

# Executive Function Coaching:

## Model and Methodology

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# Objectives

1. BBS Executive Function Coaching: what, why and how
2. Examples of tools and strategies used in coaching
3. Practical Principles for addressing EFs at home and school

# What are Executive Functions?

Analogy: Orchestra conductor

Executive functions: The brain's metaphorical “conductor”



## EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS (skills supporting goal-directed behavior)

Attention

Memory

Cognitive flexibility

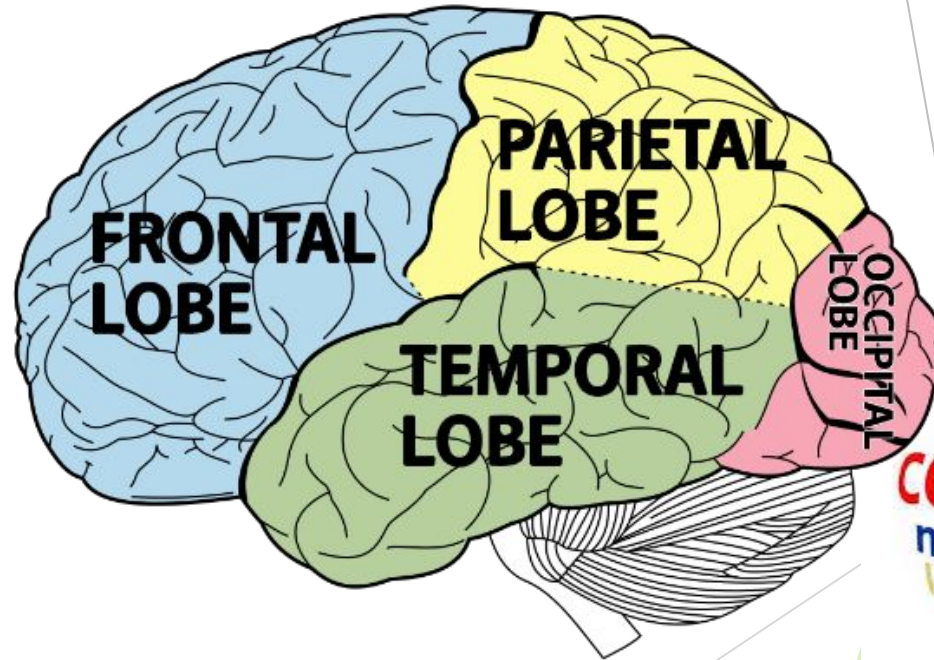
Initiation

Planning, prioritizing

Time management

Organization

(Metacognition)



Self-regulation



# Sample inventory of “in-classroom behaviors”

## Expected

Student looks at teacher and takes notes on key points.

Student works well in groups.

Student brings homework to class ... and can locate it quickly.

Student brings all materials to class.

Student asks questions when confused.

Student participates in discussions.

## Considered problematic

Student doodles, reads, stares into space.

Student does not participate or won't compromise to keep things smooth.

Student searches through messy backpack.

Student forgets or can't find key materials.

Student keeps concerns to herself.

Student avoids class discussions.

# Sample inventory of “at-home behaviors”

## Expected

Student completes homework on time.

Student completes all aspects of homework.

Student starts papers/projects early.

Student cleans out binders.

Student actively prepares for tests.

Student prepares for class.

## Considered problematic

Student doesn't write/ know due dates, may not have written it down.

Student provides minimal response or only answers some questions.

Student waits until last minute.

Student keeps everything and with little organization.

If anything, student “looks over” materials.

Student doesn't do assigned readings.

# Why coach Executive Functions?

- Executive functions are more critical for school readiness than either IQ or readiness skills in reading and math (Morrison et al, 2010; Blair and Razza, 2017);
- they are predictive of success throughout the school years from preschool through college (Loosli et al, 2012; McLelland et al, 2007)
- They are predictive not only of achievement but of quality of life (Moffitt, 2012)

# Executive Function Coaching

The goal of in-person and online coaching is for clients to develop stronger Executive Function skills that in turn will support more effective performance in and outside of school.





# HOW do we coach Executive Functions at Beyond BookSmart?

## Coaching Model

- Executive Functions: Identify and Prioritize Executive Function profile
- Methodology: Reach, Teach, Reflect, Release

# Methodology: Reach, Teach, Reflect, Release

1. Reach: Know how to connect to students, so they will be more receptive to your help;
2. Teach: Name the Executive Function skills students need for success; and Select specific tools that address these deficits and that help students to become more effective
3. Reflect: Collaborate in tailoring and mastering tools and strategies to suit the student's individual style and profile
4. Release: Support the student in taking control of integrating, applying, and generalizing tools towards the goal of independence

**REACH:** Know how to connect to students, so they will be more receptive to your help

## Three things to help

- ▶ Empathize
- ▶ Normalize
- ▶ Empower

**TEACH:** Name the Executive Function skills students need for success; and Select specific tools that address these deficits and that help students to become more effective

Among most common concerns are related to getting homework done.

What are the steps for accomplishing “do your homework?”

- In 2 minutes, jot down all the steps that a student needs to (or should) take in order to get their homework done on a typical night

# Some steps

- Identify what tonight's homework assignments
- Have materials/resources needed to do the homework
- Have a space for doing the homework
- Understand what needs to be done
- Plan time -
  - Make sure to leave enough time to complete homework
  - Anticipate what is coming up "next" (e.g. test in two days, need to start studying)
- Get started
- Keep working to completion
- Remember to turn homework in

## 6<sup>th</sup> grade student

# EF Priorities: Attention(distractible,restless) Planning and persisting with HW

Introduce and experiment with potential tools:

Fast break

Short goals (e.g. 5 minute goals)

Breaks

# Fast Break Homework Plan

Subject	Specific Task	Start Time	(Anticipated) End Time
History	Read Ch. 2 and Annotate Text	5:00 pm	5:30 pm
Math	Solve problems 6 - 10 (p. 72)	5:30 pm	6:15 pm
Dinner	Enjoy!	6:15 pm	7:30 pm
Chemistry	Finish Lab Report	7:30 pm	8:30 pm
Break	YouTube Videos	8:30	9:00 pm
English	Review reading	9:00	9:30 pm



## 5 Minute Goals: Task Initiation

- What can you get done in 5 minutes?
  - Addresses both boredom and anxiety
  - Helps students overcome inertia & establish quick wins
  - Momentum
  - Anchor point

## Reflect: Collaborate in tailoring and mastering tools and strategies to suit the student's individual style and profile

- Once identify tool, work on collaborating with student in tailoring, assessing, gaining mastery with tool
- What is working, what is not working for you?
- What would you do differently next time?

9<sup>th</sup> grade student: Again, concerns with planning and organization of HW. Conscientious in doing daily homework, but stressed by projects and if forgets or doesn't have time to complete an assignment on time, doesn't have a way to keep track of in order to complete those assignments later.

Introduce, experiment with

Planner

Steps-Time-Mapping

Covey

# Homework: Tracking, Time management

Task/Activity	Estimate vs Actual	When
History poster, finding 4 reasons	20 min 35 min	Study Hall
History poster, finishing touches	20 min 45 min	7-8 pm
Math worksheet	20 minutes 19 minutes!	5 pm
Reading for English	1 hour 1.5 hours	3-4:30
Quizlet for vocabulary words	30 min 35 min	6:30-7 pm

# Graphic organizer: Week planner

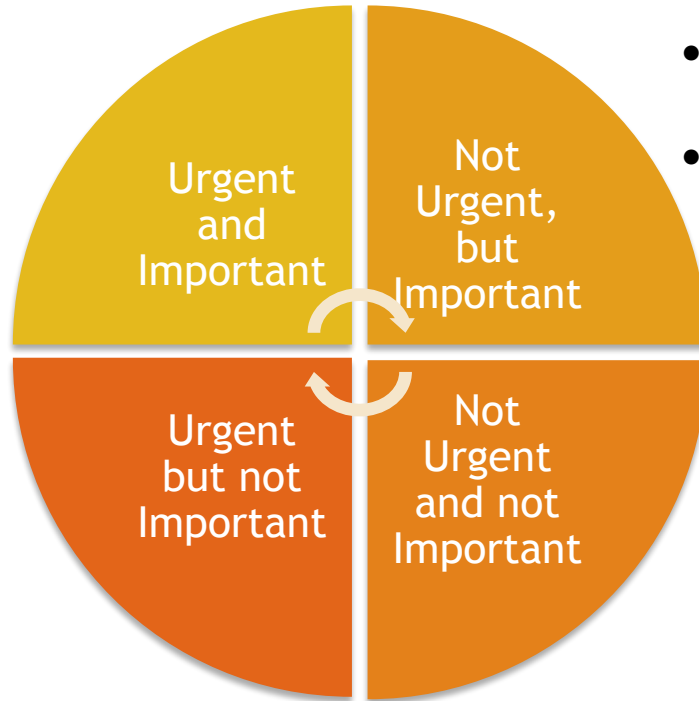
*(for planning, but support tracking and TI also)*

Class	Mon		Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday
Math (algebra)	HW	x				
Science	HW	x x				
English						
History						
Spanish						

(tried 2-week window -- didn't work as well)

# Tool for Prioritizing (Covey)

- Math test tomorrow



- Notecards for research project
- Exercise

- Snapchat

- Facebook
- Hang out with friends

# Breaking down EF Barriers

- Consider what EF skills are required to complete a task
  - Clean your room
  - Do your homework
  - Get ready for school
- What practical tool/strategy could be used to support your child/study in managing their vulnerability when doing that task - collaborate
- Support small successes, particularly initially
- Teach, Reflect/Revise, Practice to mastery

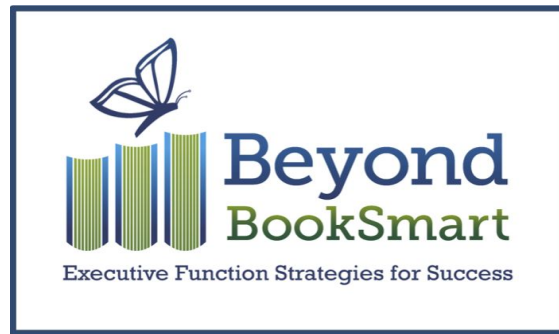
# YOUR KID'S GONNA BE OKAY

A GUIDE TO RAISING  
COMPETENT AND  
CONFIDENT KIDS

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## Executive Function Coaching

Helping students effectively meet today's challenges  
with tools that last a lifetime.

For more information about BBS, please see our website :

<https://www.beyondbooksmart.com>

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