

Strategies to Address the Needs of Students with Executive Function Weaknesses

1. Teach students to strategies to help be aware about how they think and learn.
2. Make strategy use count by giving students *credits* on the basis of their use of strategies as well as their final answers.
3. Use strategy reflection sheets for homework and tests and give credit when students take the time to think about and explain how they have completed tasks.
4. Strategy reflection sheets ensure that students allocate homework and study time to the processes as well as the strategies that work, rather than focusing on only the end product or content of learning.
5. Create daily 5- to 10-minute strategy-sharing discussions for the class. These discussions are important opportunities for students to share their strategies with one another, as this process helps students to understand how they learn and think.
6. Implement a peer-mentoring program to promote self-understanding, effort, persistence, and resilience in students with learning and attention difficulties.
7. Direct and explicit explanations of key concepts and vocabulary should be provided, so that students can access the information.
8. The steps involved in learning specific strategies should be modeled.
9. “Think-alouds” can be used to show students how to think about or approach a problem.
10. Information should be broken down into manageable chunks or steps.
11. Background information should be discussed to scaffold new concepts, so that all students have the same level of understanding.
12. The goal of strategy use should be clear to both the teacher and the students (e.g., students should understand and apply at least one memory strategy independently on a test).

TABLE 2.4. Embedding Executive Function Processes and Strategies across Curriculum Areas

Curriculum area	Executive function processes involved	Strategies
Reading comprehension	<i>Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use monthly calendars to plan and break down the reading of longer texts.
	<i>Prioritizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students use active reading strategies that ask them to look for and mark specific aspects of the text (characters, setting, themes, etc.).
	<i>Organizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require students to use Post-it notes to summarize each chapter of a novel.
	<i>Organizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students use story organizers to summarize stories for book reports.
	<i>Shifting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students predict different endings to a story.
Written language	<i>Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require students to plan long-term writing assignments by using monthly and weekly calendars and setting short-term “due dates” for themselves.
	<i>Prioritizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students use graphic organizers for brainstorming, prioritizing, and organizing ideas.
	<i>Organizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide templates or specific guidelines for writing thesis statements, introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions.
	<i>Self-checking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students develop personalized editing checklists based on previous assignments. Provide a specific rubric for students to check their work.
	<i>Shifting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize how to shift from the main ideas to supporting details when writing.
Studying and test taking	<i>Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students plan their study schedule for upcoming tests.
	<i>Organizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students take notes from the textbook in a question–answer or Triple Note Tote format for later use as a study tool.
	<i>Shifting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach students to rephrase topic sentences as questions, and to use context clues to understand ambiguities and to interpret questions.
	<i>Memorizing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When requiring students to take notes and to study history or biology, teach them to develop their own acronyms or crazy phrases to help them to retrieve and manipulate the information.
	<i>Self-checking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow students to bring personalized checklists to tests, to remind them to check for their own common errors.