

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING BASED ON AUTISM RESEARCH (STAR) PROGRAM

CHARACTERISTICS OVERVIEW CHART

Verbal Skills	Grade Levels	Cognitive Level	Areas Addressed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nonverbal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Classic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Pre)Academic/Cognitive/Academic
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mixed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Elementary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adaptive Behavior/Daily Living
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle/High	Functioning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Behavior
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication/Speech
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Emotional

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

According to Arick (personal communication, 2008) the Strategies for Teaching Based on Autism Research (STAR) Program has been in development for over 30 years. It combines elements of classroom-based best practices in autism (AU).

DESCRIPTION

The STAR program teaches children with AU the critical skills identified by the National Research Council (2001). Specifically, the applied behavior analysis (ABA) instructional methods of discrete trial training (DTT), pivotal response training (PRT), and functional routines form the instructional base of the program (Arick, Loos, Falco, & Krug, 2005).

The STAR program includes:

- detailed lesson plans,
- teaching materials,
- data systems, and
- a curriculum-based assessment.

The STAR program addresses the following six curricular areas:

- receptive language
- expressive language
- spontaneous language
- functional routines
- academics
- play and social skills

The program is designed for classroom intervention. The modifications to typical DTT and PRT allow the teacher to implement short, concise, intense sessions that establish information and then generalize that information into the typical day. The program was developed in the public school system for the public school system.

SUMMARY

Research has been conducted on the elements of the STAR program (see Discrete Trial Training, Pivotal Response Training, and Rules and Routines). In addition, studies have investigated the combined elements of the program.

RESEARCH TABLE

Number of Studies	Ages (year)	Sample Size	Area(s) Addressed	Outcome
2	2-6	114	Expressive and receptive language, following routines, preacademics, play, social skills, behavior	+

STUDIES CITED IN RESEARCH TABLE

1. Young, H. (2006). *An analysis of the variables that affect the outcomes of children with autism spectrum disorders*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Portland State University, OR. This study of 47 preschool children (ages 2 to 4) found significant improvements in expressive and receptive language, social interactions, behavior, and preacademic skills after exposure to the STAR Program for 18 months.
2. Arick, J. R., Young, H. E., Falco, R. A., Loos, L. M., Krug, D. A., Gense, M. H., & Johnson, S. B. (2003). *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 18, 74-86. Sixty-seven students with autism, between the ages of 2 and 6 years, participated in a study to evaluate the STAR program. Results showed that the majority of the children made significant progress in the areas of social interaction, expressive speech, and use of language concepts. In addition, they displayed significant decreases in behaviors associated with autism.

REFERENCES

- Arick, J., Loos, L., Falco, R., & Krug, D. (2005). *The STAR program: Strategies for teaching based on autism research*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Arick, J. R., Young, H. E., Falco, R. A., Loos, L. M., Krug, D. A., Gense, M. H., & Johnson, S. B. (2003). *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 18, 74-86.
- National Research Council. (2001). *Educating children with autism*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, Committee on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education.
- Young, H. (2006). *An analysis of the variables that affect the outcomes of children with autism spectrum disorders*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Portland State University, OR.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- Regional Program Autism Training Site Project:
http://www.rpats.ed.pdx.edu/pdf/RPATS_2007_Presentation.pdf
This document provides information about a collaborative effort for establishing regional training opportunities.
- STAR Autism Program: <http://www.starautismprogram.com/>
The home of the Strategies for Teaching Based on Autism Research (STAR) program, this site offers brief information about each level of the program, ordering information, and conference information.

GENERAL RESOURCES

- Autism Internet Modules (AIM) www.autisminternetmodules.org. The Autism Internet Modules were developed with one aim in mind: to make comprehensive, up-to-date, and usable information on autism accessible and applicable to educators, other professionals, and families who support individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Written by experts from across the U.S., all online modules are free, and are designed to promote understanding of, respect for, and equality of persons with ASD.
- The Autism Web Course: http://cdd.unm.edu/swan/autism_course/about/index.htm. This web course was developed out of materials from the Interactive Collaborative Autism Network (ICAN). The Autism Programs at the University of New Mexico has updated and added information to this web course.
 - Characteristics
 - Assessment
 - Academic Interventions
 - Behavioral Interventions
 - Communication Interventions
 - Environmental Interventions
 - Social Interventions
 - Family Support Suggestions
- Indiana Resource Center for Autism (IRCA) <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/irca/fmain1.html>. The Indiana Resource Center for Autism staff's efforts are focused on providing communities, organizations, agencies, and families with the knowledge and skills to support children and adults in typical early intervention, school, community, work, and home settings.
 - IRCA Articles: <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pageId=273>
- Texas Statewide Leadership for Autism www.txautism.net. The Texas Statewide Leadership for Autism in conjunction with the network of Texas Education Service center with a grant from the Texas Education Agency has developed a series of free online courses in autism. Please check the training page, www.txautism.net/training.html, for update lists of courses, course numbers and registration information. Current courses include the following:
 - Asperger Syndrome 101
 - Augmentative and Alternative Communication and the Autism Spectrum
 - Autism for the General Education Teacher
 - Autism 101: Top Ten Pieces to the Puzzle
 - Classroom Organization: The Power of Structure for Individuals with ASD
 - Communication: The Power of Communication for Individuals with ASD
 - Futures Planning for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Navigating the Social Maze: Supports and Interventions for Individuals with ASD
 - Solving the Behavior Puzzle: Making Connections for Individuals with ASD