

Ditri, Pat

From: Lishak, Noreen
Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2014 8:18 AM
To: Ditri, Pat
Cc: Damato, Jim
Subject: FW: Valasa_Writing Research Board Approval
Attachments: IRB Approval.rtf; Valasa_Formal ResearchRequest.docx; STACS Lesson Plans.docx; Parent Consent Form.docx; STACS Mnemonic Chart.docx; STACS Self-monitoringChart.docx; STACS self-statements.docx; STACS Graphic Organizer.docx

From: Lishak, Noreen
Sent: Friday, April 25, 2014 2:26 PM
To: Martin, Dr. Patrick
Subject: FW: Valasa_Writing Research Board Approval

Noreen Lishak, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Ph: (908)851-3020

-----Original Message-----

From: Lauren Valasa [<mailto:llv5000@psu.edu>]
Sent: Wednesday, April 16, 2014 10:16 PM
To: Lishak, Noreen
Subject: Valasa_Writing Research Board Approval

Hi Noreen,

Hope you are well! Thank you so much for your help and direction with regard to contacting the board of education about my research proposal. I have been granted IRB approval and Dr. Francis mentioned he will be contacting you tomorrow about next steps for board approval.

I wanted to send you some of the forms I sent Dr. Francis regarding the intervention (not sure if you would like to see these before Dr. Francis contacts you). Attached is my formal research request for the board, IRB approval, the parent permission form, my lesson plans, and lesson materials. I would be more than happy to share these with other resource room teachers if you would like!

As I mentioned in my first email, the purpose of the study is to evaluate the effects of Self-Regulated Strategy Development, a research-grounded literacy instruction methodology, for the STACS Strategy (Setting, Tension, rising Action, Climax, Solution), an innovative narrative writing strategy, on narrative essay-writing skills of adolescent students with mild disabilities.

I very much miss teaching at Burnet and would be so honored to be able to come back and share this evidence-based practice with the exceptional students and teachers at Burnet. Thank you again! Please let me know if there is anything else you need from me.

Kind regards,
Lauren

Lauren Valasa, M.S.

Doctoral Candidate in Special Education
Department of Educational Psychology, Counseling, and Special Education College of Education
The Pennsylvania State University

Lauren L. Valasa, M.S.
34 Millbrook Drive
Middletown, NJ 07748
April 1, 2014

Guy Francis, M.D.
Education Committee, Township of Union Board of Education
2369 Morris Ave
Union, NJ 07083

Dear Dr. Francis and Township of Union Board of Education,

My name is Lauren Valasa and I taught in the special education self-contained classroom at Burnet Middle School until June of 2012. I left to earn my PhD at The Pennsylvania State University on a full scholarship in Special Education research. Currently, I am researching narrative writing instructional strategies for adolescent students with high-incidence disabilities who are responsible for meeting the standards of the regular education curriculum.

I am writing to request the opportunity to conduct a research study at Burnet Middle School in May and June, 2014. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effects of Self-Regulated Strategy Development, a research-grounded literacy instruction methodology, for the *STACS Strategy (Setting, Tension, rising Action, Climax, Solution)*, an innovative narrative writing strategy, on narrative essay-writing skills of adolescent students with mild disabilities. Participation would involve 5, thirty-minute, evidence-based lessons for 6-8 struggling writers in a resource English classroom. Student essays would be assessed pre- and post-instruction. As the principal investigator, I would be responsible for providing all instruction.

There is no risk involved for study participants. Benefits include possible improved narrative writing skills and extra, one-on-one instruction from a certified special education teacher and researcher. All student work and district information will be anonymous. Student essays will be numbered, rather than organized by name, and stored in a locked file cabinet. When we publish any results from this study, we will do so in a way that does not identify the district or student. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and will require parental consent.

Attached you will find a letter certifying IRB approval from the Office of Research Protections at The Pennsylvania State University, the parent consent form, lesson plans, and lesson materials. If you have any questions about this study, please contact me by phone (732-241-5803) or email (LLV5000@psu.edu).

Sincerely yours,

Lauren L. Valasa



Date: March 28, 2014

From: The Office for Research Protections - FWA#: FWA00001534
Joyel D. Moeller, Compliance Coordinator

To: Lauren L. Valasa

Re: Determination of Exemption

IRB Protocol ID: 45014

Follow-up Date: March 27, 2019

Title of Protocol: Evaluating Effects of SRSD Instruction on Narrative Writing Skills of Students with Disabilities in Secondary Settings

The Office for Research Protections (ORP) has received and reviewed the above referenced eSubmission application. It has been determined that your research is exempt from IRB initial and ongoing review, as currently described in the application. You may begin your research. The category within the federal regulations under which your research is exempt is:

45 CFR 46.101(b)(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

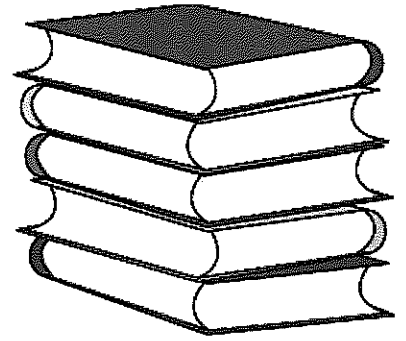
Given that the IRB is not involved in the initial and ongoing review of this research, it is the investigator's responsibility to review IRB Policy III "Exempt Review Process and Determination" which outlines:

- What it means to be exempt and how determinations are made
- What changes to the research protocol are and are not required to be reported to the ORP
- Ongoing actions post-exemption determination including addressing problems and complaints, reporting closed research to the ORP and research audits
- What occurs at the time of follow-up

Please do not hesitate to contact the Office for Research Protections (ORP) if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued efforts in protecting human participants in research.

This correspondence should be maintained with your research records.

STACS Lesson 1



Purpose: Develop Background Knowledge, Discuss STACS

Materials: STACS mnemonic chart, pre-test narrative (will be written by student in response to a randomly selected writing prompt from the list uploaded in the IRB submission), STACS graphic organizer, STACS self-monitoring chart

Set the Context for Learning

Goal

Tell students you will be working with them to learn a new strategy to help them write better narratives. Explain to students strong narrative essays have many parts and often follow a general sequence (or order). Explain that a strategy can help remember that order, making the writing process easier. This way, they can spend more time thinking of creative events for their story and less time worrying about how to write an essay.

Begin Discrimination/Generalization

Discuss and define the narrative genre. Provide a few example narrative writing prompts students may have seen across contents. Give several examples of persuasive, expository, and narrative prompts and practice identifying narrative prompts with students. This practice will later help students determine when it is appropriate to apply the strategy and avoid over-generalization of strategy application.

Establish Importance

Ask students why it is important to learn strategies (If they cannot respond, provide examples of strategies used in sports, video games, math, etc.). Ask students why it is important to learn strategies for narrative writing (i.e. help write better essays in all classes, decrease stress on NJASK, express your thoughts/ideas with ease).

Develop the Strategy and Self-Regulation

STEP 1: Introduce STACS

Show the students the STACS mnemonic chart. Say, "Let's look at the structure and sequence of a good narrative essay." Explain to students that a good story/narrative needs to begin with a solid foundation (point to the flat part of the story plot line on the graphic organizer). Provide students with an analogy of stacking books- you cannot stack books on one, small book. You need a nice, strong book as your supporting foundation. Likewise, you cannot begin events in a narrative unless you have a setting.

The **Setting** tells when and where the narrative takes place. You should also begin by introducing the main characters.

Next (follow finger along the STACS mnemonic chart), a good narrative tells what happens to begin the plot or conflict in the narrative. This is the **Tension**.

Tell students, "Now you have a solid foundation and can begin stacking! The events *leading up* to the most exciting part of your narrative is your rising **Action**." Follow with your finger up the STACS line as you explain rising **Action**.

Explain that the highest, most exciting point of your stacking is the top book! Say, "Likewise, the highest, most exciting point of your narrative is the **Climax**. This is when you write about the most exciting event in your story. The rising Action has lead you to this event!"

Say, "Last you see the see the **Solution**. The solution explains how the exciting part ends."

STEP 2: Look at current writing behavior

1. Hand student pre-test narrative essay
2. Tell students to read their response and see which parts they have. Tell them to write their parts in the graphic organizer.
3. Note parts missing.
4. Discuss that even though some parts are present, these parts can be improved. **Do not make any additional notes for improvement today.**

STEP 3: Graph current level of performance and set goals

1. Give each student a self-monitoring chart. Have the student fill in the graph for the number of parts in their pre-instruction narrative essay. Be positive by letting students know they are just learning the narrative strategy and will improve performance.

2. Explain the goal, to write better narrative essays with all of the STACS parts.

Wrap-Up

Tell students, "Next time you will practice the parts of STACS from memory!"

STACS Lesson 2

Purpose: The teacher models the process of writing an essay using the STACS graphic organizer.

Materials: STACS mnemonic chart, STACS graphic organizer, STACS self-monitoring chart, STACS self-statements sheet

Set the Context for Learning

On a scratch piece of paper, have student draw a story plot line and write down as many strategy parts as he/she can remember. Reveal how many parts the student remembered and point out which parts were missing. Practice this until the student can say all the parts.

Review Lesson 1 discussion of narrative genre and when to apply the STACS writing strategy.

Develop the strategy and self-regulation

STEP 1: Model the Strategy

The teacher will model writing an essay using the graphic organizer.

STEP 2: Graph Essay Parts

Ask the student, "Does this essay have all of the parts of a strong narrative essay?" Together, the student and teacher will graph the parts of the essay on the STACS self-monitoring chart, discussing each part.

STEP 3: Develop Students' Self-Statements

Ask the students if they can remember 1) the things the teacher said to get started, 2) the things said while working, and 3) the things said when finished. Give the student a self-statements sheet. Ask the student to write down some things he can say to himself while working.

Wrap-Up

Remind student that the teacher will ask about the STACS parts at the beginning of the next lesson.

STACS Lesson 3

Purpose: The teacher and student practice writing a narrative essay collaboratively.

Materials: STACS mnemonic chart, STACS graphic organizer, STACS self-monitoring chart, STACS self-statements sheet, pre-test narrative

Set the Context for Learning

On a scratch piece of paper, have student draw a story plot line and write down as many strategy parts as he/she can remember. Reveal how many parts the student remembered and point out which parts were missing. Practice this until the student can say all the parts.

Review Lesson 1 discussion of narrative genre and when to apply the STACS writing strategy.

Develop the Strategy and Self-Regulation

STEP 1: Supported Practice

Using the student's pre-test narrative, the teacher and student will write all of the parts present in the appropriate sections of the graphic organizer. The teacher and student will develop ideas to fill in missing parts of the graphic organizer (i.e. if the essay is missing a solution, the teacher and student will develop a solution). Next, the student will re-write the essay using the graphic organizer and self-statements sheet.

STEP 2: Graph Essay Parts

Students will graph number of essay parts on the self-monitoring hart.

Wrap-Up

Remind student that the teacher will ask about the STACS parts at the beginning of the next lesson.

STACS Lesson 4

Purpose: The teacher provides guided practice while the student writes an essay.

Materials: graphic organizer, mnemonic chart, self-statements sheet

Set the Context for Learning

On a scratch piece of paper, have student draw a story plot line and write down as many strategy parts as he/she can remember. Reveal how many parts the student remembered and point out which parts were missing. Practice this until the student can say all the parts.

Review Lesson 1 discussion of narrative genre and when to apply the STACS writing strategy.

Develop the Strategy and Self-Regulation

STEP 1: Guided practice

The student will write an essay in response to a randomly selected writing prompt (attached in IRB under narrative writing prompts in data collection) using the graphic organizer, mnemonic chart, and self-statements sheet. The teacher will only provide support if the student misses a critical part of a narrative essay.

STEP 2: Graph Essay Parts

Students will graph number of essay parts on the self-monitoring hart.

Wrap-Up

Remind student that the teacher will ask about the STACS parts at the beginning of the next lesson.

STACS Lesson 5

Purpose: The student practices writing an essay independently.

Set the Context for Learning

On a scratch piece of paper, have student draw a story plot line and write down as many strategy parts as he/she can remember. Reveal how many parts the student remembered and point out which parts were missing. Practice this until the student can say all the parts.

Develop the Strategy and Self-Regulation

Practice

The students will independently practice responding to the post-assessment writing prompt (attached in IRB under narrative writing prompts in data collection). Students will not use the graphic organizer or mnemonic chart. The prompt will be randomly selected from the list of writing prompts.

Graph Essay Parts

Students will graph number of essay parts on the self-monitoring hart.

Wrap-Up

Discuss progress made and transfer strategies (when/where the STACS strategy might be useful in the future).

Lauren L. Valasa, M.S.
34 Millbrook Drive
Middletown, NJ 07748
April 1, 2014

Guy Francis, M.D.
Education Committee, Township of Union Board of Education
2369 Morris Ave
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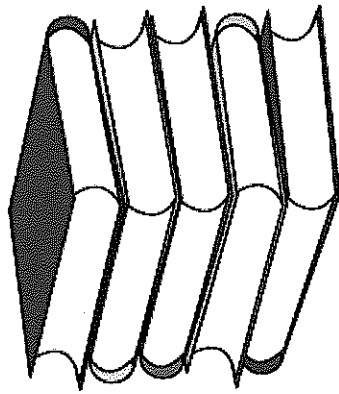
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Sincerely yours,

Lauren L. Valasa

STACS Mnemonic Chart



Climax

- Write about the *most exciting*, highest point in the narrative?

Solution

- How is the problem *solved*?
- How does the narrative *end*?

Rising Action

- Describe the events *leading up* to the most exciting part of the narrative.

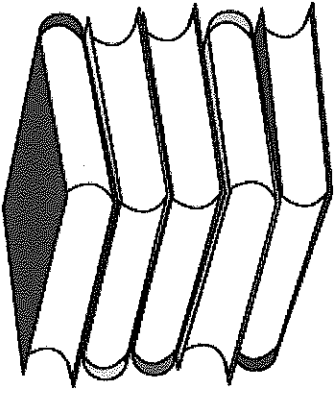
Setting

- *Where/when* does the narrative take place?
- Introduce the *main* characters.

Tension

- What happens to *begin* the plot or *conflict* in the narrative?

STACS Graphic Organizer



Main Idea

Climax

Solution

Rising Action

1. _____

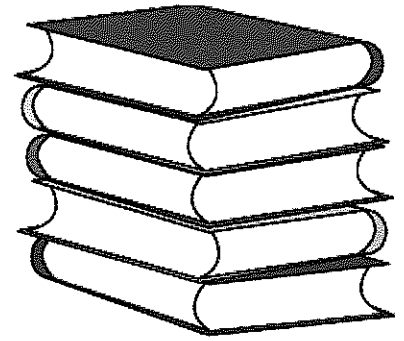
2. _____

Setting

Tension

Characters

STACS Lesson 1



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4. Discuss that even though some parts are present, these parts can be improved. **Do not make any additional notes for improvement today.**

STEP 3: Graph current level of performance and set goals

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2. Explain the goal, to write better narrative essays with all of the STACS parts.

Wrap-Up

Tell students, "Next time you will practice the parts of STACS from memory!"

STACS Lesson 2

Purpose: The teacher models the process of writing an essay using the STACS graphic organizer.

Materials: STACS mnemonic chart, STACS graphic organizer, STACS self-monitoring chart, STACS self-statements sheet

Set the Context for Learning

On a scratch piece of paper, have student draw a story plot line and write down as many strategy parts as he/she can remember. Reveal how many parts the student remembered and point out which parts were missing. Practice this until the student can say all the parts.

Review Lesson 1 discussion of narrative genre and when to apply the STACS writing strategy.

Develop the strategy and self-regulation

STEP 1: Model the Strategy

The teacher will model writing an essay using the graphic organizer.

STEP 2: Graph Essay Parts

Ask the student, "Does this essay have all of the parts of a strong narrative essay?" Together, the student and teacher will graph the parts of the essay on the STACS self-monitoring chart, discussing each part.

STEP 3: Develop Students' Self-Statements

Ask the students if they can remember 1) the things the teacher said to get started, 2) the things said while working, and 3) the things said when finished. Give the student a self-statements sheet. Ask the student to write down some things he can say to himself while working.

Wrap-Up

Remind student that the teacher will ask about the STACS parts at the beginning of the next lesson.

STACS Lesson 3

Purpose: The teacher and student practice writing a narrative essay collaboratively.

Materials: STACS mnemonic chart, STACS graphic organizer, STACS self-monitoring chart, STACS self-statements sheet, pre-test narrative

Set the Context for Learning

On a scratch piece of paper, have student draw a story plot line and write down as many strategy parts as he/she can remember. Reveal how many parts the student remembered and point out which parts were missing. Practice this until the student can say all the parts.

Review Lesson 1 discussion of narrative genre and when to apply the STACS writing strategy.

Develop the Strategy and Self-Regulation

STEP 1: Supported Practice

Using the student's pre-test narrative, the teacher and student will write all of the parts present in the appropriate sections of the graphic organizer. The teacher and student will develop ideas to fill in missing parts of the graphic organizer (i.e. if the essay is missing a solution, the teacher and student will develop a solution). Next, the student will re-write the essay using the graphic organizer and self-statements sheet.

STEP 2: Graph Essay Parts

Students will graph number of essay parts on the self-monitoring hart.

Wrap-Up

Remind student that the teacher will ask about the STACS parts at the beginning of the next lesson.

STACS Lesson 4

Purpose: The teacher provides guided practice while the student writes an essay.

Materials: graphic organizer, mnemonic chart, self-statements sheet

Set the Context for Learning

On a scratch piece of paper, have student draw a story plot line and write down as many strategy parts as he/she can remember. Reveal how many parts the student remembered and point out which parts were missing. Practice this until the student can say all the parts.

Review Lesson 1 discussion of narrative genre and when to apply the STACS writing strategy.

Develop the Strategy and Self-Regulation

STEP 1: Guided practice

The student will write an essay in response to a randomly selected writing prompt (attached in IRB under narrative writing prompts in data collection) using the graphic organizer, mnemonic chart, and self-statements sheet. The teacher will only provide support if the student misses a critical part of a narrative essay.

STEP 2: Graph Essay Parts

Students will graph number of essay parts on the self-monitoring hart.

Wrap-Up

Remind student that the teacher will ask about the STACS parts at the beginning of the next lesson.

STACS Lesson 5

Purpose: The student practices writing an essay independently.

Set the Context for Learning

On a scratch piece of paper, have student draw a story plot line and write down as many strategy parts as he/she can remember. Reveal how many parts the student remembered and point out which parts were missing. Practice this until the student can say all the parts.

Develop the Strategy and Self-Regulation

Practice

The students will independently practice responding to the post-assessment writing prompt (attached in IRB under narrative writing prompts in data collection). Students will not use the graphic organizer or mnemonic chart. The prompt will be randomly selected from the list of writing prompts.

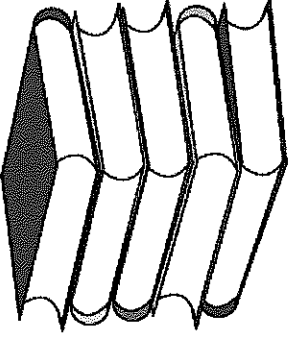
Graph Essay Parts

Students will graph number of essay parts on the self-monitoring hart.

Wrap-Up

Discuss progress made and transfer strategies (when/where the STACS strategy might be useful in the future).

STACS Self-Monitoring Chart



| Number of STACS Elements | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
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Date