

Course Title:	Executive Functioning
Grade(s):	Grades 9-12

Course Description
This course is designed for students who qualify to receive special education, attend general education classes, and require additional support in regulating their emotions and behaviors that interfere with school success. Direct instruction and support in the areas of organization and long term planning are also a focus. A plan of strategies for self-advocacy, self-monitoring and study skills will be developed on an individualized basis with the student. Targeted problem solving and regulation strategies and modeling will be provided. The class will also focus on time management, test taking, classroom learning strategies, and transition skills. All students in EF Skills class will explore transition goals to prepare for life beyond high school. Special Education teachers, school counselors, and related service faculty provide students and parents with vocational assessments, explore transitional opportunities, and access community resources.
Approved Curricular Materials/Textbook(s)
Sirotowitz, Sandi, Leslie Davis, and Harvey C. Parker. <i>Study Strategies Plus: Building Your Study Skills and Executive Functioning for School Success</i> Wilkins, Sheri, and Carol Burmeister. <i>FLIPP the Switch: Strengthen Executive Function Skills</i>

Unit Title	Unit Description (Include Unit Objectives)	Unit Pacing
Unit 1: IDEA & Self Advocacy Goal Setting	In this unit, students explore the purpose and protections of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to better understand their rights as learners. They learn what an IEP is, how it supports their success, and how they can take an active role as members of their educational team. Students also practice identifying personal strengths and needs and use this understanding to set meaningful academic and personal goals.	3 weeks September

	Students develop a clear understanding of their legal rights and educational supports, and they begin practicing self-advocacy by learning how to express their needs in appropriate and effective ways. They learn to set realistic short- and long-term goals, create action steps, and monitor their progress with increased ownership of their learning.	
Unit 2: Organization	This unit focuses on building organizational systems that make schoolwork and daily responsibilities more manageable. Students explore methods for keeping track of materials, assignments, digital files, and deadlines across their classes. Students understand how organizational systems reduce stress, increase independence, and lead to more consistent academic performance. They practice using planners, folders, digital tools, and routines, and they reflect on which strategies work best for their learning style and needs.	3 weeks September - October
Unit 3: Working Memory	Students learn about working memory (how the brain temporarily stores and uses information) and how it affects everyday tasks such as following directions, solving problems, and completing multi-step assignments. Students explore strategies to strengthen their working memory, such as chunking information, using visual aids, creating repetition routines, and using tools that support recall. They apply these strategies to academic tasks to improve their ability to hold and manipulate information over time.	2 weeks October
Unit 4: Time Management	This unit teaches students how to better understand time, estimate how long tasks will take, and manage deadlines in a structured way. Students learn to break larger tasks into smaller steps, create schedules that balance schoolwork with personal responsibilities, and use tools such as timers, calendars, and prioritization techniques. They begin applying these strategies to their school assignments in ways that promote independence and reduce procrastination.	3 weeks October - November
Unit 5: Planning & Prioritizing	Students practice evaluating tasks, determining importance and urgency, and developing plans that help them stay on track academically and personally.	3 weeks November

	Students learn how to create clear steps for complex assignments, select appropriate starting points, and adjust their plans when obstacles arise. They practice making decisions about what to work on first and use reflective strategies to determine whether their choices helped them succeed.	
Unit 6: Habit Formation	This unit helps students understand how habits are formed and how small daily behaviors create long-term change. Students learn to identify unhelpful habits and replace them with positive routines by using cues, rewards, and repetition. They create personal habit-building plans that support their academic and organizational goals, and they monitor their new habits over time to track growth.	2 weeks December
Unit 7: Attention & Focus	Students explore the factors that affect attention, including environment, motivation, distractions, and internal thought patterns. They learn practical strategies for increasing focus during schoolwork and daily activities. Students apply focus-enhancing techniques such as active breaks, structured work periods, environmental modifications, and mindfulness. They learn to recognize when their attention is drifting and practice strategies for returning to tasks with more efficiency and purpose.	3 weeks December - January
Unit 8: Self-Assessment	This unit helps students build self-awareness by assessing their own skills, habits, and learning behaviors. Students practice reflecting on their progress, identifying strengths, and determining areas for improvement. They learn how to use self-assessment tools to evaluate their executive functioning strategies and make adjustments that support continued growth and independence.	2 weeks Midterm - End of January
Unit 9: Task Initiation	Students learn how to overcome procrastination and get started on tasks more efficiently. Students explore why starting tasks can feel challenging and learn specific strategies such as working in short intervals, using timers and creating structured routines. They practice applying these strategies to school assignments to build	2 weeks February

	confidence and reduce avoidance.	
Unit 10: Communication	This unit focuses on effective communication skills that support academic success and positive relationships. Students explore verbal, nonverbal, written, and digital communication in school settings. Students learn to express their needs clearly, listen actively, ask for help appropriately, and collaborate with peers and teachers. They practice using communication tools that help them advocate for themselves and participate more confidently in group and classroom interactions.	3 weeks February - March
Unit 11: Test Prep and Study Strategies	Students learn methods for preparing for tests, organizing study materials, and practicing skills that lead to improved test performance. Students explore different study techniques such as spaced practice, active recall, summarizing, and creating study guides and learn how to choose strategies that match their learning needs. They develop personalized study plans and practice reducing test anxiety through preparation and self-regulation skills.	3 weeks March
Unit 12: Learning Styles	This unit helps students understand the ways they learn best and how to adapt their study habits accordingly. Students identify personal learning preferences, explore multisensory study approaches, and learn how to select strategies that align with their strengths. They apply this understanding to academic tasks to make their studying more effective and efficient.	2 weeks April
Unit 13: Emotional Regulation	Students examine how emotions impact learning, relationships, and executive-functioning skills. They learn strategies to manage frustration, anxiety, and stress in healthy ways. Students practice identifying emotional triggers and using coping strategies such as relaxation techniques, grounding exercises, and positive self-talk. They learn how managing emotions improves attention, decision-making, and academic performance, and they apply these strategies in real-life situations.	3 weeks April - May
Unit 14:	The final unit focuses on practical, real-world skills that support independence	3 weeks

Life Skills	both in and beyond high school. Students learn skills such as preparing for employment, maintaining personal responsibilities, and navigating community resources. They connect the executive-functioning skills learned throughout the course to everyday tasks, helping them build confidence and readiness for life after graduation.	May - June
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