Executive Functions in the Classroom

ORGANIZE MATERIALS

Organize materials is not about keeping a tidy, "Instagram-ready" classroom. You need to create and maintain systems that are predictable and reliable for you and your students.

Organize materials is measured with items, such as "I have trouble finding things in my room, closet, or desk" and "I have a messy closet."

How to help students who struggle...

A quick check of your students' desks is probably all you will need to find those that have difficulty with Organizing Materials. A desk jammed with loose pages and broken pencils is more than a physical mess...sometimes that mess reflects a disorderly internal life. Without regular reminders to put pages into the appropriate binder (for example), students will continue to find the path of least resistance. Be deliberate about the systems you enact in your class with prompts like: "Let's make a list of the work you must do and rank it in terms of importance" and "We need a system for our science booklets...what sections should we include?"

General Supports. Demonstrate to students how cell phone reminders and calendars can be used to support their organization of materials, plans, schedules, and events. Co-create daily schedules (then weekly and monthly schedules) with students. Remind students to check their schedules. Make sure the classroom sets a strong example of organization.

Sense of time. Students with a poor sense of time may under-estimate how long a task will take. Start small by asking them "how long do you think this will take you?" Then, use a timer to help them understand how to manage their time.

Organizing Materials. Point out organizational tools in the classroom (e.g., storage bins, binders, shelves) and reinforce their use. Let students develop modify organizational systems to meet their needs.

Assist student in setting up systems to organize their books, binders, and materials. Ask questions to help students engage in setting up an organisational system (e.g., "How can we work together to set a up system that will help you organize your materials?").

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