

Executive Functioning

Special Education Workshop - Grades 6-12 Parents
October 17th, 2019

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What is Executive Functioning?

“ Executive Function is a term used by neurologists to describe the brain processes that drive our ability to :

Focus, solve problems, organize ourselves, remember information, learn from mistakes, and manage impulses, all of which help us to learn efficiently and develop important social skills.” (Blair, 2002)

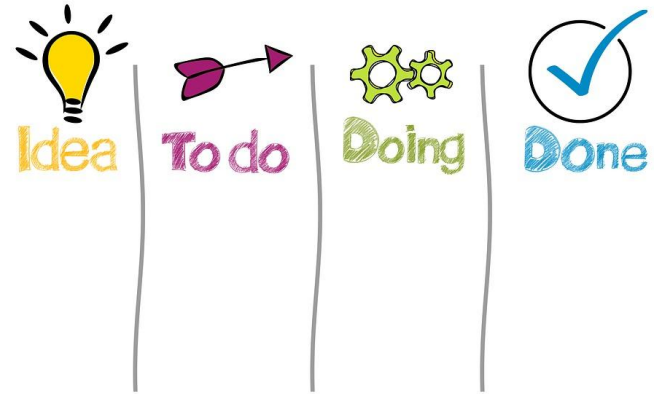




https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efCq_vHUMqs

3 Key Areas of Executive Functions

1. Working Memory



2. Flexibility in Thinking

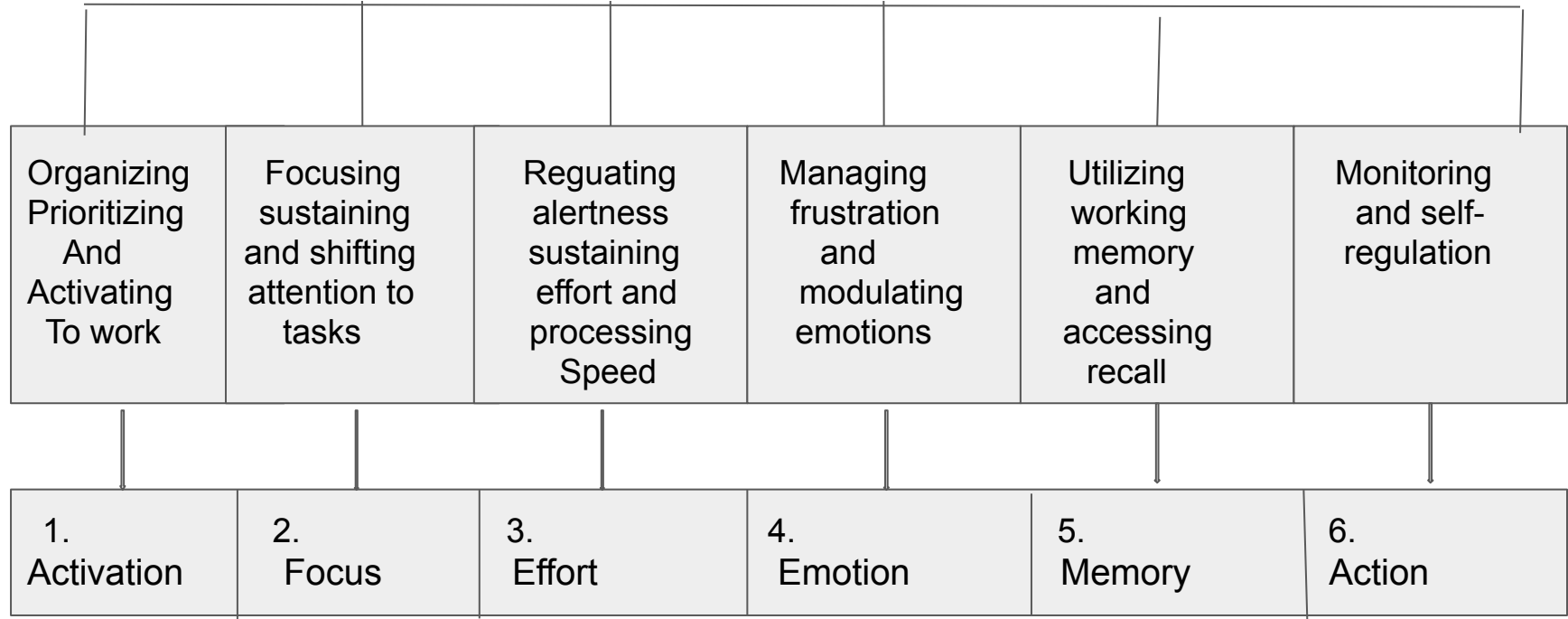
3. Emotional Self-Control

Activity: Say out loud the colors you SEE



RED BLUE PURPLE BLACK
GREEN YELLOW ORANGE RED
BLUE PURPLE BLACK GREEN
YELLOW ORANGE RED BLUE
PURPLE BLACK GREEN YELLOW

Executive Functions Work Together in Various Combinations



Activity: Listen Closely



Executive Skills

Task Initiation: to take action or to get started

Planning and Prioritizing: to decide on a goal and plan to meet it

Organization: to keep track of things mentally and physically

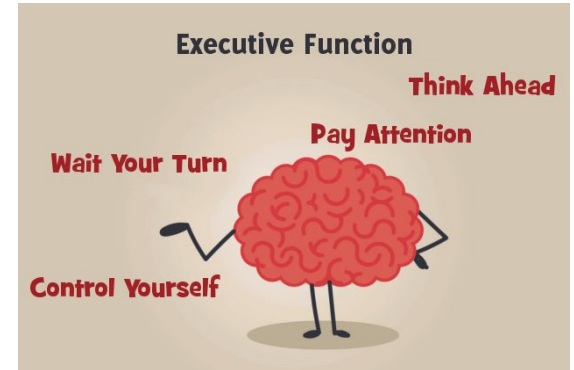
Flexible Thinking: to adjust to the unexpected

Working Memory: to keep key information in mind

Self-Monitoring: to evaluate how you are doing

Impulse Control: to think before acting

Emotional Control: to keep your feelings in check



Organization/Time Management/Goal Setting

Strong organizational skills lead to **efficient, effective** and **independent** completion of tasks

- Prioritizing
- Planning
- Routines
- Checklists - Checklists - Checklists



Flexibility/Shifting

Adapting to the world around you as it changes

- New rules for new tasks
- Transitions
- Problem-solving
- Feedback Loop



Self Regulation/Inhibition/Motivation



| Skill | Supports |
|---------------------|--|
| Attention and Focus | Chunking, Timers, Mindfulness |
| Impulse Control | Stop and Think, Mindfulness, Inhibition |
| Self-Monitoring | Tracking progress, steps toward goals |
| Initiation | Cues/prompts, Graphic organizers, checklists |
| Accountability | Celebrate success, Correct mistakes |
| Self-Awareness | Learning style, Study Habits, Coping Skills |

Strategies

Shifting: supply student with a prompt.

Inhibiting: Student would benefit from a place to work that does not have distractions. Thinking about strategies that work vs. strategies that are easy.

Updating: think about the methods a student thinks about what they know about a topic (list information, sheet for student to fill out before during and after learning to reflect on the process).



Thinking About Thinking

Metacognitive skills can be taught so learners self reflect by asking questions.

- Are my materials at home and school organized?
- How well have I been managing my time?
- What do I want to achieve and what do I need to get there?
- How well am I able to move from task to task?
- How am I controlling my frustrations?
- Do I wait my turn before jumping into a conversation?
- What has worked for me when I try to remember things?
- What can I change to improve my study habits?
- What tasks do I feel confident completing independently? What do I need help with?



Growth Mindset

Carol Dwek



“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.” – B.B. King



Thank you for coming!



Final Thoughts or Questions?

