

STAR

A Number Writing Strategy

Boom, S.E., & Fine, E. (1995, Winter). Star - A number writing strategy. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 42-45.

A strategy used to assist students in recalling, reciting, and writing numerals.

Step 1: Pretest and Obtain a Commitment to Learn the Strategy

- Observation or formal assessment - the Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development (Brigance, 1978).
- After the child has written 0-9, the teacher, showing a chart of correctly formed numerals, brings the differences to the child's attention.
- Show numbers as prices to explain how unacceptable it is to make them incorrectly.
- The student can make a commitment to learning a strategy for writing numbers.

Step 2: Describe the Strategy

- Formation of numerals is taught first using multisensory experiences.
- The teacher demonstrates the formation of a selected numeral while reciting its associated saying.
- The child repeats the saying while forming the numeral:
 1. In the air with large motor movements
 2. Using sand, clay, sandpaper, crayon on paper held over a screen, and a marker
 3. Finally, pencil and paper
- Teach the STAR strategy for when the student is unable to recall the correct formation.

S = Stop. Stop and ask myself what I am expected to do (for example, write the number that the teacher is saying).

T = Think. Think of using a *saying* to help in forming the number.

A = Ask. Ask myself which *saying* should be used for this number.

R = Recite. Recite the *saying* while I write the number.

- The teacher should point out various times the STAR strategy can be used, and demonstrate each step.
- A *STAR Strategy Card* can be made with the steps of the strategy on one side and textured numerals with the saying on the other side. If the child is unable to read, a simple drawing of each step can be used instead of writing the words.

Step 3: Model the Strategy

- Demonstrate how the strategy is used, i.e.

*I have to write a seven. I get mad when I write it backwards. I want to do it right so my mom will be proud of me. I'm going to use my new STAR strategy. The first thing, I have to do is **Stop** and ask myself what I have to do. O.K., I have to write a good seven on this line. Now I have to **Think**. Let's see, to remember which way the seven goes, I can use one of the Sayings. Now I have to **Ask** myself which Saying to use. Which one is it? I know, seven is the one with the man who made a line at the top. Now I have to **Recite** the saying while I do it. Here's my pencil. The man made a line across the top, and then he slid down the hill to the left. That's a good seven. I know it's facing the right way. I'll check it with the card to make sure.*

The teacher should model other numerals, this time stopping after the varying STAR steps to ask the children, "What should I tell myself to do next?" -thus giving the children practice in self-verbalization.

Step 4: Memorization of the Strategy

- Through verbal rehearsal, students can memorize the sayings and the STAR strategy. The STAR Strategy Card can be used as a cue during rehearsal.

Step 5: Practice with Controlled Materials

- Practice one number at a time: dictate, simple math, or answer a question
- The teacher should provide feedback on the elements of the strategy that are being done correctly and corrective feedback to improve performance.

Step 6: Practice with Grade-Appropriate Tasks

- The child should apply the strategy to classroom materials.
- Frequent opportunities for practice are needed:
 - writing multi-digit numbers, numbering pages or lines, completing math problems, writing the date, or pretending to operate a store

Step 7: Administration of a Posttest

- Require the child to write the numerals and compare the results with the pretest.
- Show the child the results and explain that they need to remember and use the strategy whenever they need to write a number.

Step 8: Generalization

- Monitor the use of the strategy in other situations
- Children can report when they have use the strategy outside the classroom
- Review the steps periodically to encourage generalization

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Self-instructions for forming numerals

To make 0: The woman went around in a circle until she got home.

To make 1: The man went straight down, like a stick.

To make 2: The woman went right and around, slid down the hill to the left, then made a line across the ground.

To make 3: The man went right and around, then around again.

To make 4: The woman went down the street, turned to the right, then back to the top for a straight ride down.

To make 5: The man went down the street, around the corner, and his hat blew off.

To make 6: The woman made a curve and then a circle at the bottom.

To make 7: The man made a line across the top, then slid down the hill to the left.

To make 8: The woman made a half circle to the left, another to the right, and then she found her way back up to the top again.

To make 9: The man made a small circle and then a straight line down.
