Executive Function: Prioritizing

Managing your time without setting priorities is like shooting randomly and calling whatever you hit the target.

-Peter Drucker

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A student with effective Executive Function Skills Can . . .

- Read the room and comprehend important information, key elements or zones,
- Can visualize themselves completing a task in a different space and time
- Can think through the different steps to complete a task in a different space and/or time
- Can imagine the “big picture” when given a task or activity
- Understands the passage of time, the time it takes to complete different steps of a task as well as the different duration for various tasks or activities

From: Sarah Ward & Kristin Jacobsen, Cognitive Connections
Struggles with prioritization

- Knowing where to begin, what comes first
- Knowing which step or what is most important
- Understanding the final expectation
- Understanding the sequence of events/expectations
- Appropriate time management
Procrastination: understanding the need to not wait until the last minute
Distinguishing between what is emergent, immediate and what can wait
Time management: how much time to spend on something
Knowing when to move on from one task, to another
Breaking down expectations or tasks into smaller chunks
  • Appropriately sequencing those chunks
Importance: understanding which task or assignment is most important
Project planning – what to do first, what is critical, what can wait
Choose appropriate activities to complete within given time limits or established deadlines
Executive Dysfunction is often Misunderstood:

- Student doesn’t care
- Student is non-compliant, refusing to complete the task, activity or project
  - Student has performed the skill at another time so they must know what to do and how to do it
  - Not “can’t do”, but “won’t do”
- The student wants control, has to do things “their way”
- Student is just disorganized, forgetful
Mirror Neurons:

• There is a link in children with autism and mirror neuron deficits:
  • Mirror neurons impact:
    • Understanding the actions of others
    • Learning language
    • Communication
    • Imitation
    • Empathy

• Deficits in the sequential organization of motor acts
• There is a disconnect between the WHAT and the WHY of actions/situations
  • Deficits in reading situations and coupling that “read” with an appropriate re-action
• Difficulty reading the actions of others, their intentions, or predictions about the actions of others
Situational Intelligence

• This is the ability of the student to “read the room”

• Comprehending the different zones:
  • Space of the room
  • Timing of activities, time management
  • The objects in the room
  • The people in the room

• Self-directed recognition and observation to ascertain:
  • What is happening now?
  • What is important now?
  • What is my role?

• **Finally – If this is what I am observing then I need to . . .**

From: Sarah Ward & Kristin Jacobsen, Cognitive Connections
Teaching priority within functional routines -

- Morning routines
- Re-entering a space after a melt-down
- Priming for transitions
- Priming for times of day or areas of struggle (recess, specials, convocations)
- End of the day routines
- Getting needed materials
- For the home:
  - Bed time routines
  - Homework
  - Morning
  - Before you leave the house
  - Going to school
Situation Awareness/Intelligence
STOP and Read the Room

Space
- Navigate the Room
  - Kind of space?
  - What's going on?
  - Is it Expected or Unexpected?
  - Pathways used to Navigate to different areas within the space?
  - Is there a shift between wide angle lens of the space (whole), the zones (parts) and the details?

Time
- Get on the Timeline
  - Time of day
  - Kind of time?
  - What is happening at this Moment in Time?
  - Sequence of actions
  - Pace
  - What is coming up?
    - Predictable?

Objects
- Organization/Objects
  - Organization of The Space: Whole-Parts
  - How is that part organized?
  - Location of objects: In sight? Out of sight?
  - Purpose/Priority of objects?
  - Necessity & Relevancy

People
- Read the Person
  - Face
  - Body
  - Appearance
  - Mood
  - Pace
  - Saying: Tone

Kristen Jacobsen, M.S., CCC/SLP

From: Sarah Ward & Kristin Jacobsen, Cognitive Connections
Read the Room:

This person is leading the class.

The manipulatives are here, but we don’t play with these right now.

This is the carpet area, we sit here for calendar, but not right now.

The students are listening.

This is where I should sit.
I like sitting on the floor better!

I want to sit in the front row.

Why do they have all those things if we can't play with them... Last year I used to...

I wonder if I could water the plant?

Ohh – what's on the screen!

Look, it's Sam, he's my friend, last weekend we...

I want to sit in the front row.

We can't play with them... Last year I used to...
Read the Room:

This person is leading the class.

The students are listening.

This is where I should sit.

The manipulatives are here, but we don’t play with these right now.

This is the carpet area, we sit here for calendar, but not right now.
Cafeteria

• Where to enter
• Where the line starts
• The direction the line flows
  • The rules and regulations with food
    (what, how much, choices, & cost)
• Where do you pay
• Where do you sit
• Where do you put your tray
• Where is the trash
• Where is the exit
Teacher says:
Get ready for math -
• Get out last night’s homework
• Get your math manipulatives
• Open your books to page 53
Teach students to become a future thinker . . .
Teacher says:
Get ready for math -
• Get out last night’s homework
• Get your math manipulatives
• Open your books to page 53
MIME - to improve non-verbal working memory

- Mental dress-rehearsal
- Mental trial and error without the risk of error leading to failure
- Can run multiple plans – teach Plan A and Plan B (flexible thinking)
- Predict the emotions that may relate to a situation
- Develops PLANNING skills (plan vs actual)
- **Antecedent Based Intervention -

From: Sarah Ward & Kristin Jacobsen, Cognitive Connections
Teach the Student to MIME when planning — also helps develop situational intelligence and a spatial temporal window.

MIME

- Make a future picture
- Imagine, what will I look like
- Motions – what movement is required
- Emotions – how will I feel

From: Sarah Ward & Kristin Jacobsen, Cognitive Connections
MIME

M – make a future picture
I – imagine: what will I look like
M – movement, what motions are needed
E – emotions: how will I feel

From: Sarah Ward & Kristin Jacobsen, Cognitive Connections
Mind MIME Skills -

- Walk it Out
- Map it Out
- Draw it Out
  - Tap it Out
- Walk it out targets motor memory
- Map/Draw – increases future mental imagery, task planning, initiation and impulse control

From: Sarah Ward & Kristin Jacobsen, Cognitive Connections
Tap Out plans or routines

Use a **visual mediator** to tap out in an effort to teach an **Inhibitory Pause** -
Tap Out plans or routines
Struggling with Where to Begin and Sequencing
Start with your planning - Get Ready, Do, Done

3. Get Ready
   What Do I need?

2. Do
   What steps do I need to take to be done?
   How long will each step take?

1. Done
   What will it look like when I am done?
   Future sketch or picture

Remember to use action words to describe the “do” section.
Lack of Role and Order with Working Memory

• Begin with the end in mind!

• This creates Episodic Future Memory: The ability to “see yourself” and what it looks like in the future! (360 Thinking Cognitive Connections, Sarah Ward)

• Effective Plans
  • Effective planning should begin with an IMAGE (sketch) of what “Done or Finished” looks like
  • Then . . . discuss the steps to complete the task
  • Finally . . . Create a list of the items and materials needed to complete the task
### Get ready to go home... (end of the day routine)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Get Ready</th>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What Do I need?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What steps do I need to take to be done?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What will it look like when I am done?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Papers from mailbox</td>
<td>- Stand in line for the mailbox</td>
<td>- Future sketch or picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Folder</td>
<td>- Take papers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Backpack</td>
<td>- Put papers in folder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Take backpack from cubby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Put folder in back pack</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Sit in Chair and wait</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Line up for the busses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Image of child standing in line for busses]
Visual tool – then MIME

Have the student TAP OUT their routine
Remember – Begin with the end in mind even with academics—

Picture or Sketch of the Final Product: rough draft of an essay

3. Get Ready
   What Do I need?
   - Book
   - Pink highlighter
   - College ruled paper
   - Pencil

2. Do
   What steps do I need to take do be done?
   - Read the Story
   - Annotate with the pink highlighter
   - Write Intro
   - Write 2 body paragraphs
   - Write a Conclusion
   - Turn in
   How long will each step take?

1. Done
   What will it look like when I am done?
   Future sketch or picture
### Get Ready, Do, Done (Get Done)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Question 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Get Ready</td>
<td>What do I need?</td>
<td>How long will each step take?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do</td>
<td>What steps do I need to do to be done?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Done</td>
<td>What will it look like when I am done?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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- [Image of a bookshelf with books]
- [Image of a notebook with handwritten content]
- [Image of a piece of paper with text and drawings]
Other visual strategies

- Highlight important information
- Prioritize based on color
  - A system established with student
Highlight feature in your Adobe Reader
Right click on the highlight to change the color
Multiplication Word Problems #1

1. Ellen went to a garage sale to buy chairs. Each chair cost 15 dollars. How much money did Ellen spend for the 12 chairs she bought?

2. Three-toed sloths have four legs. How many toes would 25 sloths have?

3. Albert has two snakes. The garden snake is 10 inches long. The boa constrictor is 7 times longer than the garden snake. How long is the boa constrictor?

4. Albert's cabbage patch has 12 rows of cabbage. In each row, there are 15 heads of cabbage. How many heads of cabbage does Albert have in all?

5. Marie can bike at a speed of 12 miles an hour. How far can she bike in 31 hours?
Develop a system with the student

- Planning sheet for activities
- Color code for pulling information from text in sequence
Prioritize steps within an assignment,
Highlight and numbered in order

Using adjectives
Grade 3 Grammar Worksheet

Circle the adjectives.
- eager
- quiet
- scrappy
- phone
- jump
- low
- horse
- castle
- famous
- clever
- play
- handsome
- odd
- driver
- shallow
- ocean
- rich
- long
- gentle
- thankful

Complete the sentences using the adjectives from above.
1. The bird with short wings is __________ looking.
2. Bob is __________ to get his new puppy.
3. The __________ actor is in a new movie.
4. A person has to be __________ to solve puzzles.
5. Some fish prefer to swim in __________ waters.
6. The runt of a litter of puppies is the __________ one.
7. The man who lives in the mansion is __________.
8. My brother was __________ that he got a new game.
9. We were tired after the __________ soccer game.
10. I like to have __________ time to read books.
11. My grandmother says I am a __________ boy.
12. The tall man hit his head on the __________ branches.
Other methods to prioritize

First: write/sketch each step on a card
Then: put the cards in order
Next: TAP OUT the routine
Finally: WALK IT OUT - practice the routine
Morning and Evening Hygiene Routines

Don’t forget to WALK OUT or TAP OUT the routine with the visual to ensure the visual meets the targeted objective!
Make-Up Routine
How to prioritize time . . .
Other suggestions

• Develop a system for color coded (with highlighters or post its) for notetaking or organization within a planner (assign each class a color). Establish specific colors for what to do first, second and so on . . . (visual support)

• Work with the student to differentiate between what is urgent and what is important

• Prime student for an assignment or activity: (antecedent based intervention)
  • Get Ready, Do, Done model
  • Work with the student develop the list, then work with the student to prioritize and/or number steps, list steps visually, even on a calendar

• Provide the student with a rubric for an assignment to see what is considered “most important” to the teacher, also to identify the final product expectations, review the rubric with the student and have the student highlight important information to remember (antecedent based intervention, visual support)
Other suggestions

• Provide student with sample finished products (for academic tasks as well) to understand the final goal *(antecedent based intervention)*
  • Work with the student to identify what information was included (what was most important)

• Provide student with an excellent example of class notes:
  • Review the notes with the student to help identify and evaluate what information was considered important
  • Or provide student with an outline prior to taking notes with key words as clues to help the student identify when to take notes
  • Work with the student to develop an outline (method) for taking notes:
    • i.e. – look for bold face words, titles, key concepts identified at the beginning of the chapter, look at the review questions at the end of the chapter or section before listening to the lecture or reading the chapter
Other suggestions

- Teach student to group tasks or activities together to increase efficiency, use visuals to identify groups and tasks, and number tasks, steps or activities for sequential order.
- Use visual timers to prioritize and support time management (visual support):
  - Use an analog clock with dry erase markers to divide time up between tasks, assignments, to alternate between work and break.
  - Identify how much time should be spent per activity or task.
- Work to help students prioritize with “Beginning, Middle, End” or “First, Next, Then, Last.”
- Identify parts of a student’s routine and then differentiate between what a student “wants” to do vs. what the student “needs” to do.
- PAIR WITH REINFORCEMENT! (reinforcement)
Resources:

- SSJCSS Links to graphic organizers arranged by subject/category
- Online Visual Timers
- Free printable homework charts
- How to use post-it notes on your windows desktop for lists
- Google keep – create to do lists and posts its that link between your google account and device(iPhone, android tablet, iPad) Establish certain colors with certain priorities (immediate vs can wait)
There is an app for that!

• 30/30 (free) – This app helps users prioritize and track the amount of time for individual tasks, create a visual schedule with built in breaks, choose individual times for different tasks and breaks.

• Istudiez - The weekly and monthly overviews on the interactive calendar can help keep track of due dates and group study sessions, and the app’s Cloud Sync integration assures that all compatible devices can access the same scheduling information.

• Ihomework ($1.99) - Assignments can have title, due date, reminder, a grade, notes, and you can even add a partner. Once entered, assignments can be viewed by day, week, or course.

• iRewardChart Lite (iPad free) – this chart allows parents to choose the “other” category within the app to reward students for achieving set organizational goals

• Complete Class Organizers ($4.99) – This apps allows students or organize classes but also allows students the ability to take notes, record lectures, and track grades
There is an app for that!

• 360 Thinking Time Tracker App - This is the app that goes along with the Get Ready, Do, Done method from 360 Thinking Cognitive Connections.

• Plan It, Do It, Check it Off ($2.99) – This is a to do list app that uses pictures (actual photos) to represent the things on the to do list. There are 26 pages of pictures or you can use your own. You can add text to the pictures as well and then add a check mark to show what has been completed.

• Idea Sketch (free or upgrade for $3.99) – create concept maps, mind maps, flow charts with the option to convert those to a text outline or list. Great for planning projects, making lists or outlines.
There is an app for that!

• **Functional Planning System** ($4.99 with additions) - the Functional Planning System utilizes video modeling to help children (and adults) create visual to do lists. Choose from a video library through in app purchases or create your own videos and step by step sequences for tasks that need to be completed daily or in preparation for a new task.

• **My Job Chart** (free) - My Job Chart is an easy-to-use app that helps children of nearly all ages and abilities stay organized and on-task at home. Family members each create their own profile within the app. Parents/adults can assign tasks and award points. This app uses a point system for completed chores, and users can choose to save, share or spend their points. Parents/adults can customize the reward system by offering non-monetary rewards, like “having a friend over”, “extra computer time”, or they can offer retail rewards through Amazon.com.
Note: Static Slide
Change the Color of the design elements individually! Color this center scribble clipart to fit your personal preference. Left click a few times to select the graphic to change color. NOTE: There might be items such as text covering the scribble graphic. Just move the text to the side if need be. Once selected, RIGHT click on the section of the graphic and choose format shape. From there choose a new fill color to change the color of that image. Good luck 😊
These are your IDEAS. Your list, make it happen😊

Add your own text here and make it happen😊

Your description goes here. This is a placeholder for the text and is an example of what it may look like.
These are your IDEAS, your list, make it happen 😊
THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT A HIGHLIGHT TO YOUR TEXT MAY LOOK LIKE. EXAMPLE.

MOVE THE PEN UP OR DOWN TO HIGHLIGHT ANOTHER AREA OF THE TEXT IF YOU WANT TO SWITCH THE ANIMATION LOCATION.
CREATE AS MUCH TEXT AS YOU LIKE IN THIS AREA. REPLACE THIS TEXT AS IT IS A TEXTHOLDER TO GIVE THE VIEWER AN IDEA WHAT THE SPACE LOOKS LIKE.

Note: Animated Slide
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