

Secondary Teachers: Simple Tips to Help Your Students and Increase Your Instructional Time

The start of school is such a busy time! Your responsibilities as a teacher go far beyond delivering content instruction as you prepare to foster success for all students. You will teach class rules, routines and expectations, organize the classroom environment and materials, teach students how to organize their materials, and teach them how to meet assignment deadlines. These practices require the use of executive function (EF) skills such as self-regulating behavior, organizing and planning, communication, managing time, and prioritizing. This can be especially challenging for students with EF skill deficits. Here are some easy tips you can use to support all students, but especially those students with EF deficits, learn the above mentioned classroom behaviors. When students demonstrate these skills, fewer reminders from you are needed, and increased student independence and awareness result in less distraction from instructional time.

It's a win-win situation!

TIP #1

An ounce of prevention versus constant correction – Behaviors and expectations need to be acquired by your students before learning can take place.

- Determine class rules, routines and expectations with your students.
This helps with getting their buy in.
- Visually support rules, routines and expectations in your classroom using posters, student checklists, physical cues, etc.
- Post information stating what the student will need for the class lesson in a designated spot.
- Post information about homework assignments in a designated spot.
Have students record this information in a planner, or use an app such as Can Due.

- Allow time for students to practice the class rules, routines and expectations using game formats such as jeopardy, concentration or Kahoot.com. You can also role play this information. Remember to reinforce the positive by using statements such as, ***"You did a nice job of entering the classroom and organizing your materials for today's lesson."***
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TIP #2

Quickly assess your students' learning and behavioral needs – Understanding and addressing your students' learning needs will facilitate their learning of content and require less review on your part as a teacher.

- Use a quick survey to gather information about your students and analyze the survey results (Strosnider & Sharpe, 2019, online appendices).
 - Have a quick conversation with your students about what they find easy to do in school and what they find challenging.
 - Have the students write a brief paragraph or bulleted responses to specific questions addressing their learning likes, dislikes and needs.
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TIP #3

Teach your students to self-regulate and evaluate their performance – The key to success is to encourage student self-regulation and independence.

- Teach your students to use metacognition so that they think about what they are doing as they complete tasks and evaluate their own progress.
- Use teaching strategies to reinforce desired student behaviors.

- Teach your students learning strategies they can use to help self-regulate.

Reference:

Strosnider, R & Sharpe, V. (2019). The Executive function guidebook: Strategies to help all students achieve success. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Content provided by Strosnider & Sharpe,
www.instituteonexecutivefunctioning.com, authors of the EF Guidebook,
Corwin, 2019.
