



Executive Functions in the Classroom

PLAN/ ORGANIZE



Plan/Organize refers to the capacity to manage current and future task expectations. Being able to set timelines and monitor goals is how we get things done!

Plan/Organize is measured with items, such as “Becomes overwhelmed by large assignments” and “Gets caught up in details and misses the big picture.”

How to help students who struggle...

Students with difficulty managing Plan/Organize are going to have difficulty with a wide range of activities in the classroom because they are stuck in the “now” of it all. Without a clear picture of what is going to happen next and what they need, students with poor Plan/Organize respond in reactive ways. They hold off on action until the consequences are right in front of them. The “Plan” component of this executive function describes their ability to anticipate future events, set goals, and develop steps that lead to the outcome they want. The “Organize” component of this executive function describes their ability to make sense and bring order to a lot of information.

Break down tasks. Help students break large assignments down into manageable pieces.

Provide structured support. Provide students with templates and planning outlines to help them organize their thoughts and time.

Share the plan. Be very clear about the objectives of tasks. Create and share a task completion plan with students. Walk students through the planning process. Show them how to make task completion plans of their own.

Use tools. Provide students with planning tools, such as calendars, agendas, apps, and timers.

Develop organizational systems. Help students develop systems of organization to keep track of information and materials.

Building capacity. Encourage students to make their own organizational plans for projects. Start small and then gradually increase the complexity of plans. Ask students to evaluate current organizational system and then work together to help the student choose ways to improve systems. Ask metacognitive questions (e.g., What will you do first? second? third?” “What do you need to do this task?”).



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