in the lesson. She had to go back into the lessons and make sure the component of goal setting and self-reflection was present each day. Then, the researcher looked over the lesson plans to ensure that the daily objectives matched the assessments to ensure that the assessments were aligned with the instruction. Next, it was important to reflect on the text set created to ensure that the relationship skills component of the SEL framework was represented properly. This led to reflecting on the activities chosen for students to engage with. It was essential to design *The Idea Generation Machine* with educational practices suitable for students with ASD and non-ASD students. More materials and resources were collected and curated as much thought went into the cooperative learning structures present within the daily lesson plans.

DISCUSSION

Limitations

A few limitations are present in the research. The most obvious limitation is the fact that *The Idea Generation Machine* has not been implemented, and therefore, the researcher cannot reach a conclusion on the effectiveness of the unit. The researcher initially hoped to test the SRSD model's impact on the writing attitudes and capabilities of students with ASD. However, a design of a comprehensive unit integrating the SRSD model must have occurred first. The second limitation present in the research is the use of the SRSD model for instruction to students with ASD has not yet been identified as an evidence-based practice. The SRSD model has demonstrated positive statistical significance when used as an instructional approach for students with ASD, but unfortunately, not enough research studies have met the criteria outlined by Horner (2005, as cited in Pennington & Delano, 2012) of evidence-based practice. Another limitation present in the study is the generalizations the researcher made about her experience with students with autism that influenced the direction of the research. The researcher's anecdotal observations of students with ASD experience with expressive writing were not conducted through a methodology process. Therefore, the generalizations made are subjective and cannot be used as research data.

Future Research

Future research must include the implementation of *The Idea Generation Machine* in a general education classroom with a population of students with ASD to test the quality and effectiveness. The researcher hopes to pursue further research examining the effectiveness of *The Idea Generation Machine* design as a graduate student of educational studies. She would also like to pursue research on the implementation of this unit with various general education classroom teachers to get their input on the feasibility of the unit. The researcher believes that research on the perceived writing attitudes and capabilities of students with ASD, tested with a pre/post strategy instruction intervention would be a beneficial contribution to the conversation of the potential for the SRSD model to become an evidence-based practice for students with ASD.

In the literature review, the researcher learned about the research-practice gap of educators not implementing evidence-based practices for students with ASD in their classrooms. The researchers that spearhead this conversation recommend addressing teacher burnout, self-efficacy, and direct coaching and feedback during professional development (Corona et al., 2017). Therefore, more research is recommended to be conducted on the practices of professional development for educating students with ASD in the general education classrooms to see if *The Idea Generation Machine*, which synthesizes social-emotional learning and the SRSD model, would be beneficial for both educators and their students with autism.

CONCLUSION

In the United States, a research-practice gap exists concerning the instruction of students with ASD because of the lack of implementation of evidence-based practices in general education classrooms. Separately, writing strategy instruction and social emotional learning have been found to greatly improve the academic outcomes of students with ASD. Therefore, this research aimed to design an expressive writing unit as a tool for general education teachers to implement that integrates writing strategy instruction and social emotional learning to provide an equitable and feasible writing instruction for students with ASD. The result was a five-day expressive writing unit, *The Idea Generation Machine*, with a relationship skills theme and with writing strategy taught using the self-regulated strategy development model. Further research is needed to determine the impact of the five day unit for promoting idea generation and organization of writing for students with ASD and being an effective and comprehensive tool for teachers to use in their general education classrooms.

At the beginning of the research process, the researcher wanted to understand how to best serve her students with ASD through the writing process. The literature review introduced the researcher to the contextual layers of differentiating instruction for students with ASD and provided her with a new understanding on the importance of research in education. Throughout the process of designing *The Idea Generation Machine*, the researcher deepened her understanding of what it takes to be an effective educator and how to pursue effective educational practices in the classroom. The researcher's teaching style has changed to be more

reflective and informed. She also developed her understanding of how to implement effective educational practices into her curriculum to best meet the needs of all students through unit planning. More importantly, the researcher gained a new sense of advocacy for students with ASD and will utilize the educational practices learned throughout the process in her future classrooms. The knowledge acquired through this process will greatly benefit the researcher as she will soon be responsible for delivering high-quality instruction for all students in her full internship and in her own classroom after graduating.

APPENDIX A: Learning Goals and ELA Florida State Standards

APPENDIX A

Learning Goals

1. Students will independently read a writing prompt and identify the prompt's purpose, audience, subject, and type of writing using the PAST strategy.
2. Students will independently generate ideas using the POW strategy and logically organize them using a TREE graphic organizer.
3. Students will write various kinds of expressive writing entries using their POW+TREE strategies that clearly express their personal opinions, personal values, or autobiographical accounts and contain details to support those ideas.

Florida State Standards

Writing Standards:

- LAFS.5. W.2.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
- LAFS.5. W.3.8: Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources
- LAFS.5. W.4.10: Write routinely over shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences
- LAFS.5. W.2.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning
- LAFS.5. L.1.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Reading Standards:

- LAFS.5.RL.1.2: Determine a theme of a story from details in the text, including how characters in a story respond to challenges

APPENDIX B: TEXT SET ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX B
Annotated Bibliography

1. *What Do You Do With an Idea?* By Kobi Yamada
<https://youtu.be/oxtvhISKsR8>

This picture book is about a child who has an idea that is all their own. At first, the child doesn't know what to do with their idea and is worried others will judge them for having it. The child almost lets their idea go in fear of being ridiculed but instead holds on to it and helps it grow. Eventually, the idea bursts into the world and the child recognizes their idea's magic. I will use this story to introduce the concept of ideas to students and teach them to recognize the importance and value of their ideas. I will use this story to introduce the POW strategy and model how I can generate my ideas using this strategy. This will lead into the brainstorming instruction of idea generation.

2. *Planning isn't my Priority...and Making Priorities isn't in my Plans!* By Julia Cook
<https://youtu.be/TCZcKFKSU9A>

This storybook is about two boys named Cletus and Bocephus who are both learning how to effectively plan and prioritize, although Cletus, is having a harder time than Bocephus. Together, the two explore how to make plans and priorities while working together on a mealworm project for the Science Fair. I plan to utilize this book to introduce students to the planning step of the writing process. I will have students at their present and independent level complete a short written entry about whether they resonate with Cletus or Bocephus or a little bit of both. We will explore how Cletus and Bocephus made a plan of action and develop our own plans with our goals for the unit.

3. *Dear Mr. President* by Sophie Siers
<https://www.getepic.com/app/read/67092>

This book is about a boy named Sam who writes complaint letters about his younger brother to the President. Sam is convinced the President's idea of building a wall is the perfect solution to dealing with his pesky younger brother. As his younger brother exercises healthy problem-solving skills like open communication, considering other opinions, and negotiation. I plan to utilize this book to explore the concept of problem-solving. I will use the example of Sam's problem and his medium of letter writing to model exploring the PAST strategy. I will present students with a writing prompt related to their problem-solving experiences. Students will practice the POW+TREE strategy to develop and organize their ideas.

4. *How to be Human: Diary of an Autistic Girl* by Florida Frantz
<https://www.getepic.com/app/read/12342>

This chapter book is written in the style of a diary from the perspective of Florida who has Autism spectrum disorder. She recalls some of the social challenges she faced growing up and shares her personal growth experiences related to developing strong social and communication skills. I will be using this book to bring ASD awareness into the classroom. I will use steps 1 - 4 from her diary entries to explore how she worked through her problem. I will model PAST, POW + TREE using Florida's diary entries. Students will then make their own diary entries using PAST, POW + TREE to write

about a problem they have faced or are currently facing. We will develop these entries throughout the unit.

APPENDIX C: PRE/POST ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX C

Writing Attitudes and Capabilities Questionnaire

Name: _____

Date: _____

Writing Attitudes & Capabilities Questionnaire

1. Do you like to write? Circle the choice you agree with.



Hate to

Don't like
to

Okay

Like to

Love to

2. What kind of writer are you? Circle the choice you agree with.



Horrible

Bad

Okay

Good

Great

3. Do you like to write in your free time? Circle the choice you agree with.



Hate to






Don't like
to

Okay

Like to

Love to

4. How does writing make you feel? Circle the choice you agree with.

				
Horrible	Bad	Okay	Good	Great

5. Do you like to make a plan when you write? Circle the choice you agree with.



Hate to

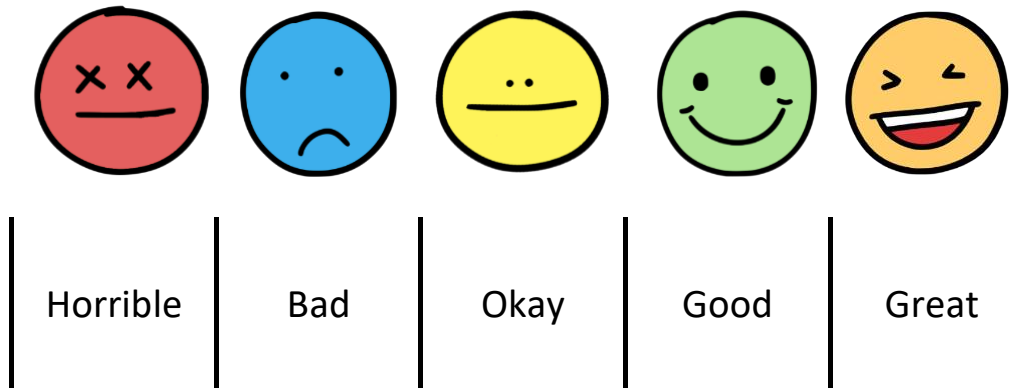
Don't like
to

Okay

Like to

Love to

6. How do you feel when you come up with ideas?



7. What kind of writer does your teacher think you are? Circle the choice you agree with.



Horrible



Bad



Okay








Good



Great

8. How do you feel about becoming a better writer? Circle the choice you agree with.

				
Horrible	Bad	Okay	Good	Great

9. What does a good writer look like? Please draw what a good writer looks like below.



Writing Journal Entry

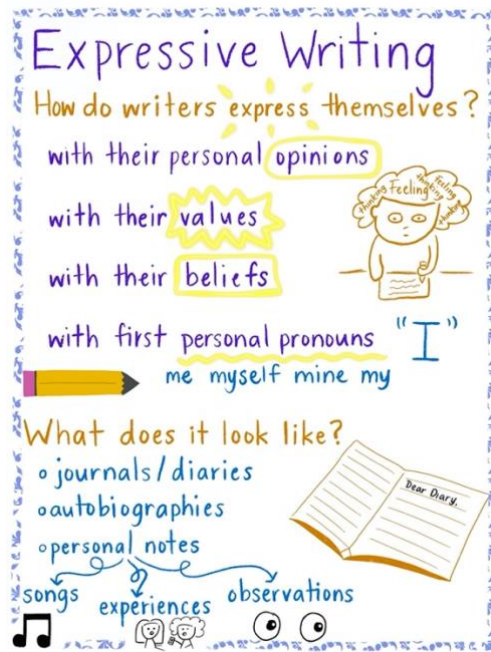
Have you ever had a disagreement with a friend? How did you solve the problem? Write about a time you had an argument with a friend and how you solved it.

APPENDIX D: BODY OF THEMATIC UNIT DESIGN

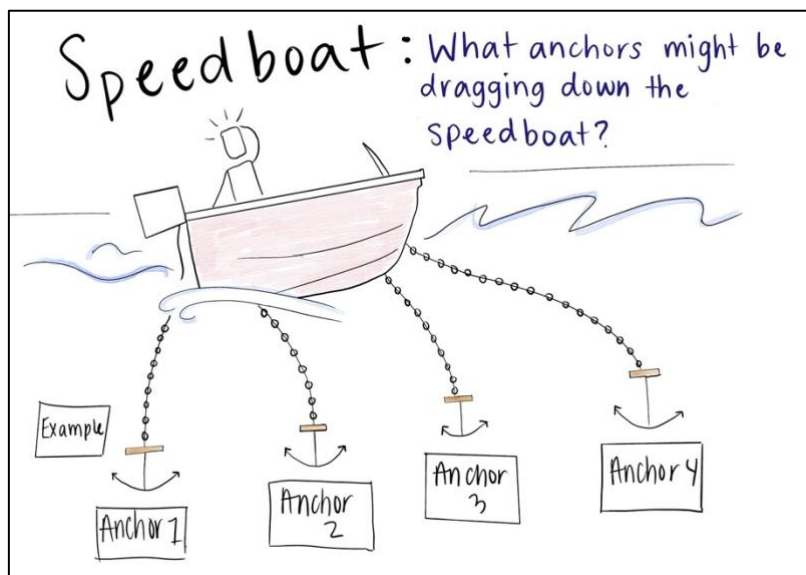
APPENDIX D

Anchor Charts

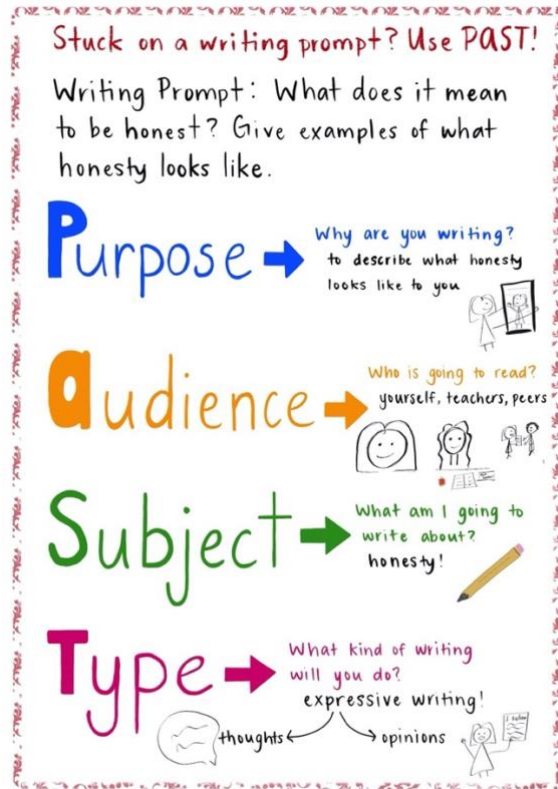
Expressive Writing Genre



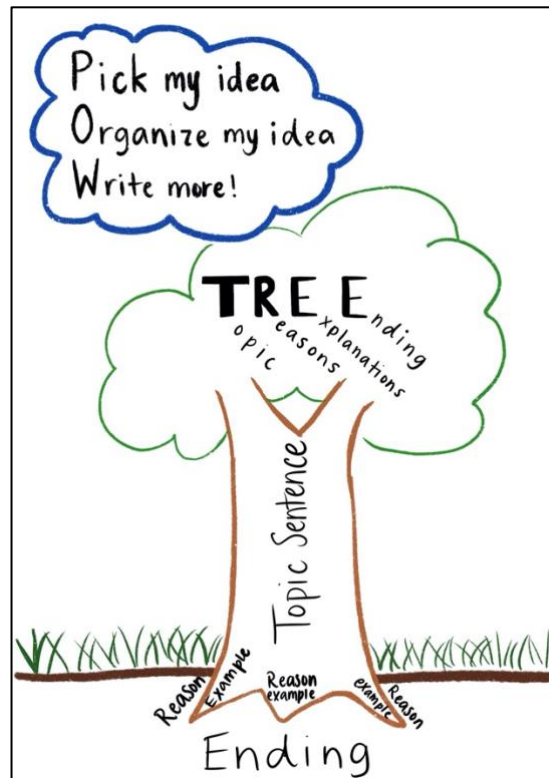
Speedboat + Anchors



PAST Anchor Chart



POW + TREE Anchor Chart



Writing Prompts

- Write about a time it was challenging to be a good friend? How do you handle those situations?
- Have you ever had a disagreement with a friend? How did you solve the problem? Write about a time you had an argument with a friend and how you solved it.
- What do you do when you disagree with your best friend? How do you handle this situation?
- What three qualities do you think are most important in a friend? Why?
- What are some ways you let friends in your class know you care about them?
- What are some conflicts you have seen happening on the playground? How do you think kids could prevent them or even resolve them?
- What are some conflicts you have seen happening in the classroom? How do you think kids could prevent them or even resolve them?
- When working in a team, how do you react when someone doesn't like your idea? What are some things you can do to help the situation?
- Write about a time you struggled to give or receive help. What did you learn about yourself?
- What are some ways you are similar to your family? What are some ways you are different?
- Write about a time you had a conflict with a sibling or family member. How did you resolve the conflict?
- Why is it valuable to learn about the perspective of others?
- Write about a time your opinion changed. What caused it to change?

Activity Materials

Social Story example

This printable was taken from <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>. The annotation was written as an example of what a group of students would come up with.



Writer's Theatre

These are two examples of what the cue cards could look like.

Front

Cue card

You are in the lunch line and a peer skips you.

How do you react?

Back

Role Play

Choose one:

- the peer who cut
- the line
- a teacher
- a friend nearby

Front

Cue card

Both of you want the same topic for a project but there is only one topic per student.

How do you react?

Back

Role Play

Choose one:

- the friend
- the teacher

Choose the Picture

Choose the Picture Freewrite

Choose one photo that you resonate the most with. Do a free write for 8 minutes on the photo. Remember do not stop writing even if you don't know what to write anymore.



This or That: Problem Solving Edition Example

Teachers can insert images into the solution boxes to provide visual support.

This or That? Problem Solving Edition

You see a student cheating

You confront the student

You inform the teacher

Unit Lesson Plans

Day 1:

Lesson Title: Analyzing Writing Prompts using PAST and Exploring Problem-Solving

Content Area: ELA

Lesson Objectives:

- During the lesson, students will identify the purpose, audience, subject, and type of writing from a writing prompt by using the PAST graphic organizer.
- During the lesson, students will determine the theme of a story by summarizing.

Florida Standards:

1. Writing Standards

- LAFS.5. W.3.8: Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources
- LAFS.5. W.4.10: Write routinely over shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences
- LAFS.5. W.2.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning

2. Reading Standards:

- LAFS.5.RL.1.2: Determine a theme of a story from details in the text, including how characters in a story respond to challenges

Motivating Activity: Read Aloud of *Planning Isn't My Priority and Making Priorities Isn't in My Plans* by Julia Cook (2015)

Procedures:

Warm Up -

1. Share the focus of the lesson: learning objective and student expectations
2. Review expressive writing genre by creating an anchor chart

Pre-Assessment -

1. Students will read and respond to an SEL problem-solving focused writing prompt by writing a journal entry:

Have you ever had a disagreement with a friend? How did you solve the problem? Write about a time you had an argument with a friend and how you solved it.

2. Students will complete a writing attitudes and capabilities questionnaire.

Discussion -

3. Engagement Activity: Read aloud *Planning Isn't My Priority and Making Priorities Isn't in My Plans* <https://youtu.be/TCZcKFKSU9A>
4. Invite students to reflect on the character's problem-solving journey. Instruct students to turn to their partner and discuss.
5. Display the events of the story in a disarray on the board. Have students work with their partners to correctly sequence the story event on their sheet.
 - o Depending on the needs of the ESE and ELL students, have students sort out the events of the story using pictures.
6. Call on each partnership to retell a portion of the story until the whole story has been retold. Review the concept of theme with the class.

Events and Summary Graphic Organizer

Text Title: _____

Main Idea/Problem: _____ _____		
Detail/Event 1: _____ _____ _____	Detail/Event 2: _____ _____ _____	Detail/Event 3: _____ _____ _____
Wrap Up/Resolution: _____ _____		
Summary: _____ _____ _____ _____		

7. Prompt students to discover the theme by reflecting on the events of the story.
8. As a whole group, create a Speed Boat + Anchors chart based off the theme of the story. The speedboat represents the planning process, and the anchors are the obstacles that weigh down the process. Students can write their anchors on sticky notes and post them on the chart.
9. Discuss goal setting and its importance. Model using the prewriting elements checklist on a written entry. Model choosing an element that you want to improve throughout the unit and make it your goal
10. Instruct students to use the prewriting elements checklist to check off what they did when they wrote their pre-assessment entry. Instruct students to reflect on which element they want to improve on. Have students write out their goal.

Prewriting Elements Checklist	
Elements	Check off what you used
Read the writing prompt	
Analyzed the writing prompt	
Brainstormed ideas	
Organized ideas	
Used a strategy	

GOAL ACTION PLAN

My Goal:

Monday:	Tuesday:
Wednesday:	Thursday:

Friday's Reflection:
Did you meet your goal?

Skills Practice -

11. Introduce PAST as a strategy students can use to propel their planning process. Define purpose, audience, subject, and type and collaborate coming up with examples for each section. Create an anchor chart while walking students through the strategy.
12. Display the mnemonic song on the board: “Purpose, Audience, Subject, and Type. These are the elements you use to write. When you’re telling a story and doing it right - Purpose, Audience, Subject and Type.” Lead students into a choral singing of the song to help them memorize the strategy.
13. Model working through 2-3 writing prompts using the PAST graphic organizer.
14. Partner students up. Provide students 2-3 writing prompts and corresponding PAST graphic organizers.

PAST Graphic Organizer	
Purpose - Why are you writing?	
Audience - Who is going to read it?	
Subject - What are you writing about?	
Type - What kind of writing will you do?	

- If students finish early, they chose an activity from the choice board:
 - **Read to Self** - Students will read a book of choice with and conduct a summarizing activity
 - **Social Story** - Students will create a social story comic that explains a problem they had and how they solved it. They can create their comic strips digitally or on paper
 - **Writer's Theatre** - Students will act out problems from cue cards and write out how the problem was solved
 - **Freewrite** - Students will select a writing prompt and do a freewrite

15. Pull out a small group of students to provide more explicit instruction using PAST.

Review each section and the examples. Collaborate together reading a writing prompt and filling out the graphic organizer.

16. **Closure:** Have students complete their exit slip by writing their goal in their action plan and write one way they worked towards reaching their goal. Review PAST as a strategy students can use when responding to a writing prompt by spending the last 5 minutes of class choral singing the mnemonic song.

Assessment: Completing the PAST Graphic Organizer + Determining the theme of *Planning Isn't My Priority....*

Materials:

- *Planning Isn't My Priority and Making Priorities Isn't in My Plans!*
- Writing Prompts
- Journal Writing Notebook
- Prewriting Elements Checklist + Action Plan Template
- PAST Graphic Organizer
- Summary Organizer
- Writer's Theatre activity materials
- Social Story activity materials

Day 2:

Lesson Title: Generating and Organizing Ideas using POW +TREE

Content Area: ELA

Lesson Objectives:

- During this lesson, students will be able to pick an idea or opinion and generate three relevant reasons using the TREE organizer.
- During the lesson, students will determine the theme of a story by discussing how a character responds to the conflict.

Florida Standards:

1. Writing Standards

- LAFS.5. W.2.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
- LAFS.5. W.4.10: Write routinely over shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences
- LAFS.5. W.2.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning

2. Reading Standards:

- LAFS.5.RL.1.2: Determine a theme of a story from details in the text, including how characters in a story respond to challenges

Motivating Activity: Read aloud of *What Do You Do with an Idea?* by Kobi Yamada (2013)

Procedures:

Warm Up -

1. Share the focus of the lesson: learning objective and student expectations
2. Review expressive writing genre by referencing the anchor chart
3. Display 6 different photos on the board. Instruct students to select the photo that resonates with them the most. Instruct students to free write for 8 minutes on which photo

they chose and why in their journal notebook. Students should include a minimum of 2 reasons in their free write.

Engagement Activity -

4. Read aloud *What Do You Do with an Idea?* <https://youtu.be/oxtvhISKsR8>
5. Instruct students to turn to their partner and discuss the character's problem and solution. Hold a discussion as a whole group about what a problem is and ways, we can solve them.
6. Divide students into groups of 4-6 for the brainwriting activity. Model for students writing a solution to a problem and then building and elaborating on the solution. Instruct students to reflect on their groups' problems. Have one student write a solution to the problem and then pass it to the student on their right. The next student will then read aloud the solution and build on it by elaborating or offering a new solution. Students will then present their problem and solutions as a group to the class.

Discussion -

7. Introduce POW+TREE as writing strategies students can use to help them pick, plan, organize, and maintain their writing. Reference back to the Speedboat + Anchors chart and make connections to POW+TREE as solutions to cut ties with the students' anchors.



8. Display the writing prompt “Write about a time you had a problem and didn’t know what to do. Include how you solved your problem or what you could have done to solve it. Be sure to add at least 3 details.” to use for a writing model using POW+TREE for students. Think aloud following the POW+TREE process and organizer using the character’s problem from *What Do You Do with an Idea?*
9. Group students into groups of 4. Assign 1 student the role of topic and ending and the other 3 are responsible for coming up with a reason and explanation. Students will collaboratively complete a TREE organizer based off the writing prompt.

POW and Tree Graphic Organizer

Pick my Idea: _____

Organize my Idea:

Topic: _____

Reasons:	Explanations:
1. _____ _____	
2. _____ _____	
3. _____ _____	

Ending: _____

Write more: _____

10. Writing Stations-

There will be 4 writing stations: Writer's Theatre, Social Story, TREE, and Teacher conferencing

- **Writer's Theatre** - Students will act out problems from cue cards and write out how the problem was solved
- **Social Story**- Students will create a social story comic that explains a problem they had and how they solved it. They can create their comic strips digitally or on paper.
- **TREE** - Students will examine incomplete or incorrectly completed TREE organizers. Students will either complete the organizer by incorporating their ideas or fix the incorrect sections.
- **Teacher Conference** - Students will discuss their action plan, any confusions or misconceptions they have about the planning process and demonstrate their ability to complete a TREE organizer by completing it together.

11. **Closure:** Review POW+TREE strategies and their importance. Students complete their exit slip by writing in their action plan one way they worked towards reaching their goal.

Assessment: Collaborative TREE organizer

Materials:

- *What Do You Do with an Idea?*
- Journal Writing Notebook
- Journal Writing Prompt
- Action Plan
- TREE organizer
- Writer's Theatre cue cards
- Computers/iPads for digital comics <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>

Day 3:

Lesson Title: Generating and Organizing Ideas cont.

Content Area: ELA

Lesson Objectives:

- After completing the lesson, students will distinguish the purpose, audience, subject, and task of a writing prompt with 90% accuracy.
- After completing the lesson, students will generate an idea and organize their reasons using the POW+TREE strategies with 80% accuracy.
- After completing the lesson, students will determine the theme of a story by summarizing and reflecting on how the character responded to the conflict.

Florida Standards:

1. Writing Standards

- LAFS.5. W.3.8: Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources
- LAFS.5. W.4.10: Write routinely over shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences
- LAFS.5. W.2.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning

2. Reading Standards:

- LAFS.5.RL.1.2: Determine a theme of a story from details in the text, including how characters in a story respond to challenges

Motivating Activity: Choose the Picture

Procedures:

Warm Up -

1. Display 6 different photos on the board. Instruct students to select the photo that resonates with them the most. Instruct students to free write for 8 minutes on which photo they chose and why in their journal notebook. Students should include a minimum of 2 reasons in their free write.

2. Share the focus of the lesson: learning objective and student expectations
3. Review PAST strategy by displaying the mnemonic song and choral singing.

Discussion -

1. Handout *Dear Mr. President* and sticky notes to each student. Instruct students to follow along while you read.
2. Conduct a book talk. Read aloud *Dear Mr. President*
<https://www.getepic.com/app/read/67092>
3. Instruct students to turn to their partner and discuss the character's problem and solution. Have students write down their responses on sticky notes.
4. Instruct students to work with their partners to summarize the story using the organizer.
 - Depending on the needs of the ESE and ELL students, have students sort out the events of the story using pictures.
5. Have students answer the question, "How did the character respond to the conflict of the story?"

6. Writing Stations-

There will be 4 writing stations: Writer's Theatre, Social Story, TREE, and Teacher conferencing

- **Writer's Theatre** - Students will act out problems from cue cards and write out how the problem was solved
- **Social Story**- Students will create a social story comic that explains a problem they had and how they solved it. They can create their comic strips digitally or on paper.
- **TREE** - Students will examine incomplete or incorrectly completed TREE organizers. Students will either complete the organizer by incorporating their ideas or fix the incorrect sections.

- **Teacher Conference** - Students will discuss their action plan, any confusions or misconceptions they have about the planning process and demonstrate their ability to complete a TREE organizer by completing it together.

Guided Practice -

1. Review POW+TREE strategies by referencing the anchor charts.
2. Display the writing prompt “Write about a time you had a problem with a sibling or a friend. Include how you solved your problem or what you could have done to solve it. Be sure to add at least 3 details.”
3. Model using POW+TREE for students by planning out my response. Think aloud following the POW+TREE process and organizer when writing your model response.

Independent Practice -

4. Instruct students to plan and organize their responses using the PAST and TREE organizers. Students will then write their responses in their journal notebooks.
5. **Closure:** Review POW+TREE strategies and their importance. Students complete their exit slip by checking off their free write entry using the prewriting elements checklist. Also, have students write in their action plan one way they worked towards reaching their goal.

Assessment: Formative assessment of PAST and TREE graphic organizers

Materials:

- *Dear Mr. President*
- Journal Writing Notebook
- Journal Writing Prompt
- Prewriting Elements Checklist
- Action Plan Template
- PAST Graphic Organizer
- TREE Graphic Organizer
- Summarize Organizer

Day 4:

Lesson Title: Organize Ideas with TREE

Content Area: Reading and Writing

Lesson Objectives:

- During this lesson, students will independently generate and organize ideas expressing their personal opinions, values, or autobiographical accounts using the POW and TREE strategy with 80% accuracy.
- After this lesson, students will independently write an expressive journal entry that clearly expresses their topic, reasons, and explanations, and includes an ending sentence.

Florida Standards:

1. Writing Standards

- LAFS.5. W.2.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
- LAFS.5. W.4.10: Write routinely over shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences
- LAFS.5. W.2.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning

Motivating Activity: Read aloud *How to Be Human: Diary of an Autistic Girl* by Florida Frenz (2013)

Procedures:

Warm Up -

1. Share the focus of the lesson: learning objective and student expectation.
2. Review peer checking etiquette and checklist with students.

Discussion -

1. Read aloud *How to Be Human: Diary of an Autistic Girl* to page
2. Partner students up and hand out one problem from the diary entries to each partnership. Instruct students to read over the entry to figure out what was the character's problem and how did she solve it, or if she didn't solve it, how could she have solved her problem?
3. Choose a few partners to share with the class.
4. Display one of the diary entries on the board. As a whole group, work together to find the topic, a reason, an explanation, and an ending in the diary entry. When each component is found, write it on the TREE organizer.

Independent Practice -

1. Display a writing prompt on the board and the POW anchor chart. Hand out a PAST and TREE organizer. Allot 25 minutes for students to complete their planning process and entries.
2. Instruct students to work through their planning process and write a journal entry. There is no minimum sentence count as long as their topic, reasons, and explanations, and the ending is present in their writing. Teachers can opt to play soothing music at a low volume during this time.
3. Walk around the classroom to monitor students' progress. If a student is struggling, encourage them to use one of the ideas they came up with in previous days. If a student finishes early, they can read a book silently at the classroom library or at their desks, or they can work on their social stories on the computer.
4. When the 25 minutes are up, instruct students to check two of their peers' work and have two peers check their work. They will switch journal entries and check each other's work using the peer editing checklist.

	Yes	No
A. Content		
The main idea is clearly stated		
The main idea is supported by 3 reasons		
Each reason is supported by details		
B. Organization		
Entry has a topic sentence		
Entry has 3 reason sentences with supporting details		
Paragraph order makes sense		

5. Meet with students at the back table for a teacher conference. Discuss the student's action plan and how they feel it's going. Review their organizer and writing entry and provide constructive feedback. Inquire about any misconceptions or confusions the student may still have about the planning process.
6. **Closure:** Review POW+TREE strategies and their importance. Have students complete a prewriting elements checklist on their independent entry. Students will complete their exit slip by writing in their action plan one way they worked towards reaching their goal.

Closure: Independent Daily Journal Writing

Assessment: Completing a PAST and TREE graphic organizer. Expressive journal entry. Peer editing checklist.

Materials:

- *What Do You Do with an Idea?*
- Journal Writing Notebook
- Journal Writing Prompt
- Prewriting Elements Checklist
- Action Plan Template
- TREE Graphic Organizer
- Peer Editing Checklist

Day 5:

Lesson Title: Strategic Journal Writing

Content Area: Reading and Writing

Lesson Objectives:

- After this lesson, students will independently generate and organize ideas expressing their personal opinions, values, or autobiographical accounts using the POW and TREE strategy with 90% accuracy.
- After this lesson, students will independently write an expressive journal entry that clearly expresses their topic, reasons, and explanations, and includes an ending sentence.

Florida Standards:

1. Writing Standards

- LAFS.5. W.2.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
- LAFS.5. W.4.10: Write routinely over shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences
- LAFS.5. W.2.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning

Motivating Activity: This or That: problem and solution edition

Procedures:

Warm Up -

1. Have students stand in the middle of the classroom. Review the rules of the game. A problem will display on the board with two solutions. Students will indicate what solution they chose by moving to the side of the classroom. The game will include a fun variety of serious and fun problems with solutions.

2. Share the focus of the lesson: learning objective and student expectations.
3. Review PAST, POW, and TREE strategies.

Writing Stations -

There will be 4fourwriting stations: Writer’s Theatre, Social Story, TREE, and Teacher conferencing

- **Writer’s Theatre** - Students will act out problems from cue cards and write out how the problem was solved
- **Social Story**- Students will create a social story comic that explains a problem they had and how they solved it. They can create their comic strips digitally or on paper.
- **TREE** - Students will examine incomplete or incorrectly completed TREE organizers. Students will either complete the organizer by incorporating their ideas or fix the incorrect sections.
- **Teacher Conference** - Students will discuss their action plan, any confusions or misconceptions they have about the planning process, and demonstrate their understanding of the PAST, POW, and TREE strategies.

Independent Practice -

1. Post-Assessment: Students will read and respond to a problem-solving focused writing prompt by writing a journal entry using PAST, POW, and TREE.
2. Exit Slip: Students will complete a writing attitudes and capabilities questionnaire.

Closure: Independent Daily Journal Writing

Assessment: Completing a POW + TREE graphic organizer

Materials:

- Journal Writing Notebook
- Journal Writing Prompt
- Action Plan Template
- PAST, POW + TREE Graphic Organizer

REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association. (2021). *What is IDEA?* Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). <https://www.apa.org/advocacy/education/idea>
- Adams, D. (2013). *The application of social emotional learning principles to a special education environment*. Korean Educational Development Institute Journal of Educational Policy. KJEP Special Issue, 103-118.
<https://content.ebscohost.com/ContentServer.asp?T=P&P=AN&K=91262424&S=R&D=eue&EbscoContent=dGJyMMTo50SeprM4xNvgOLCmsEmepq5Ss6m4SreWxWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMOHr8Irrj5PJT69fnhrnb5ofx6gAA>
- Asaro-Saddler, K., Arcidiacono, M. B., & Morris Deyoe, M. (2017). Instructional practice for students with autism spectrum and related disorders: Explore the teaching of writing in two self-contained classrooms. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 33(2), 171-186.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10573569.2016.1145561>
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (n.d.). *What is SEL?* CASEL. <https://casel.org/what-is-SEL/>
- Corona, L. L., Christodulu, K. V., & Rinaldi, M. L. (2017). Investigation of school professionals' self-efficacy for working with students with ASD: Impact of prior experience, knowledge, and training. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 19(2), 90-101.
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1098300716667604>
- Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing without Teachers* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Florida State University. (n.d.). *Welcome to CPALMS*. CPALMS.

<https://www.cpalms.org/Public/>

Data and Statistics on Autism Spectrum Disorder | CDC. (2020, September 25). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>

Delano, M. (2007). Use of strategy instruction to improve story writing skills of a student with Asperger syndrome. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 22(4), 252-258. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F10883576070220040701>

Dominguez, A., & La Gue, K. (2013). Beyond academic standards: Social and emotional learning in the classroom. *National Teacher Education Journal*, 6(1), 17-21.

Eklund, K., Kilpatrick, K. D., Kilgus, S. P., & Haider, A. (2018). A systematic review of state-level social-emotional learning standards: Implications for practice and research. *School Psychology Review*, 47(3), 316-326. <https://doi.org/10.17105/SPR-2017.0116.V47-3>

Fleischman, S., Scott, C., & Sargrad, S. (2016). *Better evidence, better choices, better schools: State supports for evidence-based school improvement and the Every Student Succeeds Act*. Center for American Progress. https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/30141500/EvidenceESSAreport.pdf?_ga=2.8767989.1748745929.1600720220-585608872.1600720220

Gillespie, A., & Graham, S. (2014). A meta-analysis of writing interventions for students with learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 80(4), 454-473. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0014402914527238>

Gillespie Rouse, A., & Kiuahara, S. A. (2017). SRSD in Writing and Professional Development for Teachers: Practice and Promise for Elementary and Middle School Students with Learning Disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 32(3), 180–188. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ldrp.12140>

- Graham, S., & Harris, R. K. (1993). Self-regulated strategy development: Helping students with learning problems develop as writers. *The Elementary School Journal*, 94(2), 169-181. <https://doi.org/10.1086/461758>
- Graham, S., Harris, R. K., & Hebert, M.A. (2011). *Informing writing: The benefits of formative assessment. A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act report*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Graham, S., Harris, K. R., & Mason, L. (2005). Improving the writing performance, knowledge, and self-efficacy of struggling young writers: The effects of self-regulated strategy development. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 30(2), 207–241. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2004.08.001>
- Graham, S., & Hebert, M. A. (2010). *Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading*. A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act Report. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Graham, S., McKeown, S., Kiuvara, S., & Harris, K. R. (2012). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for students in the elementary grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 104(4), 879-896. <https://doi.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0029185>
- Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(3). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.99.3.445>
- Iovannone, R., Dunlap, G., Huber, H., & Kincaid, D. (2003). Effective educational practices for students with autism spectrum disorders. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 18(3), 150–165. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10883576030180030301>
- IRIS Center Peabody College Vanderbilt University. (2020). *What is autism m spectrum disorder and, what are the characteristics associated with it?* Available:: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/asd1/cresource/q1/p01/#content>
- Lushin, V., Mandell, D., Beidas, R., Marcus, S., Nuske, H., Kaploun, V., Seidman, M., Gaston, D., & Locke, J. (2019). Trajectories of evidence based treatment for school children with

- autism: What's the right level for the implementation? *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 50(3), 881-892. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-019-04304-6>
- Maenner, M. J. (2016). *Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder Among Children Aged 8 Years – Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, 11 Sites, United States*. MMWR Surveillance Summaries. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/ss/ss6904a1.htm?s_cid=ss6904a1_w
- Marshall, D., & Goodall, C. (2015). The right to appropriate and meaningful education for children with ASD. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 45(10), 3159-3167. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-015-2475-9>
- Pennington, R., & Delano, M. (2012). Writing instruction for students with autism spectrum disorders: A review of the literature. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 27(3), 158-167. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1088357612451318>
- Scully, Kristina. (2020). *Read Aloud List for Social Emotional Learning*. Pathway 2 Success. <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Social-Emotional-Learning-Read-Aloud-List-Distance-Learning-4807314>
- Skrabanek, D.W. (2012, October). *Primer: Expressive purpose*. English/Austin Community College. <https://www.austincc.edu/dws/expressive.html>
- Spencer, V. G., Evmenova, A. S., & Boon, R. T. (2016) Review of research-based interventions for students with autism spectrum disorders in content area instruction: Implications and considerations for classroom practice. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 4(3), 331-353. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088357615583464>
- Unsplash. (n.d.). *Beautiful Free Images & Pictures*. <https://unsplash.com/>

Yoo, C. (2018). *How to Support Self-Regulation Difficulties in Children*. Foothills Academy.

<https://www.foothillsacademy.org/community-services/parent-education/parent-articles/self-regulation-difficulties>

Zimmerman, B. (2006). *Create Comics Online | Comix Maker | Comic Strips | Comic Generator*.

Make Beliefs Comix. <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>

REFERENCES USED FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Cook, J., & Hyde, M. H. (2016). *Planning Isn't My Priority (Functioning Executive)*. National Center for Youth Issues.

Frenz, F. (2013). *How to Be Human: Diary of an Autistic Girl*. Creston Books.

Siers, Sophie. (2019). *Dear Mr. President*. Owlkids Books.

Yamada, K., & Besom, M. (2014). *What Do You Do with an Idea?* (9th Print ed.). Compendium Inc.