

Professional Learning Community:

Going Deeper into Executive Functions

Here are options to build value and learning after the presentation:

The Missing Link for Student Success: Executive Function Skills

The first option is to set aside fifteen minutes a week to consider the following prompts that relate specifically to the presentation handout. Focus on one question a week. Consider meeting with a buddy or small group which will enable you to learn from each other.

The second option is to create a study group around reading one of the books listed on page two. The third option is take a distance course to learn more from Marydee Sklar.

Option One – Slide Handouts and Your Notes

Questions to reflect upon and discuss:

1. Review slides 15 and 16. Share how your personal executive function strengths support your skills as a teacher. Examine how your executive function weaknesses complicate your life and the success of your students. What might you do to learn more to support your EF weaknesses?
2. Using slides 15 and 16 as a guide, evaluate a student who is struggling in your classroom. Review slides 20 and 21. What other underlying issues might be controlling or contributing to his or her lack of production? Discuss your conclusions with other professionals who know this child and family. How might this child benefit with more support from you or others?
3. From the perspective of the age of the students in your classroom, consider the level of development of their key executive function skills as shown on slide 23. How might you need to adjust your classroom expectations?
4. Select a student in your classroom who has a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD. Take their age and subtract three years to approximate their level of executive function development as shown on slide 24. Now, imagine a typical child of that age in your classroom. What accommodations would you have to make to assure that child's success in your classroom? Apply these accommodations to your ADD/ADHD students.
5. Review your notes and slides, 26 – 38. Analyze where you need clocks and calendars in your classroom. Implement having at least three consecutive months of calendars in view in your classroom. How can you use them to help your students develop the "future thinking" required for completing multistep projects on time?
6. Review your notes and slide 30. Consider how you might use timers to help your students transition from one activity or class to another, allowing adequate time for cleanup, filing papers or recording assignments due. What other ways could you use timers?
7. Review your notes and slides 31 and 32. Prepare a lesson to teach your students to understand how to motivate themselves and maintain focus by activating the dopamine reward system of the brain. How could you use this strategy for a classroom assignment? How could students apply it to completing homework?

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Option Two — Books for a Study Group:

Cooper-Kahn, J. and Foster, M. (2013). *Boosting Executive Skills in the Classroom: A Practical Guide for Educators*. San Francisco: Josie – Bass .

This book is for teachers, K-12. It is designed to be used as a book for self-reflection with places to write answers to questions. It has forms to copy. Very readable and teacher friendly.

Kaufman. C. (2010). *Executive Function in the Classroom: Practical Strategies for Improving Performance and Enhancing Skills for All Students*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks Publishing.

This book goes into brain and executive functions at a more academic level. This is the text I use for a class that I teach through Portland State University.

Sklar, M. (2014). *50 Tips to Help Students Succeed: Develop Your Student's Time Management and Executive Skills for Life*. Portland: Aguanga Publishing.

While this book was written for a parent audience, teachers find it useful. At one school each teacher drew a number or two out of a hat. The number corresponded to a tip in the book. Each week, during staff meetings, one or two teachers would act out or demonstrate the tip they had chosen. Brief discussions followed. The teachers also used the book at parent conferences, pointing out tips to parents that the teacher felt would benefit that family and student.

Willis, J. (2006). *Research-Based Strategies to Ignite Student Learning*. Alexandria: ASCD.

Dr. Willis is a neurologist who left medicine to become a classroom teacher. This book provides more background information about the brain and practical strategies to enhance the learning in your classroom.

Option Three — Online Distance Learning:

Visit www.ExecutiveFunctioningSuccess.com for professional development classes by Marydee Sklar. Graduate level credits are available through Seattle Pacific University. See website for details:

- ***Building Executive Function Skills in the Classroom: Time Management, Planning and Organization:*** This course provides easy to understand information about the brain and how it connects to effective teaching and learning. Connect the brain information to tools and strategies to develop a personal unit of instruction to build your student's time-management, planning and organization skills.
- ***Teaching the Seeing My Time® Program:*** *Seeing My Time* is a workbook-based curriculum of six units. In this live webinar course Marydee Sklar leads you through the workbook as if you were her client, while you simultaneously teach the program to a practice student.