

SESSION ONE

WHAT DOES EXECUTIVE FUNCTION LOOK LIKE?

Learning Objectives:

- Gain a basic understanding of Executive Function and what it looks like in action
- Describe how the “Stroop Test” uses Executive Function skills
- Review how basic tasks demonstrate different developmental levels of Executive Function

Before the PLC Session:

1. Learners complete Module 1: What Does Executive Function Look Like?
2. Learners answer the *Reflect and Apply* questions and are prepared to bring these ideas to the PCL

During the PLC Session:

1. Group Share of *Reflect and Apply* Ideas (15 minutes)
 - a. Consider breaking into small groups of 3 or 4 if you have a larger PLC
 - b. If learners are slow to warm up or seem stuck, try the following prompts:
 - i. How do you think challenging student behavior relates to EF skills?
 - ii. How is your own EF affected when you feel stressed?
 - iii. In what ways do you think EF helps students learn academic content?
 - c. You might also share your own *Reflect and Apply* ideas to get the group started
2. Group Discussion Questions (20 minutes):
 - a. *Topic 1: Executive Function Knowledge*
 - i. How familiar were you with EF before starting this Professional Development course?
 - ii. In what ways has your understanding of EF improved after the first module?

- b. *Topic 2: Dominant versus Goal-directed Response*
 - i. What is an example of a dominant response that you see your students making regularly?
 - ii. In what ways might you help your students learn to pause and respond in a more goal-directed way in the example you provided to the previous question?
 - c. *Topic 3: EF and Social-Emotional Skills*
 - i. Do you have a social-emotional program that you use in your classroom or specific part of your day to focus on skill development?
 - ii. In what ways do you think EF skills influence social and emotional development and vice versa?
3. Group Activity (20 minutes):
- a. Thinking back to the Stroop Test and the Day/Night task, design and activity that you could use in the classroom that practices goal-directed responses and inhibiting dominant responses.
4. Session 1 Evaluation (5 minutes): After completing the session, evaluate each statement below on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being *Strongly Disagree* and 4 being *Strongly Agree*.
- a. The group activity we created helps students practice working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility.
 - b. I can identify ways in which EF relates to academic learning and social-emotional skills.

After the PLC Session:

1. Try the activity that you created with your students in the coming week. Describe how the activity went over and whether you would like to make any changes and why.
2. Additional resources to explore:
 - a. SEL competencies defined - <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>
 - b. Executive Function & Self-Regulation (Harvard University: Center on the Developing Child) <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function/>