

# Makes Sense Strategies Toolbox Professional Development

## Instructions for Special Educators

Many Alabama special educators support instruction in a wide variety of subjects as well as work with students from a range of exceptionalities (e.g., learning disabilities, behavior disorders, developmental disabilities, etc.). The Makes Sense Strategies Toolbox provides an extensive array of resources that you can use when supporting your students as well as their general education teachers. Follow the steps below to complete the on-line Makes Sense Strategies Professional Development.

**Step 1:** Determine the subject-area (science, social studies, reading, writing, math, etc.) as well as approximate grade-equivalent developmental levels of students with exceptionalities for whom you are primarily responsible.

**Step 2:** There are various strands of professional development videos that address how to apply the Makes Sense Strategies resources to different grade levels and subject areas. Select the strand that **best matches** the grade level and subject-area for which you are primarily responsible for supporting instruction.

Makes Sense Strategies Professional Development (teachers) Strands

Grades K-3 Language Arts

Grades 4-5 Language Arts

Grades 6-8 Language Arts

Grades 9-12 English/Language Arts

Grades 4-5 Social Studies

Grades 6-8 Social Studies

Grades 9-12 History/Social Studies

Grades 6-8 Science

Grades 9-12 Science

Grades 6-12 Math

**Step 3:** View all of the *Makes Sense Strategies* professional development videos associated with the specific strand you selected and then complete the MSS Professional Development Teacher-assessment.

**NOTE: The most important guideline for selecting one of the MSS Professional Development strands is to select the one you think will be most helpful to most of your students.**

**Examples....**

If you are a middle school special education teacher, and your primary teaching responsibilities are associated with co-teaching science, then you should select the **Grades 6-8 Science** strand of MSS Professional Development.

If most of your students are at the emerging literacy level and thus most of your teaching responsibilities center around supporting emerging literacy language arts instruction (e.g., very basic reading comprehension; how to write simple paragraphs), then you should select **Grades K-3 Language Arts** strand of MSS Professional Development.

If you don't have a "primary" academic area for which you support but rather spend most of your time consulting with general education teachers in all subject areas to provide them with ways to more effectively address the needs of your students, then select the strand that coincides with the academic area where the general education teachers *seem to need the most support*. As a hypothetical example, if most of your students with exceptionalities are struggling to pass their English courses, then you should select the **Grades 9-12 English/Language Arts** strand of MSS Professional Development. If passing Algebra I is the "hot spot", then you should select **Grades 6-12 Math** MSS Professional Development.

**SPECIALISTS**

If you are a **Transition Specialist** working in a high school, you should select the **Counselors** MSS Professional Development strand; there are numerous MSS resources specifically designed for teaching critical transition skills such as self-assessment, goal setting, and self-advocacy that are addressed in this strand.

If you are a **Behavior Specialist** who primarily deals with developing behavior interventions and helping teachers implement them, then you should select the **Counselors** MSS Professional Development strand; there are numerous MSS resources specifically designed for teaching students self-control, social skills, goal-setting, etc. as well as tools to use when working with teachers to help them analyze behavior and develop intervention plans.

If you are a **Speech and Language Pathologist** whose responsibilities include language therapy and/or helping elementary teachers provide a more language-rich environment as well as teach critical language processing skills, then you should select either the **Grades K-3 Language Arts** or the **Grades 4-5 Language Arts** strand of MSS Professional

Development. Both of these strands address numerous tools you can use when either providing individual or small group language therapy or when supporting general education teachers.