### Rubric for SPED 5020: Educational Strategies for Exceptional Children

**Course Requirement: Strategies File**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Superior</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Clearly labeled dividers, strategies are well-organized by subject and categories and clustered by academic/non-academic areas</td>
<td>Dividers are used, strategies are put in correct subject areas</td>
<td>Either no dividers or poorly labeled dividers, strategies are not categorized well</td>
<td>No subject dividers, strategies are randomly placed in file or some/all are loose</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensiveness</strong></td>
<td>File covers all essential academic and non-academic areas; sub-categories provided in each area (e.g. under Reading, decoding, fluency, comprehension delineated)</td>
<td>Strategy file covers key academic and non-academic areas-sub-categories are provided in some places</td>
<td>File is sparse, some academic areas are not included and there are no strategies provided to address classroom behavior</td>
<td>File omits many academic areas; there are few or no strategies to address any non-academic areas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Artifact</strong></td>
<td>Artifacts are very relevant and useful for students with special needs; the strategies are clearly described</td>
<td>The artifacts are useful and they provide good descriptions of the strategies</td>
<td>The artifact may be useful for students with special needs; the descriptions of the strategies are adequate</td>
<td>Many artifacts do not appear to be useful for classroom application; may not be appropriate; descriptions are fair</td>
<td>Artifacts are inappropriate and poorly described; very difficult to apply strategies based upon information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creativity</strong></td>
<td>Strategies are very creative and provide new and novel ways to approach learning and behaviors</td>
<td>Many strategies are creative and provide innovative ideas for application of strategies</td>
<td>Some strategies are innovative and provide new ways to approach learning and behavior</td>
<td>Strategies are not novel; few innovative strategies for students with special needs</td>
<td>Strategies do not provide new ways to approach learning for students with special needs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence of Learning</strong></td>
<td>Student demonstrates high level of knowledge and skills in reflections</td>
<td>Student demonstrates some knowledge and skill development in reflections</td>
<td>Evidence of knowledge and skill development seen in reflections</td>
<td>Student does not demonstrate complete knowledge and skills as seen in reflections</td>
<td>Little or no understanding and demonstration of knowledge and skills in reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation Style</strong></td>
<td>Portfolio is very attractive, neat; professional; laminated sheets are used</td>
<td>Portfolio is neat and attractive; may or may not use laminated sheets</td>
<td>Portfolio may be attractive, but is not neat; papers may be frayed or falling out of folder</td>
<td>Portfolio is not professional; papers are frayed and pages are not attractive; may contain written notes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**Notes by Nyree Arana:**

- Outstanding Portfolio
- Excellent Table of Contents
- Matrix Enhanced Project
- References Reinforced Strategies and Reflections
- Quality of Artifacts and Varies

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**Score:** 30+
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- Technology Strategies to Differentiate Instruction

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- Chapter 10: How to use journals to improve your students’ writing skills
- Six ways to encourage young writers
## Strategy Portfolio
Outline of topics & sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Book</td>
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<td>ABA</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Fine Motor</td>
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<td>Graphic Organizers</td>
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<td>Math</td>
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<td>Memory</td>
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<td>Reading</td>
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<td>Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
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APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

Artifacts:


- ABA Teaching Strategies for Autism in the Classroom, from website:
  https://apps.tvdsb.on.ca/employees/dptspeced/Boardmaker%20Files/ASD%20Placemat.pdf


*Reflection statement provided for bolded artifact
ABA: *Applied Behavior Analysis, 2nd Edition*

I recently purchased the *Applied Behavior Analysis* textbook for a course I am taking in ABA. The text provides a comprehensive foundation in several principles of behavior such as positive and negative reinforcement, motivating operations, developing new behavior through shaping and chaining, and functional behavior assessment. Although the book is very technical, I feel it provides a thorough understanding of behavior principles that are beneficial to classroom teachers. Just as general education teachers can benefit from a background in special education, I feel that educators today can also benefit from an understanding of the core concepts that make up applied behavior analysis. As more and more students are being brought back to district and inclusion is becoming the norm, teachers will find it useful to have a foundation in ABA.

This text is a good resource for both general and special education teachers, as the principles apply to all behaviors. The book explains various concepts, principles, and procedures that underlie student learning. It demonstrates the influence of motivation and reinforcement on student behavior and emphasizes the point that student behavior is driven by consequences, which can be analyzed through functional behavior assessment. It recognizes that students learn better from positive reinforcement rather than punishment and explains how to vary reinforcement schedules when trying to acquire new behavior verses maintaining it. It also suggests ways to keep the learner motivated and gives ideas for using contingency contracts, token economies, and group contingencies to help meet individual and group goals.

Recently, the behavior specialist position in my district was eliminated, leaving the teachers without support for difficult behaviors in the classroom. I'm looking forward to

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applying the knowledge I've gained from this text and the ABA course to analyze behaviors in the classroom, identify how to reduce unwanted behaviors and increase appropriate behaviors, and use various schedules of reinforcement to promote appropriate behaviors. I've completed A-B-C data charts in the past, but never felt comfortable with how to use the information to change behaviors. I'm looking forward to having more input when developing functional behavior assessments, analyzing A-B-C data, and applying these principles with my preschool students and the students for whom I do home instruction through the district.
Artifacts:


*Reflection statement provided for bolded artifact*
Behavioral: “Teaching Transitions- Techniques for Promoting Success Between Lessons”

Council for Exceptional Children

Teaching Transitions provides powerful and well researched techniques for effective transitions in the classroom and school environment. The strategy described involves four techniques that help teachers plan for transitions, as well as manage behavioral routines. The techniques include teaching the routines by providing clear examples of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, using precorrections, providing positive reinforcement, and actively supervising students. A reproducible lesson plan form is also included to create lessons that will target specific skills needed for transitioning.

I originally debated between using this article or the Harry Wong book, The First Days of Teaching, as a resource for behavioral strategies. Both address the importance of routines and practice to help students learn what is expected of them and reduce behaviors in the classroom. I was particularly drawn to the article because of its foundation in and references to research, the detailed explanations of four specific techniques, and the references it made specifically to the social and behavioral deficits that students with special needs face.

The article is a good reminder of how difficult transitions can be for students with Autism, ADHD, and other behavioral disorders. These students often have difficulty monitoring and managing their own behavior, moving from one routine to the next, and following multi-step directions. Teachers sometimes take classroom expectations and rules for granted without realizing how difficult it can be for some students to follow cues or teach themselves how to transition.

As a sixth year teacher, I was happy to find that I have been using the techniques presented in this article in my classroom. But the article was a true testament to how we

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can become complacent in certain practices and need refreshers to revive our own teaching practices. The strategy of providing precorrections before engaging in an activity or transitions is something I do, but probably not enough. It's something that occurs often in the beginning of the year, but tends to fade as the year goes on. I'm thinking about placing a reminder for myself in the classroom so I continue to practice it throughout the year, especially in the Spring when the students catch Spring fever.

The rule about praising students at least three times as often as you reprimand them also struck a chord. Although I provide a lot of positive reinforcement through social praise, I would like to be more conscious of maintaining a fair balance of praise and reprimands, particularly with students who I know have difficulty with managing their behaviors. I think the article is a great resource for all teachers and plan to give it to my principal in hopes that it will be shared with more teachers who could appreciate the valuable lessons it provides.
FINE MOTOR

Artifacts:


- Fine Motor Strategies for the Classroom, PowerPoint presentation by Gwen Masterman.

*Reflection statement provided for bolded artifact
Fine Motor: Write Out of the Box!

Write Out of the Box is an internet site dedicated to fine motor development. It is an excellent resource for preschool and early elementary teachers, as well as parents, who are looking for strategies to help children increase their fine motor skills. The strategies offer assistance with pre-writing skills and handwriting problems by providing tips in areas such as cutting, finger placement, vertical surface writing, and letter formation. I particularly liked the website for the variety and utility of strategies provided through one source. I think the activities are developmentally appropriate, simple to administer, and engaging for students.

It seems that most students who enter preschool lack fine motor strength, especially students with special needs. This tends to carry on through the elementary grades if not addressed. Many of the students do not receive occupational therapy, which makes it a more important focus in the classroom to help students develop the fine motor abilities they will need for writing and self-help skills. The strategies provided on this site demonstrate the need to keep students engaged, use a multi-sensory approach, sequence steps based on skill level, and identify materials that are considered reinforcing to promote student learning.

I'm excited to have found this resource and look forward to using these strategies in my preschool classroom, as well as with the students for whom I do home instruction through the district. I've been having difficulty with helping students improve their pencil grip and forming letters correctly, while keeping them engaged and interested in the activity. I'm excited to use the strategy for improving the tripod grasp position and working with the wikki sticks, using the game approach, to practice letter formation. I'm also considering using novel vertical surfaces around the room to entice students to engage in writing activities at their own will, as opposed to being teacher directed.

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GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Artifacts:


- Integrate Kidspiration Into Your Curriculum. Software information and article from Inspiration website: http://www.inspiration.com/


*Reflection statement provided for bolded artifact*
Graphic Organizers: Venn Diagram and KWL charts

The Venn Diagram and KWL chart are common types of graphic organizers used by teachers today. They are effective tools for helping students organize their thoughts, understand logical relations between classes of items, and apply higher order thinking strategies to construct meaning from something read or discussed. There are many different websites that provide examples of these graphic organizers and allow teachers to construct their own. The two I selected were from a website called TeacherVision.com, which hosts a collection of graphic organizers that can be used for all grade levels.

I selected the Venn Diagram and KWL chart from all the different types of graphic organizers because they work well with early elementary students. They are simple to use and easy to understand. The Venn Diagram that I selected for this portfolio was particularly interesting to me because it suggested conducting an activity using concrete materials first, before recording the information on the diagram. I liked the suggestion of using manipulatives to demonstrate the comparison initially because it engages multiple senses and provides additional opportunities for learning. I also liked the phrasing used for the first KWL sample because it was the first time I saw the “W” represented as “Wonder,” instead of “what I want to learn.” I find the term “Wonder” to be more relatable and exciting to use with preschool and Kindergarten students.

Graphic organizers are great tools for students with learning disabilities and those requiring visuals because they appeal to different learning styles. They address the difficulties that these students have with organization, retention, and recall by providing a format that helps organize their thoughts and output. They help students to explain abstract ideas in a concrete way, identify relationships among facts and concepts, and store and recall information.

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I've used KWL charts in my preschool classroom, but am looking forward to changing my approach to include "Wonder" for the "W" component. It's a simple change that I think will make the inquiry more exciting. I also like the idea of using manipulatives to compare items in a make-shift diagram first and then recording the information on an actual Venn Diagram for students to see. I think graphic organizers are a great way to make learning fun, while building confidence in students. In addition to the graphic organizers described here, I'm looking forward to using the additional free printable organizers provided on the TeacherVision website with my Writing group, which is comprised of students in Grade 4 who need additional writing support. I'm interested to see how the organizers will help them during our writing practice and if the students share any particular preferences for specific organizers.
Artifacts:


- How to Teach Students with a Math Disability: Math Inclusion Strategies for the Regular Education Teacher, from suite101.com website: http://specialneedseducation.suite101.com/article.cfm/how_to_teach_students_with_a_math_disability

*Reflection statement provided for bolded artifact*
Math: Math in the Preschool Classroom

Math in the Preschool Classroom is a resource that was given to me recently after expressing an interest in improving and increasing lessons in math and science in my integrated preschool classroom. The book identifies five areas in math that are fundamental in giving preschool students a rich foundation in mathematics. It also identifies strategies for incorporating the five areas into the aspects that comprise the High/Scope approach, which include the daily routine, the learning environment, and the adult-child interaction.

I selected this book because I felt it provided a wide variety strategies and activities to develop a rich math program. The strategies are research based and engaging for all students. I particularly liked the way the authors outlined the strategies by each core area of math. The book serves as a good refresher, but also identifies many useful strategies that are new to me and can revitalize my approach in the classroom.

The book demonstrates that math in the early years is not just learned through rote drill and practice. Similar to brain-based strategies that aim to accomplish learning by stimulating all the senses and actively engaging students, the strategies in this book provide experiences that are hands-on, meaningful, and build on children’s natural interests. The strategies also appeal to multiple learning styles, which allow all students to be engaged and activate learning.

I plan to identify at least two new strategies within each of the five areas of math to implement in my lesson plans over the next three months. I think a slow and steady goal is more likely to be accomplished and will allow me to assess student reactions to the new strategies. I’m also thinking about creating a list of suggested strategies to enhance math skills through adult-child interaction so that all staff in the classroom can access and use the strategies in their daily interactions with the students. Based on the volume of strategies provided in the book, it should remain a useful resource for time to come.

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MEMORY

Artifacts:


- Making It Stick: Memorable Strategies to Enhance Learning, from LD online website: http://www.ldonline.org/article/5602

- Using Mnemonic Instruction to Teach Math, from the Access Center (Office of Special Education Programs) website: http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/mnemonics_math.asp

*Reflection statement provided for bolded artifact*
Memory: “Brain-Based Teaching Strategies for Improving Students’ Memory, Learning, and Test-Taking Success” *Childhood Education*

Prior to reading this journal article, I really didn’t know much about brain-based teaching strategies. I had heard the term before, but didn’t have a solid understanding of what they were and why they were considered effective. The article does a great job of explaining the relationship between neuroscience and classroom instruction by describing scientific areas of brain-based memory research and explaining methods for improving student learning.

I was interested in this article because it validated the use of the suggested brain-based teaching strategies by making a connection to science and research. Although it was a bit technical and some parts needed to be revisited, it provided strategies that are motivating and engaging to the learner. The strategies appear to be practical and can be used with all age groups.

The article describes a progression in memory skills that occurs in all learners and the challenges that teachers face as they help students build rote memory, working memory, relational memory, and long-term memory. Since students with learning disabilities and ADHD often have trouble in these areas, it reinforces the need to activate previously learned knowledge, help recognize patterns and make connections to new memories, and engage in repeated practice to learn new information. It also reinforces a multi-sensory approach to learning by recommending that students personalize information and build memories through a variety of activities that allow them to connect with the information through as many senses as possible. Finally, brain-based strategies reinforce the use of

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partner discussion and Think-Pair-Share, as well as graphic organizers, to help students connect with information and organize patterns and relationships for memory storage.

There is a lot of information provided in this article that is useful in the classroom. I will be thinking about how to use brain-based strategies when planning anticipatory sets to ensure that I provide students with an experience that will activate prior knowledge, but also provide an understanding to those who have not yet had those experiences. I will be mindful of engaging students in activities that allow them to problem solve and interact directly with materials, while engaging as many senses as possible. And I will be more mindful to include an element of surprise every now and then as a way to spark student attention and curiosity. I think this is the one that I forget about the most that can have a powerful impact on student learning.
READING

Artifacts:


*Reflection statement provided for bolded artifact*
**Reading:** Elkonin Boxes

Elkonin boxes are used as a reading strategy to help build phonemic awareness by segmenting words into sounds or syllables. I was interested in this strategy because it is straightforward to administer, simple for students to learn, and can be used in a variety of ways to target different skills. It can be used to identify specific sounds in words, identify letter-sound correspondence by writing the letters in the boxes, and to practice recognizing consonant diagraphs. Students can use tokens or chips to segment words, be given letters on paper squares to use as manipulatives, or be instructed to write the letters in the boxes for the sounds that they hear.

The strategy addresses a fundamental skill needed for reading by using a multi-sensory approach. It combines visual, auditory, and tactile learning styles to make the concept of phonemic segmenting more concrete for students who may have difficulty with abstract concepts. In addition to building reading skills, it can also be used to practice spelling and writing.

The strategy can be used with all types of groupings, from whole group instruction, to partner or individual practice. In my preschool classroom, I practice a similar approach to segmenting words by performing various movements to manipulate sounds in words. For example, my students practice clapping or stomping syllables in words to segment them. However, a few of my students are ready to be challenged and can benefit from this strategy, particularly a few students on the Autism Spectrum who have placed above Kindergarten level for reading readiness. I look forward to using the Elkonin boxes, starting with picture prompts, for students who are ready to begin the task of segmenting words into sounds. As I monitor their progress throughout the year I expect to introduce the letter manipulatives for those who show readiness and enjoy new challenges.

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SOCIAL

Artifacts:

- **Teaching Social Skills**, from Cooperative Learning Network website: [http://home.att.net/~clnetwork/socialsk.htm](http://home.att.net/~clnetwork/socialsk.htm)


*Reflection statement provided for bolded artifact*
Social: “Teaching Social Skills” by Laura Candler

There is a wealth of information available today on training students with special needs in social skills. Effective strategies are available through a host of sources online, in textbooks, and through the Positive Behavior Support in Schools movement that has been sweeping through school districts. I found this article by Laura Candler to be particularly interesting because it provides an overall framework for teaching social skills through four simple steps, while maintaining consistency and actively engaging students. Once the teacher and the students learn the approach, it can be used for any social skills that may be targeted.

The strategy describes four simple steps to teaching social skills and begins by involving the students in understanding why they are important, discussing problems they have personally encountered, and brainstorming a list of skills they would like to work on. It focuses on one skill each session and gave us the idea of creating a t-chart to allow students to work together to identify what the skill “looks like” and what it “sounds like.” This was difficult at first, but with assistance they were able to take control and gain confidence in completing this step. The final step of the strategy has been the most productive piece for the students. By giving them the opportunity to practice it within the current session, through fun and engaging games, the students have been able to practice the skill in a non-threatening environment and can get immediate feedback while doing so.

I initially chose this approach last year when I was in my second year of heading a social skills group for students in Grades 3-5. At the time, the program was in its second year, most of the students returned from the prior year, and we had not received formal training or materials to implement it. In searching for a new approach to change things up

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from the previous year, I came across this article and decided to integrate it into our program. The strategy has been a great compliment to our program because it considers student learning styles, is not overwhelming, and is consistent. Students know what is expected and became more confident in participating.

As a preschool teacher in an inclusion classroom, I look forward to using the T-Chart with my preschool students, in a simplified way. I think it could be useful as we teach character traits and even in reviewing classroom rules from time to time. Teachers can help the students come up with the responses that fit into the “looks like” and “sounds like” category and then model or role play responses to give students a better understanding of appropriate things to say or do. The skill would then be “practiced” in the natural environment throughout the daily routine and teachers could highlight or help correct students’ social skills in the moment as they occur naturally.
TECHNOLOGY

Artifacts:

- **PowerPoint Talking Books.** Directions by K. Parra on how to create talking books from SPED 5023 course taken in Summer 2009.


- Technology Strategies to Differentiate Instruction, PowerPoint presentation by Dr. Robert Isherwood.

*Reflection statement provided for bolded artifact*
**Technology:** Directions for making “PowerPoint Talking Books” by K. Parra

Talking books are a method of providing access to books for students with reading difficulties or physical challenges. There are many talking books available online or sold commercially that are used by teachers and parents, but I had never known about creating my own talking books until I took a technology course with Kim Parra this past summer. The course required students to follow the directions enclosed to create a simple talking book using samples provided by the professor. I chose this artifact because it was a great experience for me and something I would like to revisit in the future. The process was not only empowering for me as a teacher, but the directions are straightforward and the final product is a great addition to any classroom or home library.

Talking books provide reading support for all students, but are particularly useful for students with reading difficulties. Students with reading disorders often have trouble with fluency and phrasing and benefit from listening to reading being modeled and having the opportunity to read along with a model. They can also be embarrassed when reading in front of a group. The talking books provide an intervention that addresses the support that these students need while making it a fun resource for the entire class. Teachers also benefit from making their own books by allowing them to target specific readers/levels that are needed to help specific students in the class.

I’ve implemented the book that I created in class over the summer and my students really enjoy it. It’s a great way to connect technology and literacy and get students interested in reading. In my preschool classroom, I’m interested in creating additional books to challenge my more advanced students who need appropriate alternatives that will stimulate and engage them. I’m also looking forward to creating books for the students for whom I do home instruction through the district to help with their reading fluency.

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WRITING

Artifacts:


- Chapter 10: How to use journals to improve your students’ writing skills. *How to Turn Any Disruptive Child Into Your Best Student, Second Edition*. (2005). Daly, T.

- Six ways to encourage young writers, from greatschools website: http://www.greatschools.net/students/academic-skills/six-ways-to-encourage-young-writers.gs?content=88

*Reflection statement provided for bolded artifact*
Writing: POW and TREE writing strategies

The POW strategy is a three-step general planning strategy used for essay writing. The TREE strategy has been introduced within the framework of POW as an opinion writing strategy that includes prompts about basic elements of a persuasive essay. Both strategies were used in the study described in the article “Using Self-Regulated Strategy Development to Improve Expository Writing with Students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder” and have been found to be effective in delivering instruction through the Self-Regulated Strategy Development approach.

I was interested in both strategies after first seeing the TREE strategy implemented on the video we saw in class on elements of strategy instruction. When I came across it in this article and read more about it, I thought it was a great and simple strategy to try out. Furthermore, it’s supported in the research on self-regulation and strategy instruction, as demonstrated by the promising results from this study.

The strategies address the difficulties that struggling writers have with planning, mechanics and language, and self-regulation. The study specifically targeted the use of Self-Regulation Strategy Development with students with ADHD and found that the SRSD model significantly improved the written expression skills of students with ADHD and other conditions. Using the POW and TREE strategies helped students learn strategies for planning and revising and self-regulation, which eventually helped them to become independent writers.

I’m interested in using these strategies with my Writing group, which is comprised of students in Grade 4 who need additional writing support. Our time each session is limited to an hour, but I’m interested in using the approach suggested in the article for teaching the strategy to the students. If we initially dedicate our sessions to the four stages of instruction outlined in the article, and continue to practice during some of the remaining sessions that follow, it will give the students a new strategy to use in their writing and hopefully be useful to them in their classrooms.

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