

How to Set Up a Tier 1 Intervention for Promoting Executive Skill Development: Embedding Executive Skills into Daily Classroom Routines and Instruction

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When teachers attend my “Smart but Scattered” executive skills seminars, they often leave full of new ideas that they can carry back to the classroom. But a question I am frequently asked is, “How do you fully implement these strategies in the regular classroom so that they can be used to best effect?” They often ask a follow-up question that goes something like this: “How can I get teachers who haven’t attended your seminars on board so that they are eager and willing to add to their teaching practices, too?”

Since my whole approach to designing executive skills interventions is to create step-by-step processes (usually with some kind of visual to go with the process), let me use that same approach here. And I should probably state up front the caveat that I communicate to parents and teachers about how long it takes before they’ll see improvement in their kids’ executive skills: *Progress is measured in years and not months*. The same caveat may apply to teachers who want to change their teaching to incorporate executive skills. The good news is that teachers who make this investment invariably report that it transforms their teaching practice. And they can see what an impact it has on the students they’re working with, so it makes that time investment worthwhile.

So let’s get started.

Step 1: Familiarize yourself with what executive skills are and how they impact learning.

The short answer to that question is that they are brain-based skills, managed out of the frontal lobes of the brain (the part of the brain right behind the forehead) that take 25 years to reach full maturation. A concise description of what executive skills are: they are the skills that make goal-directed behavior possible. Here’s another short description: they are the skills required to *execute tasks*.

Over the years, we have found that a useful way for teachers to familiarize themselves with executive skills is to assess their own executive skill strengths and weaknesses. The appendix [ADD ESQ TO APPENDIX] contains a quick questionnaire that can be used for this purpose. Here are some questions to consider after you have completed the survey:

- Look at your strengths (your three highest scores). How do you use them on the job? Are they skills that your job requires you to use frequently? Do they impact how you manage your home or tasks outside of work?
- Look at your weaknesses (your three lowest scores). Do these make some aspects of your work challenging? Have you figured out coping strategies to compensate for those weaknesses? Are there strategies you think might help you improve those skills?

These are, by the way, the same questions we ask students to consider when we introduce executive skills to them. If you want to learn more about executive skills in adults and how you might take advantage of your strengths and cope with your weaknesses, you may want to take a look at *The Smart but Scattered Guide to Success* (by Dawson & Guare).

At the same time that you are gaining a deeper understanding of your own executive skills profile, you can start observing your students and looking for signs of executive skill strengths and weaknesses. Table 1 lists each skill and provides a quick definition and description of the skill in action at different

ages. The skills are listed in the order in which we believe they emerge developmentally, beginning shortly after birth.

Table 1
Executive Skill Definitions

Executive Skill	Definition	Description
Response Inhibition	The capacity to think before you act – this ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behavior might impact it.	In the young child, waiting for a short period without being disruptive is an example of response inhibition while in the adolescent it would be demonstrated by accepting a referee’s call without an argument.
Working Memory	The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.	A young child, for example can hold in mind and follow 1-2 step directions while the middle school child can remember the expectations of multiple teachers.
Emotional Control	The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior	A young child with this skill is able to recover from a disappointment in a short time. A teenager is able to manage the anxiety of a game or test and still perform.
Flexibility	The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions.	A young child can adjust to a change in plans without major distress. A high school student can accept an alternative such as a different job when the first choice is not available.
Sustained Attention	The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.	Completing a 5-minute chore with occasional supervision is an example of sustained attention in the younger child. The teenager is able to attend to homework, with short breaks, for one to two hours.
Task Initiation	The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.	A young child is able to start a chore or assignment right after instructions are given. A high school student does not wait until the last minute to begin a project.
Planning/Prioritizing	The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what’s important to focus on and what’s not important.	A young child, with coaching, can think of options to settle a peer conflict. A teenager can formulate a plan to get a job.
Organization	The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.	A young child can, with a reminder, put toys in a designated place. An adolescent can organize and locate sports equipment.
Time Management	The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.	A young child can complete a short job within a time limit set by an adult. A high school student can establish a schedule to meet task deadlines.

Executive Skill	Definition	Description
Goal-Directed Persistence	The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.	A first grader can complete a job in order to get to recess. A teenager can earn and save money over time to buy something of importance.
Metacognition	The ability to stand back and take a birds-eye view of oneself in a situation. It is an ability to observe how you problem solve. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills (e.g., asking yourself, "How am I doing? or How did I do?").	A young child can change behavior in response to feedback from an adult. A teenager can monitor and critique her performance and improve it by observing others who are more skilled.

For a deeper understanding, read the early chapters of any of our books (e.g., *Smart but Scattered* or *Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents*).

One approach used by many schools to introduce executive skills to teachers is to use a study group or book club format. At Mountain View, an alternative high school in Fairfax, Virginia, for instance, Tim McElroy, the head of special education, created a voluntary study group and gave every member a copy of *Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents*. About 8 teachers signed up, and each month of the school year, participants read and discussed a chapter of the book until they completed it.

Step 2: Learn to apply the executive skill terminology to student learning and behavior.

As you learn about each skill, you can stretch your understanding of the skill by looking for examples of it *in action* in the classroom. Executive skills impact both learning and behavior. Table 2 shows some examples.

Table 2

Executive Skill	Learning	Behavior
Response Inhibition	Jumps into work without reading directions	Blurts out hurtful things to peers or classmates
Working Memory	Forgets to put math book in backpack	Forgets rules for games
Emotional Control	Gets frustrated and shuts down when doesn't understand worksheet instructions	Lashes out at peers when something at recess is upsetting
Flexibility	Significant problems with creative writing assignments or other open-ended tasks	Gets upset when a fun planned event or activity gets cancelled
Sustained Attention	Gets distracted before completing seatwork	Doesn't listen to instructions or gets distracted on the playing field and misses an important play
Task Initiation	Dawdles before starting work	May frustrate peers during group activities because fails to follow through on promised actions
Planning/Prioritizing	Difficulty carrying out long-term projects	Difficulty "thinking ahead" to pack what's needed for a fieldtrip or activity with friends
Organization	Loses papers; messy notebooks, backpacks	Has trouble keeping track of play equipment; may leave things behind at school or on the playing field

Time Management	Fails to allot sufficient time to complete long-term projects	Late for school; keeps friends or family waiting for organized activities
Goal-Directed Persistence	Doesn't set goals for the future or connect the present with those goals (may want to go to college but doesn't invest the time to earn good grades)	Lives "in the moment." Makes choices about how to spend time based on immediate needs and interests only.
Metacognition	Struggles with tasks that require analysis or abstract thinking	Can't see the impact of behavior on others, or can't see understand why peers react the way they do

As issues come up during the school day, see if you can tag them to executive skills. But don't just look at problem situations or behaviors—be on the lookout for executive skill strengths as well.

This practice can also be incorporated into a study group. Study group members could keep logs where they collect examples of executive skills in action to share with the rest of the group. If you see a behavior or learning challenge that is a puzzle to you—does it reflect an executive skill strength or weakness or not?—share that with the group as well, and together come to some decision. Obviously, not all learning or behavioral deficits are associated with executive skill challenges, but you might be surprised how many are.

Teachers will often ask me, what are reasonable expectations for executive skills at different grade levels? I wish I could answer this question, but the ability to use executive skills is highly *context-dependent*. If a first grade teacher works really hard to establish classroom routines that incorporate executive skills (such as teaching the class to follow a morning schedule to help them get ready for the school day promptly), her students may look very different to a second grade teacher than students coming from a class that did not focus on embedding executive skills into daily routines. In both cases, students may start the year looking similar, but the first group will probably be able to learn and internalize the second grade teacher's routines faster than the second group. In the absence of clear grade level norms, I suggest you look at what the majority of students at your grade level are able to do and assume that that's the norm. To be honest, we don't place a whole lot of emphasis on norms at any age or grade level, because if you have a child with executive skill challenges you have to start with the level the child is at. Your goal, then is to bring that child to the level where he or she doesn't stand out as markedly different from their classmates.

Step 3: Introduce executive skills (concepts, vocabulary, definitions) to your students.

Once you feel that you have a firm grounding in executive skills, can differentiate the different skills, and can match behaviors with skills, you are now ready to introduce executive skills to your students. The most typical way that schools or teachers do this is to present the skills one at a time across the school year. Some teach one skill a week, others one every other week (which allows them to build in a little more practice with each skill). An elementary school in New Hampshire introduced one skill each month, creating a poster for each skill that was posted near the entrance to the skill and reminding students in the daily announcements what the focus skill for the month was. Teachers developed different activities and strategies for promoting each skill, which they gathered in a resource notebook that was kept in the teacher's room. How fast you roll them out depends on the age and developmental maturity of the students you're targeting.

How do you introduce the skills? Again, it depends in part on the age of the students you're working with. We've found young children respond particularly well to connecting each skill to an imaginary character (sometimes referred to as a "superhero"). This approach was first developed by teachers at the Montcrest School in Toronto, Canada. Teachers there have developed 10 superheroes to represent the 10 executive skills they've chose to focus on. Each superhero is introduced with a script and they each offer an array of strategies children can use if that executive skill is a challenge for them. [provide example here]. More information about these superheroes can be found at www.efs2therescue.com.

While the materials created by Montcrest School teachers are available for purchase, we have also worked with schools to develop their own characters. The advantage to this approach is that going through this process gave teachers the opportunity to think more deeply about the executive skills they wanted to focus on and the strategies they wanted to encourage students to use. Below are a couple of characters created by second grade teachers at Moharimet School in Madbury, New Hampshire.



Stopasaurus
(Response Inhibition)



Focus Phantom
(Sustained Attention)

Some elementary school personnel (school psychologists, behavior specialists, OT's, special education teachers, speech pathologists) have created lessons to introduce executive skills to students in a developmentally appropriate manner. Some have done this as a Tier 2 Intervention, targeting small groups of children identified by teachers as having significant executive skills challenges (often students with ADHD). Others have embedded these lessons into the regular classroom, thus making it a Tier 1 intervention. Felicia Sperry, a school psychologist in the Oyster River School District in New Hampshire, first introduced executive skills in a Tier 2 model but she realized that achieving generalization to the general education classroom (where these skills needed to be deployed) was hampered by this pull-out model. She has moved from working with small groups of targeted students to teaching whole classrooms. Her curriculum can be accessed through a Dropbox folder:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ndzznaz826s1cig/AADSdmGTVNIRbaXM6cPHYBuva?dl=0>

Teachers at the middle school level in Bedford, New Hampshire created a Tier 2 Intervention for students on IEP's and 504 Accommodation Plans. While they use a pull-out model, their materials could easily be adapted for whole-class use as a Tier 1 intervention. Their work can be accessed through a google drive link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B4kid0327lZdNk44eDdCS24yckE>

At the secondary level, the most common approach is to introduce executive skills through a series of short weekly lessons, which then get reinforced as each executive skill arises naturally in the course of the lessons and assignments that are part of teacher's curriculum for the week. This approach has been developed and refined by teachers at Mountain View School. The components of this approach include:

- Introducing each skill through an activity or a funny YouTube video.
- Posing questions that encourage students to think about the meaning of the video or activity and to understand the nature of the executive skill that's the point of the lesson.

- Creating a “catch phrase” that can be posted on classroom walls to remind students of the week’s executive skill.
- Providing concise definitions and brief examples of each skill, including examples of what the skill looks like both as a strength and as a weakness. These, too, are posted on classroom walls so that by the end of the lesson series, the entire array of executive skills is displayed, serving as an easy reference that both teachers and students can refer to.
- Highlighting places during the course of the week where that particular skill presents itself in lessons and assignments—while also referring back to skills presented in earlier lessons.
- Debriefing with students on Friday, focusing on what they’ve learned about themselves and their understanding of the week’s skill.

Teachers at Mountain View have posted their lessons on their website (www.efintheclassroom.net), and secondary level teachers are encouraged to look at their materials. On the homepage you will find a google drive link that brings the viewer to a set of folders, one for each executive skill. In addition to one lesson per skill, Mountain View has found it helpful to begin with a lesson on growth mindset, based on Carol Dweck’s work, because they want to impress upon students that although it is common to have both strengths and weaknesses, the weaknesses students have are not permanent and are subject to improvement through targeted practice. The growth mindset lesson is also included in their curricular materials.

Mountain View’s approach is to spend one week on each skill. In working with schools to adapt the Mountain View approach to meet their needs, many schools opt to focus on fewer skills and to spend a minimum of 2-3 week on each skill. At the elementary level, teachers often only focus on a few skills, selecting those from the first six listed in Table 1, since these are skills that we generally expect children to show progress in during the elementary school years. Adding metacognition to that list may also make sense, because if we can help students reflect on their own executive skills and the strategies they can use to build those skills, we are ahead of the game if we begin early.

Step 4: Find ways to illuminate where in a child’s life at home and at school executive skills present themselves and give students the opportunity to make these connections on their own.

As you and your students expand your understanding of executive skills, you will find them popping up throughout the school day. Students may even begin to bring in examples from home, and you can prompt them to think about that (e.g., “What executive skill do you need to use when you’d rather play video games than do your homework?”). Here’s a list of situations and settings that may serve as fodder for class discussions about executive skills:

- Classroom lessons
- Independent seatwork
- On the playground
- In the cafeteria
- In the hallways
- On the school bus
- Playing sports
- With friends
- After school or summer jobs
- Doing homework
- Other situations at home (e.g., chores, getting along with parents or siblings)

Here are a few examples of how students learn to apply these concepts independently after they have been introduced to the vocabulary by teachers:

- A second grade teacher at a private school in Los Angeles described how she had to cancel a fun activity the class had been looking forward to for weeks. It fell through at the last minute, and on the day of the event, she had to announce to the class first thing in the morning that the fun event had to be cancelled. A second grade girl in the class, on hearing this, sighed and said, “I guess we’ll have to be flexible.”
- Teachers at Moharimet school in New Hampshire reported that after they introduced a superhero named “Stopasaurus” to teach response inhibition, their students came in from recess reporting how the superhero had saved them from getting in trouble on the playground.
- Students at a high school in Moultonborough, New Hampshire, after participating in a series of lessons on executive skills were able to identify that emotional control was a critical skill in the jobs they held after school.

Step 5: Incorporate executive skills into lessons, classwork, and homework assignments. Be explicit with students about how the skill contributes to mastery of content and how they can identify strategies to overcome obstacles that may get in the way of using those skills effectively.

Typically, any lesson or assignment we present to students requires one or more executive skills in order to master the lesson or complete the assignment successfully. By integrating executive skill instruction into these activities, we’re not adding to a teacher’s workload. We’re simply asking them to think a little differently about how they teach. Here’s a 4-step process for transforming the way you teach:

1. Identify which executive skills are critical to the lesson or assignment.
2. Identify the kind of obstacle that might impede a student from using those skills effectively.
3. Help the student identify a strategy for overcoming that obstacle.
4. Help the student implement the strategy and reinforce them for doing so.
- 5.

Table 3 gives several examples of these steps as they are applied to some sample lessons and assignments.

Table 3

Lesson/Assignment	Executive Skill(s)	Obstacle	Possible Strategies
Math: Subtraction with regrouping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization • Working Memory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor spacing/messy handwriting • Forgetting the steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use large-grid graph paper • Use a template or checklist with each step numbered or color-coded
English: Learning vocabulary words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Memory • Metacognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty retaining the meanings (ineffective study strategies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make up “silly sentences” for each word • Study with a friend using flash cards

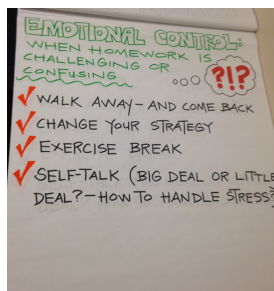
Social Studies: studying for a quiz or test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Memory • Response Inhibition • Task Initiation • Sustained Attention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forgetting the quiz itself, leaving the textbook at school, forgetting the material being studied • Having other things to do that are more fun than studying • Putting off studying too late in the evening • Not spending enough time studying to ensure mastery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a graphic organizer; use Quizlet; use practice tests • Use self-talk (“I won’t go on-line until I’ve spent 30 minutes studying for my quiz) • Make a plan with a start time • Use Pomodoro to help with task persistence
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This table can be turned into a planning sheet to help teachers think through the lessons and assignments they teach. The form, which is included in the Appendix to this paper, could be used by teachers initially, but eventually it may be helpful to get students to complete the form themselves, since it reinforces the idea that everything we ask them to do in school requires executive skills and if they run into snags, they can think their way to means to overcome obstacles.

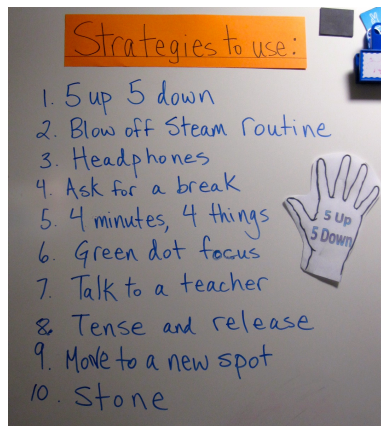
Laurie Faith, a former teacher at the Montcrest School has done extensive work developing this approach to embedding executive skills into classroom curricula and activities. More about her approach can be seen at her website (www.activatedlearning.org).

Step 6: Post strategies in the classroom to use as a reference when obstacles are uncovered.

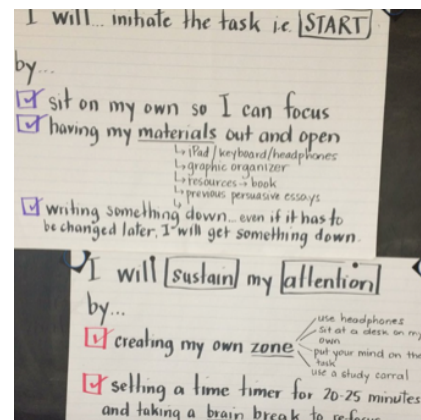
This step reinforces the “growth mindset” mentality that underlies executive skill development. Posting strategies on the walls in classrooms reminds students that learning obstacles can be overcome, and it gives them a readily accessible resource they can refer to if they find themselves stuck. Below are a number of examples from schools in the U.S. and Canada.



Brookstone School, Columbus GA



Montcrest School Toronto Canada



Bracebridge Public School, Ontario Canada
From www.activatedlearning.org

Step 7: Periodically take a problem associated with an executive skill challenge and do a class brainstorm for how to solve the problem.

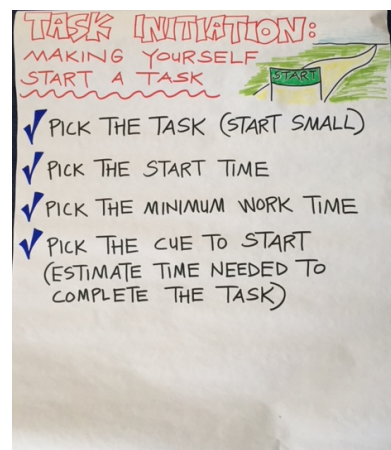
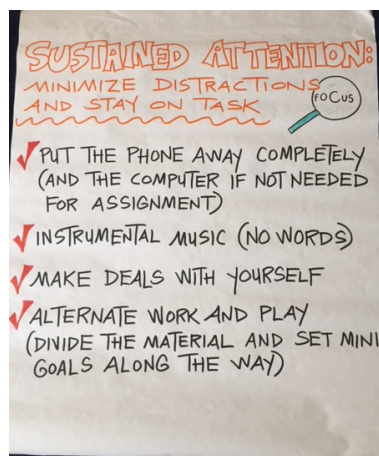
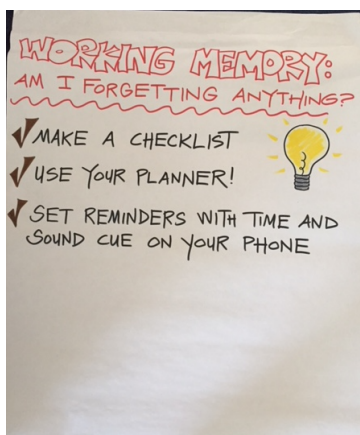
Here’s how this might work: A few years ago, I was invited by a school in Georgia (the Brookstone School in Columbus) to spend the day at the school talking with students in grades 6-12 about executive skills.

Before I came I asked the teachers who worked in the Learning Center to have those students complete a couple of surveys, the Executive Skills Questionnaire and the Executive Skills Problem Checklist. These are available in the *Work Smart Academic Planner, Revised Edition* (Dawson & Guare, 2017) and in *Executive Skills in Children and Adolescents, Third Edition* (Dawson & Guare, 2018). I then asked the teachers to calculate the 5 weakest executive skills on average reported by their students and the 5 executive skill problems endorsed most by those students. Table 3 shows the results of that tabulation.

Table 3

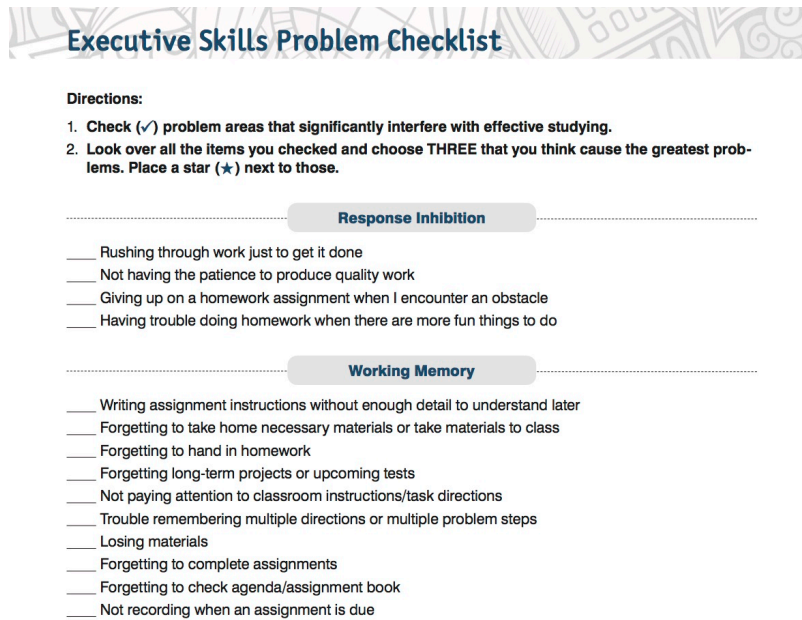
Executive Skill Challenges	Problem Situations
Response Inhibition	1. Having trouble doing homework when there are more fun things to do
Emotional Control	2. Getting really irritated when a homework assignment is hard or confusing
Task Initiation	3. Relying on deadline as activator or motivator
Sustained Attention	4. Rushing through work just to get it done
Working Memory	5. Internally and externally distracted

When I met with the students, we reviewed their choices and then we voted on which ones we wanted to brainstorm strategies for, with different groups choosing different ones. I wrote down their suggestions on my laptop (projected via an LCD projector), but the art teacher later turned them into posters to put up on the walls of the Learning Center. Examples of the posters are below.



I was invited as an outside speaker, but this activity could well be employed by classroom teachers. Topics for brainstorming are likely to present themselves naturally and students should be encouraged to make suggestions, but if teachers are looking for ideas, the Executive Skills Problem Checklist includes about 60 common problems associated with executive skills that students often encounter. A portion of this checklist is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.



Executive Skills Problem Checklist

Directions:

1. Check (✓) problem areas that significantly interfere with effective studying.
2. Look over all the items you checked and choose THREE that you think cause the greatest problems. Place a star (★) next to those.

Response Inhibition

- Rushing through work just to get it done
- Not having the patience to produce quality work
- Giving up on a homework assignment when I encounter an obstacle
- Having trouble doing homework when there are more fun things to do

Working Memory

- Writing assignment instructions without enough detail to understand later
- Forgetting to take home necessary materials or take materials to class
- Forgetting to hand in homework
- Forgetting long-term projects or upcoming tests
- Not paying attention to classroom instructions/task directions
- Trouble remembering multiple directions or multiple problem steps
- Losing materials
- Forgetting to complete assignments
- Forgetting to check agenda/assignment book
- Not recording when an assignment is due

Step 8: From time to time, have students reflect on what they’ve learned about executive skills and how their skills have improved.

Of all the executive skills, metacognition may be the most useful and most versatile. When students work on this skill, they are learning when to deploy all the other executive skills effectively. This can be done formally, by having students set goals and track their progress toward goals or it can be done informally during classroom discussions and teacher/student conversations. The *Work Smart Academic Planner* and the book *Coaching Students with Executive Skills Deficits* are both resources that support a more formal goal-setting approach. But informal classroom conversations can also be effective in reinforcing metacognition. In particular, when students successfully accomplish a task that may be challenging for them, it is worth asking them questions such as *What worked for you here?* Or *What strategy were you using to help you get that done?* With younger children, who have trouble answering these kinds of open-ended questions, I’ve found it helpful to ask them *What were you saying to yourself to help you be successful?*

Step 9: At the end of school year, help students think about how the next school or grade that they go to may not offer the same supports you have provided. Help them identify how they can carry over what they have learned about skills and strategies to a new setting.

When students pass from one grade level to the next or one school to the next, they often encounter bumps in the road. Quite frequently, teachers at the next grade level have expectations that are higher than some of their incoming students can meet. While teachers have an obligation to “meet their students where they are at,” this transition does not always go smoothly. If you have spent the year with your students helping them understand executive skills and the strategies they can use to overcome obstacles, you can help with this transition by spending the last few weeks of the school year

talking with your students about how they can use what they've learned in a new school or classroom. You may want to point out (and have them reflect on) the progress they've made since the beginning of the school year. You can share with them what the next grade level will be like and your understanding of what next year's teachers will expect them to do. With the class, brainstorm some strategies they can use to help that transition proceed smoothly. In particular, you may want to help them come up with a bulleted list of brief reminders or "catch phrases" that will help them remember the strategies that were the most successful. Print them out on colorful paper, laminate them, and hand them out as an end-of-year gift. You may also want to invite students to get back in touch with you in the coming years, both to share their successes and to ask your advice.

Step 10: Take some time to reflect on what *you've* learned about teaching students about executive skills.

We've had teachers tell us that building executive skills into their classroom transformed their teaching practice. Take time to pat yourself on the back for your successes. Share them with other teachers. If you began this journey by being part of a study group, have a celebratory party at the end of every year to share your experiences with others. And invite another teacher to join you next year as you continue the journey. You now have an expertise that others would benefit from!

APPENDIX
Executive Skills Questionnaire —

Peg Dawson & Richard Guare

Step I: Read each item below and then rate that item based on the extent to which you agree or disagree with how well it describes you. Use the rating scale below to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the Key on page 2 to determine your executive skill strengths (2-3 highest scores) and weaknesses (2-3 lowest scores).

Strongly disagree	1	Tend to agree	5
Disagree	2	Agree	6
Tend to disagree	3	Strongly agree	7
Neutral	4		

Item	Your score
1. I don't jump to conclusions	_____
2. I think before I speak.	_____
3. I don't take action without having all the facts.	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____
4. I have a good memory for facts, dates, and details.	_____
5. I am very good at remembering the things I have committed to do.	_____
6. I seldom need reminders to complete tasks	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____
7. My emotions seldom get in the way when performing on the job.	_____
8. Little things do not affect me emotionally or distract me from the task at hand.	_____
9. I can defer my personal feelings until after a task has been completed	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____
10. No matter what the task, I believe in getting started as soon as possible.	_____
11. Procrastination is usually not a problem for me.	_____
12. I seldom leave tasks to the last minute	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____
13. I find it easy to stay focused on my work.	_____
14. Once I start an assignment, I work diligently until it's completed.	_____
15. Even when interrupted, I find it easy to get back and complete the job at hand.	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____
16. When I plan out my day, I identify priorities and stick to them	_____
17. When I have a lot to do, I can easily focus on the most important things.	_____
18. I typically break big tasks down into subtasks and timelines.	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____
19. I am an organized person.	_____
20. It is natural for me to keep my work area neat and organized.	_____
21. I am good at maintaining systems for organizing my work.	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____

Strongly disagree	1	Tend to agree	5
Disagree	2	Agree	6
Tend to disagree	3	Strongly agree	7
Neutral	4		

Item	Your score
22. At the end of the day, I've usually finished what I set out to do.	_____
23. I am good at estimating how long it takes to do something.	_____
24. I am usually on time for appointments and activities.	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____
25. I take unexpected events in stride.	_____
26. I easily adjust to changes in plans and priorities.	_____
27. I consider myself to be flexible and adaptive to change.	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____
28. I routinely evaluate my performance and devise methods for personal improvement.	_____
29. I am able to step back from a situation in order to make objective decisions.	_____
30. I "read" situations well and can adjust my behavior based on the reactions of others.	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____
31. I think of myself as being driven to meet my goals.	_____
32. I easily give up immediate pleasures to work on long-term goals.	_____
33. I believe in setting and achieving high levels of performance.	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____
34. I enjoy working in a highly demanding, fast-paced environment.	_____
35. A certain amount of pressure helps me to perform at my best.	_____
36. Jobs that include a fair degree of unpredictability appeal to me.	_____
YOUR TOTAL SCORE:	_____

KEY

Items	Executive Skill	Items	Executive Skill
1 - 3	Response Inhibition	4 - 6	Working Memory
7 - 9	Emotional Control	10 - 12	Task Initiation
13 - 15	Sustained Attention	16 - 18	Planning/Prioritization
19 - 21	Organization	22 - 24	Time Management
25 - 27	Flexibility	28 - 30	Metacognition
31 - 33	Goal-Directed Persistence	34-36	Stress tolerance

Strongest Skills

Weakest Skills

**PLANNING SHEET FOR DESIGNING STRATEGIES
TO OVERCOME EXECUTIVE SKILL OBSTACLES**

Lesson/Assignment	Executive Skill(s)	Obstacle	Possible Strategies