

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

Prepare:

1. Complete Module 1: What Does Executive Function Look Like?
2. Complete each *Reflect and Apply* questions. There is space below for you to record your ideas. Be prepared to bring this back to share with your PLC.

Share:

1. Group Share of *Reflect and Apply* Ideas (Pair and Share)
 - a. When a child acts out in your classroom, what is your immediate response? Is it frustration, anger, exasperation, or patience and understanding? Why do you think this is the case?
 - b. How does stress affect brain development? Is it always a bad thing?
 - c. What is more important when children enter kindergarten – being able to sit still or reciting the ABC’s? Why?
 - d. True or false: Executive Function skills are predetermined and cannot be developed, just like IQ. Please share your reasoning.

2. Group Discussion

- a. *Topic 1: Executive Function Knowledge*
- b. *Topic 2: Dominant versus Goal-directed Response*
- c. *Topic 3: EF and Socia- Emotional Skills*

3. Group Activity

- 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. Reflect on Your Learning: 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.

Apply:

- 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.
- Additional resources to explore:
 - SEL competencies defined - <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>
 - Executive Function & Self-Regulation (Harvard University: Center on the Developing Child) <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function/>