



ADDRESSING EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & TRAUMA IN SCHOOL

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AGENDA

- ✘ Introduction to executive functions
- ✘ Symptoms and educational implications of trauma
- ✘ Strategies, interventions, accommodations



WHAT ARE EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS?

A very quick overview

WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTION?

“An umbrella term for the complex cognitive processes that control flexible, goal-directed behavior and the coordination and synthesis of many different processes.” (SMARTS CURRICULUM)

“Frontal lobe functioning responsible for higher-level cognitive abilities and cognitive control.” (Gottschall and Rozendaal, 2011)

“Set of directive capacities that facilitate a person’s ability to engage in purposeful processing of perceptions, emotions, thoughts and actions” (Miller, 2013)

“Skills that enable us to navigate through everyday life by helping us organize, plan, and manage life tasks.” (Gottschall and Rozendaal, 2011)

“An array of mental processes responsible for regulation of cognitive functioning during purposeful, goal directed problem solving behavior” (Dehn, 2013)

“Control and coordination of cognition processes during performance of complex tasks”

SIMPLE DEFINITIONS OF EF

- ✘ How the brain helps us to **execute** tasks
 - ✘ EF enable us to plan, organize, remember things, prioritize, pay attention and get started on tasks
- ✘ The ability to regulate thoughts, emotions, and actions (self-regulating)



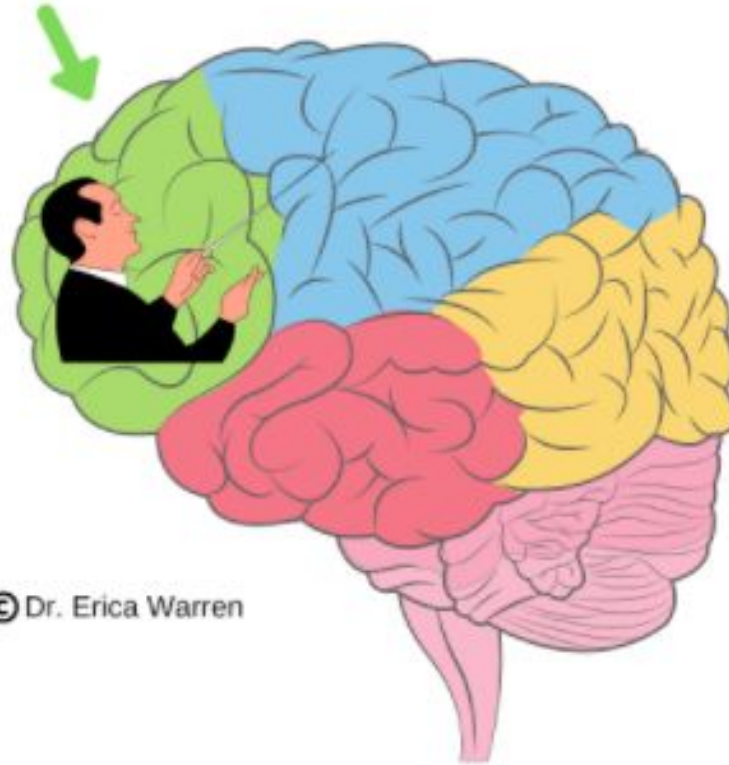
Manages

Organizes

Directs

Integrates

Frontal lobe




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TWO DIMENSIONS OF SKILLS

COGNITION-THINKING


- ✗ Working memory
- ✗ Planning/prioritization
- ✗ Organization
- ✗ Time management
- ✗ Metacognition



Select & achieve goals or
develop solutions to
problems

BEHAVIOR-DOING

- ✗ Response inhibition
- ✗ Emotional control
- ✗ Sustained attention
- ✗ Task initiation
- ✗ Goal-directed persistence
- ✗ Flexibility



Do what's
necessary to
reach goals

Dawson and Guare (2009)
Smart But Scattered

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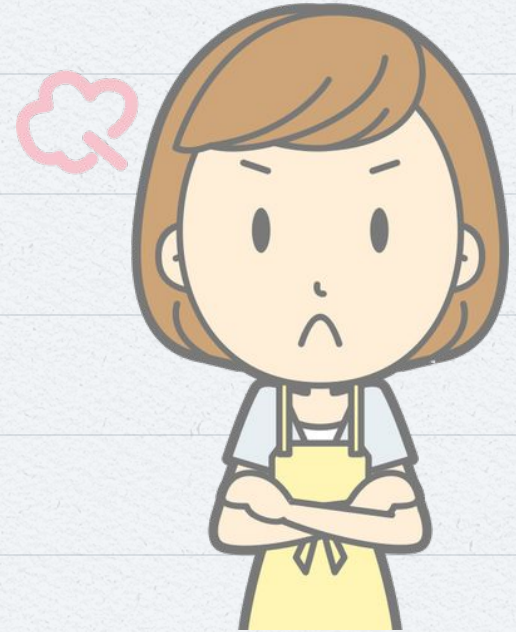
DOES THE CHILD...

- ✗ Follow classroom rules?
- ✗ Handle conflicts with peers without getting into physical fights?
- ✗ Calm down from an emotionally-charged situation when prompted by an adult?
- ✗ Resist saying hurtful things when with friends?



RESPONSE INHIBITION

The capacity to think
before you act



DOES THE CHILD...

- ✗ Remember after-school and weekend activities, events, and responsibilities?
- ✗ Remember to do assignments?
- ✗ Bring school materials to and from school?
- ✗ Remember multistep directions, given sufficient time and practice?



DOES THE CHILD...

- ✗ Recover quickly from a change of plans?
- ✗ Tolerate criticism from an adult?
- ✗ Calm down quickly when they get upset or excited?



EMOTIONAL CONTROL

**The ability to manage
emotions**



DOES THE CHILD...

- ✗ Get “stuck” on things?
- ✗ Recover quickly from minor disappointments?
- ✗ “Shift gears” when plans change?
- ✗ Do “open-ended” homework assignments?



FLEXIBILITY

**The ability to revise plans
in the face of obstacles,
setbacks, new information
or mistakes.**



DOES THE CHILD...

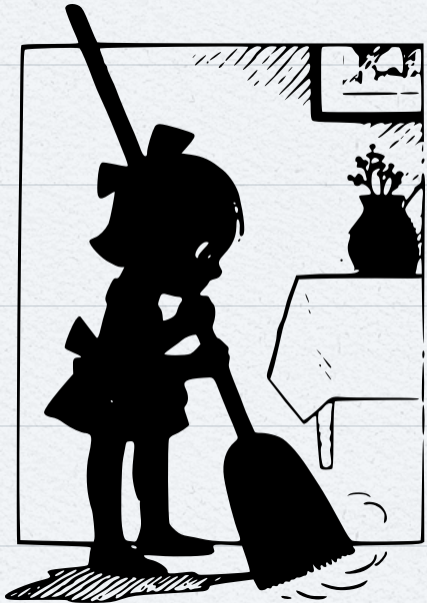
- ✗ Spend adequate time on homework assignments?
- ✗ Maintain focus in the classroom?



SUSTAINED ATTENTION



The capacity to keep paying attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.



DOES THE CHILD...

- ✗ Follow 3-4 step routines that have been practiced?
- ✗ Complete 3-4 classroom assignments in a row?
- ✗ Make and follow nightly homework schedule without undue procrastination?



TASK INITIATION

The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.



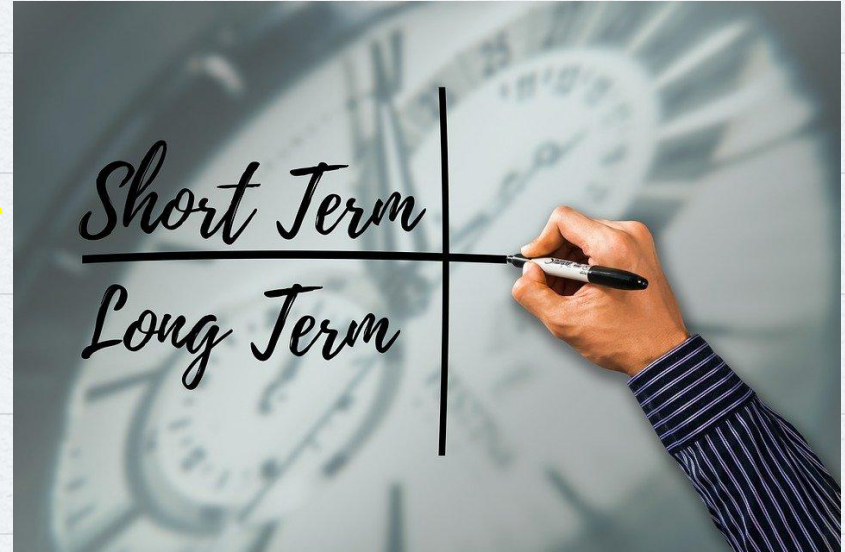
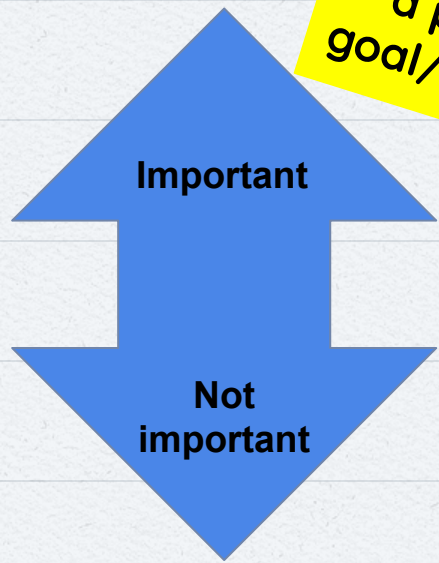
DOES THE CHILD...

- ✗ Finish one task before beginning another?
- ✗ Carry out a homework assignment with various steps
- ✗ Do online research for school/something of interest



PLANNING/PRIORITIZATION

The ability to create
a plan to reach a
goal/complete a task



DOES THE CHILD...

- ✗ Maintain notebooks/folders (including virtual)?
- ✗ Lose personal belongings?
- ✗ Keep track of and complete assignments?
- ✗ Have a neat workspace?



ORGANIZATION



The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials

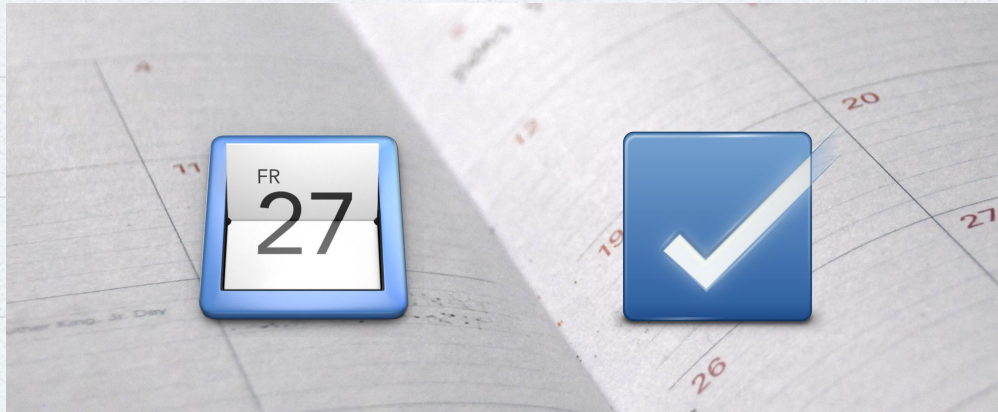
DOES THE CHILD...

- ✗ Complete homework/tasks in a reasonable amount of time?
- ✗ Use a planner/calendar?
- ✗ Spread out studying for tests and completing long-term projects?



TIME MANAGEMENT

Estimating the amount of time a task will take to complete in order to meet deadlines



DOES THE CHILD...

- ✗ Try more than one solution to get to a simple goal?
- ✗ Increase their effort to improve performance?
- ✗ Practice without reminders to improve a skill?



GOAL-DIRECTED SELF-PERSISTENCE

The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off/distracted by competing interests



DOES THE CHILD...

- ✗ Anticipate the result of an action and make adjustments accordingly?
- ✗ Stop and re-read when they lose track?
- ✗ Stay on topic while writing?
- ✗ Review work and edit mistakes?



METACOGNITION

The ability to stand back and take a bird's eye view of oneself in a situation



How am I doing?
How did I do?

TRAUMA AND PTSD SYMPTOMS OR BEHAVIORS

- ✗ Flashbacks, hallucinations, nightmares, etc.
- ✗ Emotional distress from reminders of event
- ✗ Physical reactions from reminders of event
- ✗ Fear of certain places, things, or situations
- ✗ Disturbed/irregular sleep
- ✗ Difficulty concentrating
- ✗ Easily startled
- ✗ Self-destructive behavior
- ✗ Irritability
- ✗ Impulsiveness
- ✗ Anger and hostility
- ✗ Depression, sadness, hopelessness
- ✗ Fight, flee, freeze



EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF TRAUMA

- ✘ Clingy, whiny, impatient, impulsive, aggressive
- ✘ Unable to perform skills or even basic functions
- ✘ Capacity for learning may be decreased
- ✘ Difficulty concentrating, preoccupied, easily confused
- ✘ Lose interest in activities
- ✘ Become quiet and/or sad
- ✘ Avoid interaction with other children
- ✘ Fall asleep in class



INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS



PROVIDE A CONSISTENT, PREDICTABLE ROUTINE WITH MOVEMENT AND MINDFULNESS

CLASS AGENDA

9:00 AM

Welcome/Mindfulness

10:00 AM

English

11:00 AM

Recess/Movement

12:00 PM

Lunch

1:00 PM

History

2:00 PM

Science

2:45 PM

Dismissal



DON'T FORGET!

- Meet Miss Amelia - Our sub while Mrs. Kelly is on maternity leave
- Check schedule for Trevor the Gerbil feeding
- Field trip next Thursday

TO-DOS

- Bring your library books on Thursday
- Science project due on Friday

THE 5-4-3-2-1 COPING TECHNIQUE

EASE YOUR STATE OF MIND IN STRESSFUL MOMENTS.

ACKNOWLEDGE **5** THINGS YOU CAN SEE AROUND YOU. 

ACKNOWLEDGE **4** THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH AROUND YOU. 

ACKNOWLEDGE **3** THINGS YOU CAN HEAR AROUND YOU. 

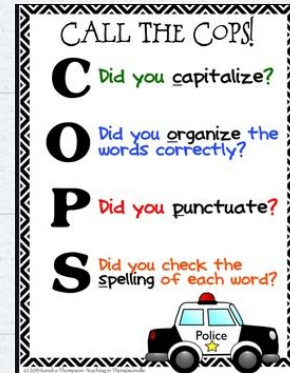
ACKNOWLEDGE **2** THINGS YOU CAN SMELL AROUND YOU. 

ACKNOWLEDGE **1** THING YOU CAN TASTE AROUND YOU. 



USE PLANNING APPROACHES AND REMINDERS

- ✘ To-Do checklists
- ✘ Structured daily routine
- ✘ Provide scoring rubrics
- ✘ Graphic organizers
- ✘ Use different modalities
- ✘ Have child repeat lists



EXAMPLE OF A CHILD FOLLOWING AND REMEMBERING DIRECTIONS



Sesame Street - Episode 0408, November 14, 1972

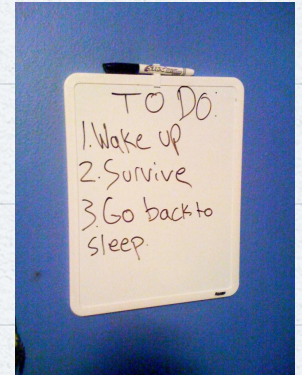
PLAN FOR HOMEWORK, PROJECTS, OTHER TASKS

- ✗ To-do lists/tables
- ✗ Plan for long-term projects
- ✗ Kanban boards



My Intention:

Order	Task/goal	Duration	Time



KANBAN BOARDS



	To do	In progress		Done	
		Next	Doing		
House chores	+ add task Plan Barcelona holiday activities Prepare for book club discussion 0/6 Organize Danny's party	+ add task Barcelona - book a hotel for July 13th to 20th Place a complaint regarding books delivery last week	+ add task Order new soccer shoes for Mickey Set a dentist appointment for M. and I	+ add task Invite Tom and Carol for lunch / make a menu (incl. vegan options for C.)	+ 1 archived task + add task Print out Sam's best pictures Place online grocery order
Volunteering	+ add task Send invitations to the Comitee Prepare a speech for UBF	+ add task Prepare a presentation for TBD meeting Write the speech for the XDP Gala	+ add task Set team rotation plan for May Follow up with Daria Garcia about key points of our meeting	+ add task Contact Mary Frisco Arrange a conference call with members of the Comitee	+ 4 archived tasks + add task Contact Free World Now

- Color code post-it notes
- Move up and down and across columns
- Option- Use days of the week instead of status

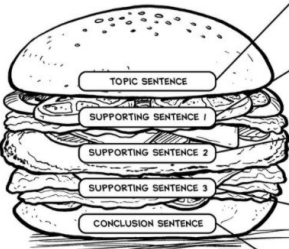
<https://kanbantool.com/personal-kanban-board>



PROVIDE AND TEACH STUDENTS TO USE GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Name _____
Date _____

The Hamburger Paragraph



TOPIC SENTENCE

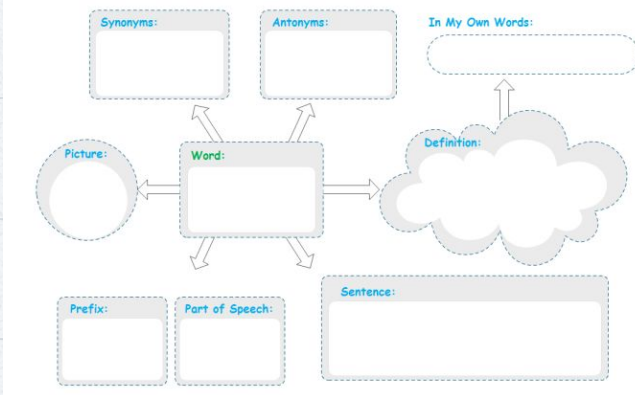
SUPPORTING SENTENCE 1

SUPPORTING SENTENCE 2

SUPPORTING SENTENCE 3

CONCLUSION SENTENCE

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Synonyms:

Antonyms:

In My Own Words:

Picture:

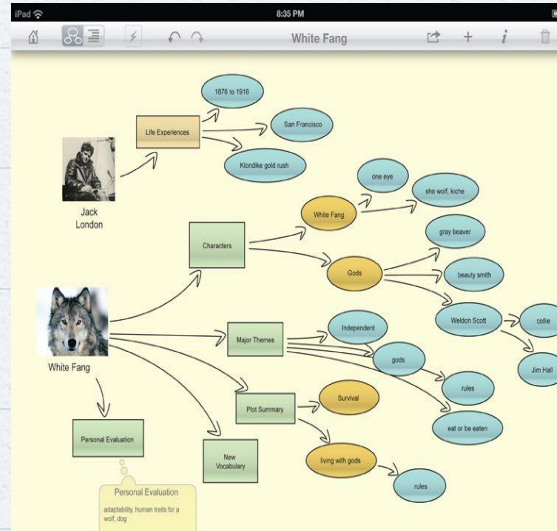
Word:

Definition:

Prefix:

Part of Speech:

Sentence:



White Fang

Jack London

White Fang

Major Themes

Plot Summary

Personal Evaluation

Life Experiences

1876 to 1916

San Francisco

Klondike gold rush

Characters

White Fang

one eye

she wolf, scow

gray beaver

Major Themes

Independent

goats

Survival

living with goats

rules

eat or be eaten

rules

jealousy with

Webster Scott

collie

Jim Hall

Personal Evaluation

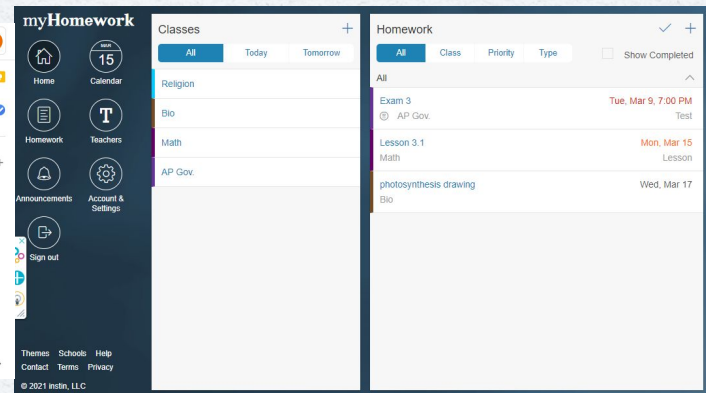
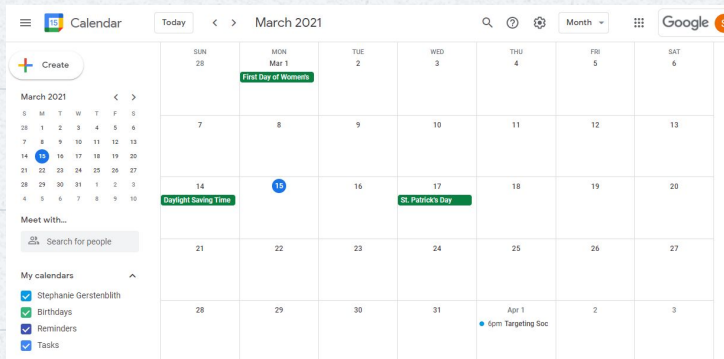
adaptability, human traits for a wolf, dog



WEAR REMINDERS



ENCOURAGE THE USE OF CALENDARS/PLANNERS



TEACH HOW TO MAKE HOMEWORK PLANS

Helps with time estimation

Helps to visualize/rehearse task

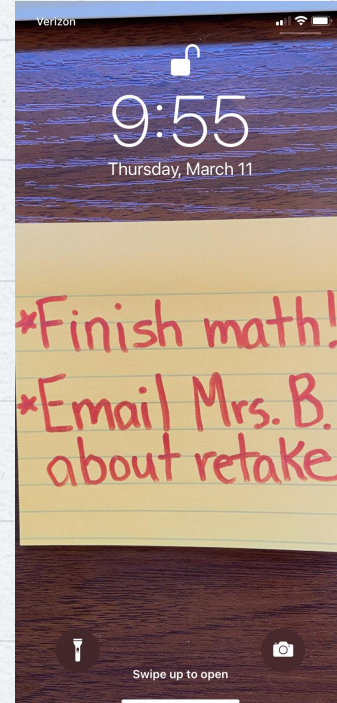
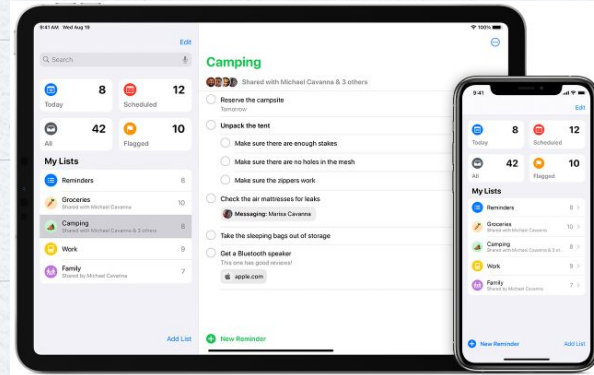
STUDY PLAN

Date: _____

Task	How long will it take?	When will you start?	Where will you work?	Actual start/stop times	Done (✓)

OR- write what time/where on assignment itself, in assignment book, or as an alarm in smart phone

IMPLEMENT REMINDERS

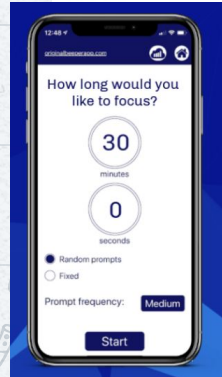
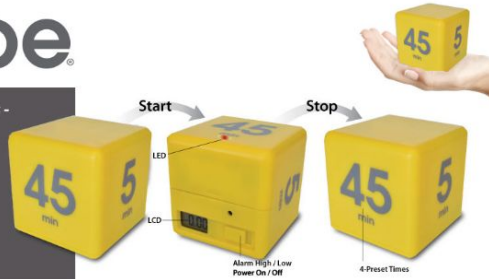


TIME
Cube

No buttons or dials -
Just turn it!

Durable

Splash proof



BEEPERAPP

ASSIGN WORK IN CHUNKS

1

Write introduction

Assign the introduction before having the students write the rest of the paper.

2

Write body paragraphs

Specify what the body paragraphs should entail (textual evidence, number of paragraphs, etc.)

3

Write conclusion

Assign writing the conclusion as the last "piece." Instruct students how to write a conclusion.



TEACH NOTE TAKING AND ACTIVE READING STRATEGIES

History 30: Canada & the 20s/30s Powerpoint

Canada: 1920s and 30s Cloze Notes

1920s AND 30s

_____ about government, authority and life changed dramatically after World War I.

_____ existed in every country following World War I.

People started to look for new ways to govern themselves.

Some ways were peaceful like socialism while others were violent and _____ like fascism and communism.

WINNIPEG GENERAL STRIKE (1919)

Unions across Western Canada formed in to the " _____ " (OBU) in 1919.

A strike broke out first in _____ followed by the outbreak of "sympathetic" strikes across the West. The OBU was fighting for improved working conditions.

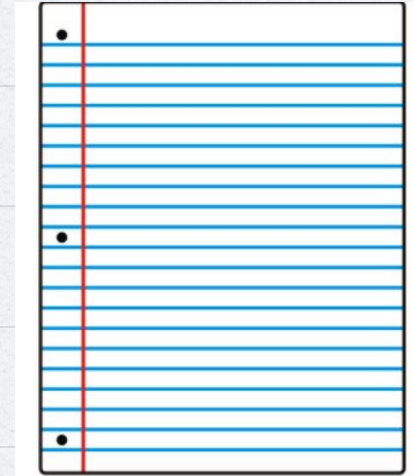
The bus _____ government and est _____

Busines _____ m and socialis _____

Have students fill in cloze notes during lectures



TEACH BINDER ORGANIZATION



CONSISTENTLY MONITOR AND ASSESS STUDENT ORGANIZATION

CRITERIA	EACH OF THE CRITERIA IS WORTH 1 POINTS APIECE.
<u>DUE DATES:</u> THE STUDENT WRITES DUE DATES AT THE TOP OF ALL ASSIGNMENTS.	
<u>NO STUFFING:</u> THE STUDENT'S BINDER AND TEXTBOOK DO NOT CONTAIN LOOSE PAPERS, AND HE/SHE USES THE TAB DIVIDERS AND POCKETS APPROPRIATELY.	
<u>MATERIALS:</u> THE STUDENT HAS ALL NECESSARY MATERIALS FOR CLASS. (EX. PENCIL, PAPER, ETC.)	
<u>PLANNER:</u> THE PLANNER IS FILLED OUT.	
<u>COMPLETE/INCOMPLETE SECTION:</u> THE STUDENT'S BINDER CONTAINS EITHER A FOLDER OR SECTION FOR COMPLETE AND INCOMPLETE HOMEWORK.	
TOTAL	5

INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY

- ✘ Provide a scribe for the child
- ✘ Read document aloud to hear/see/edit errors
- ✘ Speech to text
- ✘ Text to speech
- ✘ Spell check
- ✘ Grammarly
- ✘ Audible versions of books along with hard copies



ADJUST THE ENVIRONMENT

- ✗ Attempt to control or eliminate situations that may trigger strong emotional responses
- ✗ Establish a feeling of safety and acceptance in the classroom (warm greetings, eye contact)
- ✗ Arrange room so it is easy to move through
- ✗ Create a balance between quiet and noisy activity areas; alternate schedule between active and quiet activities

Ideal for trauma victims' classrooms



Ideal for trauma victims' classrooms

PROVIDE A SAFE SPACE

Create a peace corner in the classroom

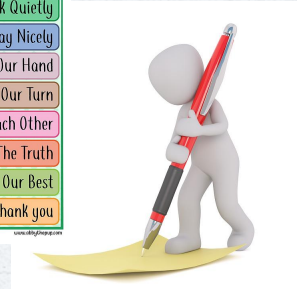


Allow students to use a "flash" or "fast" pass to go to a safe place in the building

HELP CHILDREN THINK BEFORE THEY ACT

- ✘ Post and review classroom rules
- ✘ Sticky notes to write something down rather than interrupting
- ✘ Use a nonsense word to cue self-control
- ✘ Quiet body signal (thumb on chest)
- ✘ Provide prompts in advance about expected behavior

CLASSROOM RULES	
Rule # 1	Listen Carefully
Rule # 2	Follow Directions
Rule # 3	Work Quietly
Rule # 4	Play Nicely
Rule # 5	Raise Our Hand
Rule # 6	Wait Our Turn
Rule # 7	Respect Each Other
Rule # 8	Tell The Truth
Rule # 9	Try Our Best
Rule # 10	Say Please and Thank you



Ideal for trauma victims



Ideal for trauma victims

TEACH STUDENTS:

- ✗ How to recognize situations or early signs
- ✗ Coping strategies
- ✗ Mindfulness meditation
- ✗ Growth mindset
- ✗ Social pragmatics (Michelle Garcia Winner)
- ✗ Self-talk to plan in advance (if/then)

I can get myself back on track as soon as I can



Butterfly hug

Ideal for trauma victims

PROVIDE VISUALS TO HELP CHILDREN IN THE MOMENT

Hard Times Board

Triggers:

Sometimes I get upset when I hear loud noises such as my friend crying or a vacuum cleaner.



Can't Dos:

When I'm upset, I can't throw things or hurt other people.



Can Dos:

When I'm upset, I can:

Listen to music

or

Read a book



What Zone Are You In?

Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
Sick Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Mean Yelling/Hitting Disgusted Out of Control



Ideal for trauma victims

OFFER COMFORT WHEN NEEDED



A supportive
peer

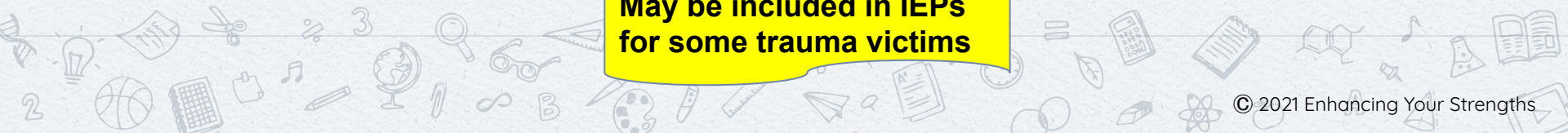
Something to
hold



PROVIDE ART AND/OR MUSIC THERAPY



**May be included in IEPs
for some trauma victims**



Just a few to
get you
started!

LOOK INTO SOME RESOURCES

- ✘ Smart But Scattered by P. Dawson and R. Guare
- ✘ The Organized Student by D. Goldberg
- ✘ Executive Functions Training by C. Gottschall and C. Lund Rozendaal
- ✘ Seth Perler sethperler.com and on YouTube
- ✘ Executive Function Tribe (private FB group maintained by Seth Perler)

DEVICES AND APPS

- ✘ Time Cube: datexx.com
- ✘ WatchMinder: watchminder.com
- ✘ myHomework: myhomeworkapp.com
- ✘ Fantastical: flexibits.com/fantastical
- ✘ Learning Ally: learningally.org
- ✘ Epic Books: getepic.com
- ✘ Audible: audible.com
- ✘ Hoopla: hoopladigital.com



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Thank you! Have a good night!