

A Plan to Build Executive Function: Interventions for Your Class or Individual Students

The following questions and reflections guide you through the three steps of using interventions to develop students' executive function. Consider this tool an anchor for your journey, a space you can come to when you feel like you need more structure for the process, or even when you feel overwhelmed. This tool can also guide you through implementing strategies you've learned in our journey together, allowing you a format for organizing your thoughts and plans.

Phase 1: Awareness

Let's look at how to address each of the heavy hitters in the classroom.

Working memory: How are the routines of the day offloading student working memory? Is there consistency across your periods and days in how students begin and end the day? Is the way they return work and receive feedback consistent? Is the way they communicate with teachers or check grades also consistent? The more routine, practiced, and known these aspects of the school day are, the more we free up working memory for students to use learning content.

Describe some classroom routines and how to make them visual and concrete.

Classroom setup: The classroom checklist in figure 6.4 (page 146) is a great place to start becoming aware of the classroom environment and its support of executive function. Now, consider walking into the classroom as a student.

How are you able to navigate?

What do you reference?

Is it clear how to help yourself if you were lost in a process during the day?

When thinking about navigating the classroom as a student, describe some common observations and classroom needs.

Emotional regulation: Figure 6.4 (page 146) provides a starting point for considering the available classroom emotional-regulation accommodation.

Are there spaces to go or methods students can use to calm down when they need to?

Does the class have sensory or self-soothing items available?

How are students made aware of the systems for emotional and sensory regulation in class?

Describe classroom tools and methods for students' emotional regulation.

Look at Your Data

- Classroom observations
- Feedback from students and parents
- Executive function student and teacher checklists

Needs emerging from an analysis of classroom data include:

Phase 2: Skill Building

After examining your class data, determine the executive function skills you will build in all students or an individually identified student.

Prioritized executive function skills include:

Classroom Instruction and Practice of Skills

When? (Which dates?)

How will you teach the skills? (With which materials? Using which approaches?)

How will the students practice the skills? (What will the skills look like in each class? How will you monitor students' progress? How will you celebrate students' growth?)

What accommodations can support identified skills? (What might students with significant executive function needs require to learn and use the skills?)

Phase 3: Reflect and Support as a Team or Individually

Describe the feedback you hear from the following.

Your peers:

Students:

Parents:

What do you observe in your classroom regarding student engagement? Student behavioral concerns?

What does initial data look like for monitoring skills growth?

What adjustments or new teaching are you planning to propel the growth further?