



# 5 Step Process to Executive Functioning

Courage to Risk - January 2025



# MAKE SURE YOU HAVE...

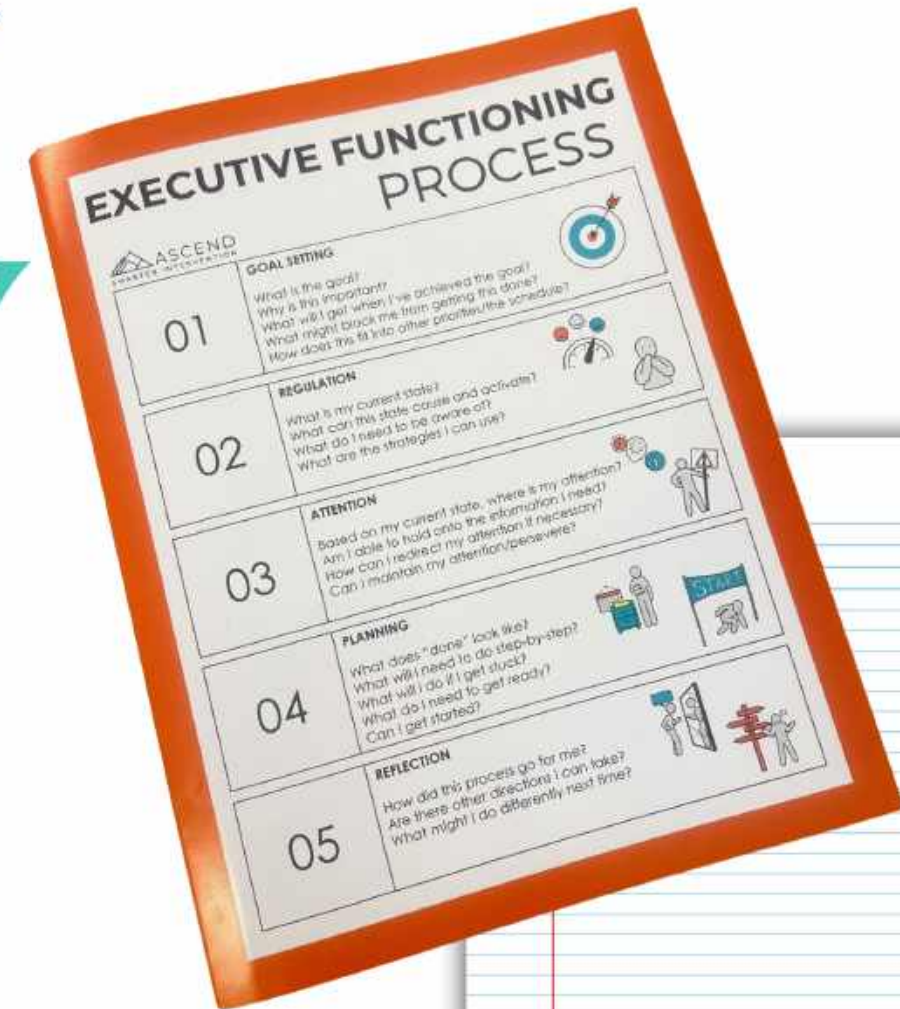
*our favorite EF resource*



Executive Functioning  
Process Trifold



Somewhere to write  
notes for reflections!



# HI! I'M COREY

I'm the executive director at Ascend SMARTER Intervention where our mission is to make research based instruction easy and accessible.

- At Ascend, we've worked directly with thousands of students with learning difficulties in grades K-12.
- We consult with and have trained over 25,000 educators and specialists at the school and district levels throughout the world.



# QUICK SHARE...

- Your role
- The grade levels you work with
- How long you've been an educator



1

## WHY

Why do we need to consider EF as part of our instruction?

2

## WHAT

What are the specific skills we should be considering?

3

## HOW

How do we easily incorporate EF instruction into our day?

4

## WHAT IF

Reflection + Q & A

reflection

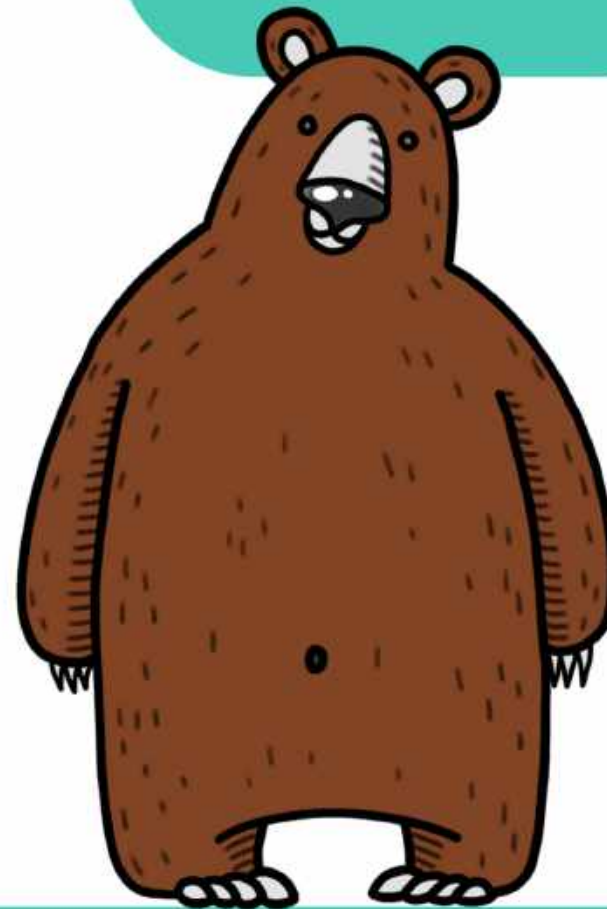


**In your notes...**

**What does EF mean to you and  
how are you currently  
addressing it with your  
students?**

Let's Share it...

I need at least two  
people willing to  
share a reflection.



*What is executive functioning?*



The skills we need to have in place  
to set and reach goals.

Executive functions (EF) encompass those cognitive processes that underlie goal-directed behavior and are orchestrated by activity within the prefrontal cortex (PFC) (e.g., Shimamura, 2000; Olson & Luciana, 2008).

Our goal in **reading** is to be able to sound out words, understand their meaning, and understand the meaning of combined text.

Our goal in **writing** is to be able to spell words, write complete sentences, and express our thoughts effectively.

Our goal in **math** is to be able to understand the question, apply the appropriate equation/process, and solve the problem.

Our goal in **an assignment** is to be able to plan out what needs to be completed, manage our time effectively to get it done, analyze our knowledge, and organize ourselves to get it turned in.

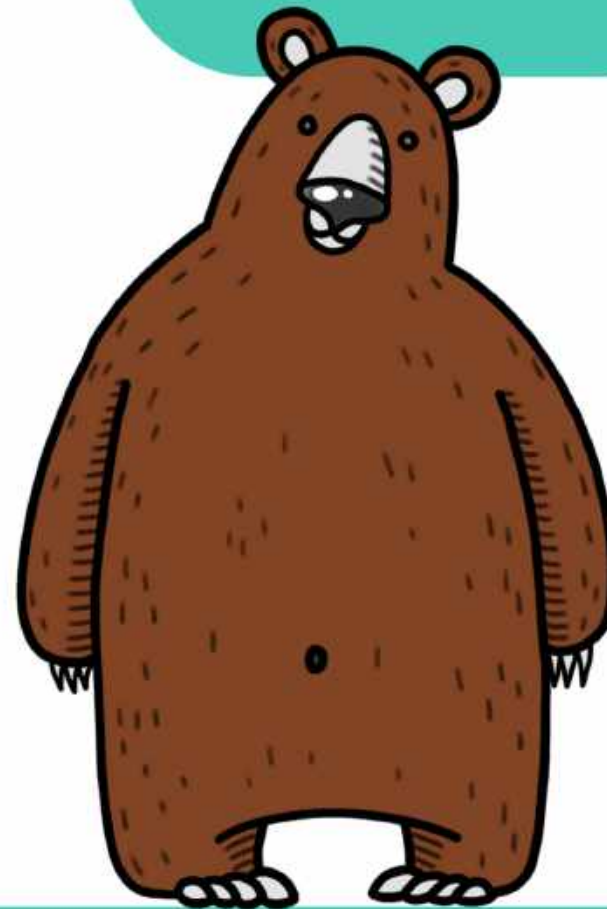
Reflection -



**What other goals might your students be working towards?**

Let's Share it...

I need at least two  
people willing to  
share a reflection.



“

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**"Self-regulation** is a better indicator of success than intelligence or talent."

- LAURENCE D. STEINBERG, PHD



Nobody is born with these skills—  
we are born with the potential to  
develop them.



1

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Reflection +  
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**TRAINING OUTLINE**

# EF Requires



Foresight



Hindsight



Self-awareness across time

# Foresight

In order to reach goals we need to mentally project ourselves into the future time and space.

**What am I trying to accomplish?**

(example: comprehending a passage)

# Hindsight

In order to reach future goals, we must be able to see into the past to self-evaluate and fix past errors.

(example: after reading, it didn't make sense)

# Self-Awareness

to see ourselves move through the world in the future and past allows us to set goals and work towards them

(the journey between foresight and hindsight)

# What are the EF skills?

There are MANY and there are multiple definitions or constructions of these skills.

# EF Constructs

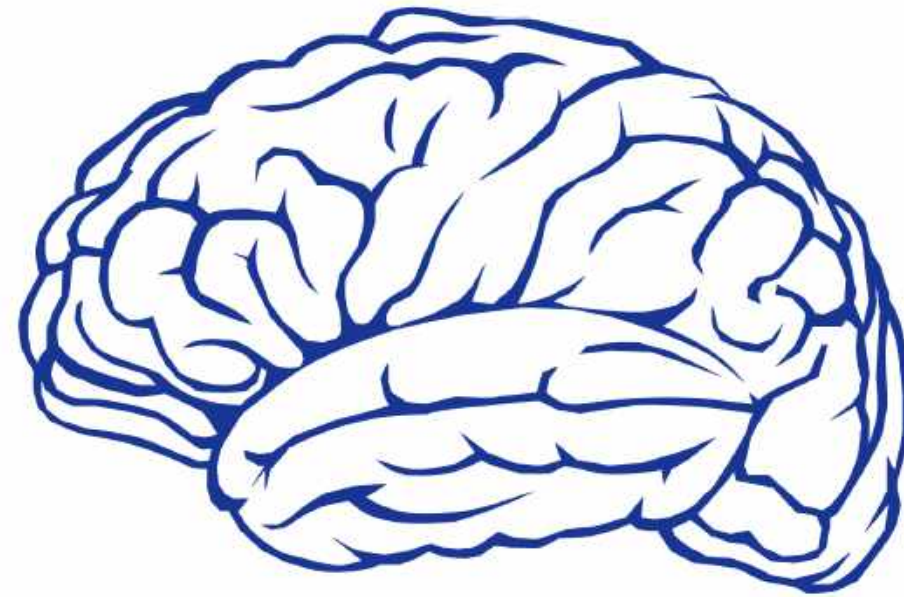
**Organizing**

**Goal Setting**

**Attention**

**Emotion Regulation**

**Planning**



**Metacognition**

**Working Memory**

**Flexibility**

**Inhibitory Control**

**Self-Control**

**Time**

**Initiation**

**Perseverance**

**Management**



# Grouping

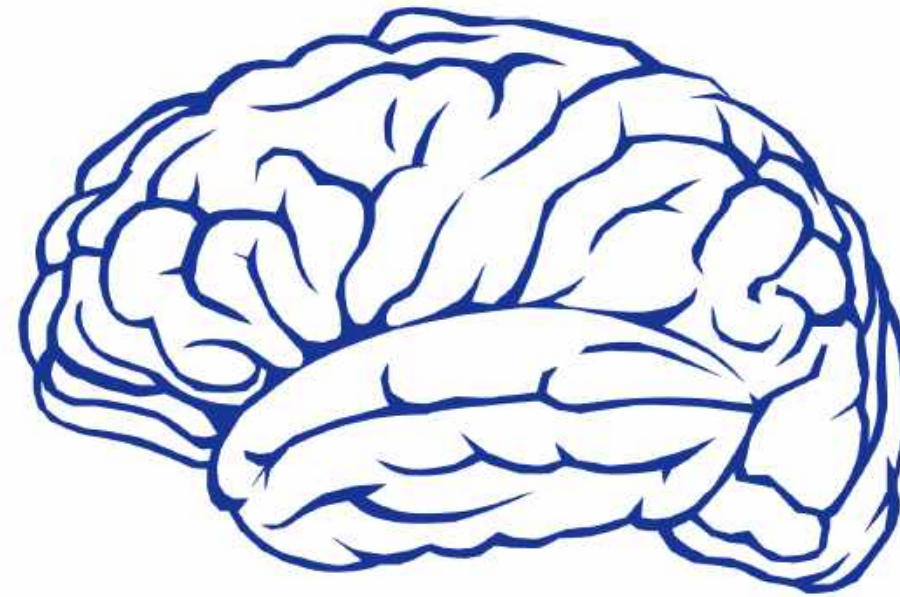
Organizing

Goal Setting

Attention

Planning

Emotion Regulation



Metacognition

Working Memory

Flexibility

Self-Control

Inhibitory Control

Initiation

Perseverance

Time Management

# 5-Part EF Framework

① Goal Setting

② Regulation

③ Attention

④ Planning

⑤ Reflection



When we say “pay attention!!!”  
or “were you paying attention?”





1

2

3

4

## WHY

Why do we need to consider EF as part of our instruction?

## WHAT

What are the specific skills we should be considering?

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How do we easily incorporate EF instruction into our day?

## WHAT IF

Reflection +  
Q & A

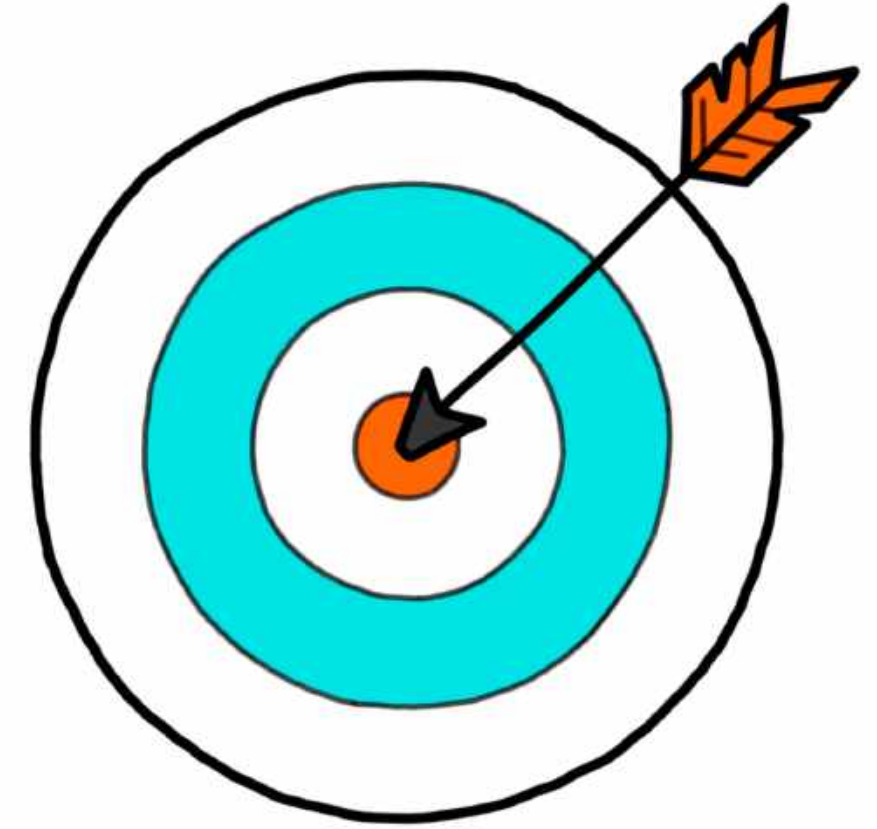
**TRAINING OUTLINE**

1

# Goal Setting

The first thing we want to do is make sure students are clear on the goals and WHY we are doing this work! How will this help them?

# Goal Setting



- What is the goal?
- Why is it important?
- What will I get when I've achieved the goal?
- What might block me from getting this done?
- How does this fit into the priorities/schedule?

- **What is the goal?**

- Long-Term: To have the skills we need to read and understand what we are reading.
- Short-Term: Learning the “ar” pattern

- **Why is it important?**

- So we can access information, read a menu, pass our driver’s written test (what’s important to your students?)



1 Goal Setting	
What is my goal?	
Why is it important?	
What will I get when I achieve the goal?	
What might block me from getting it done?	
How does this fit into my priorities?	

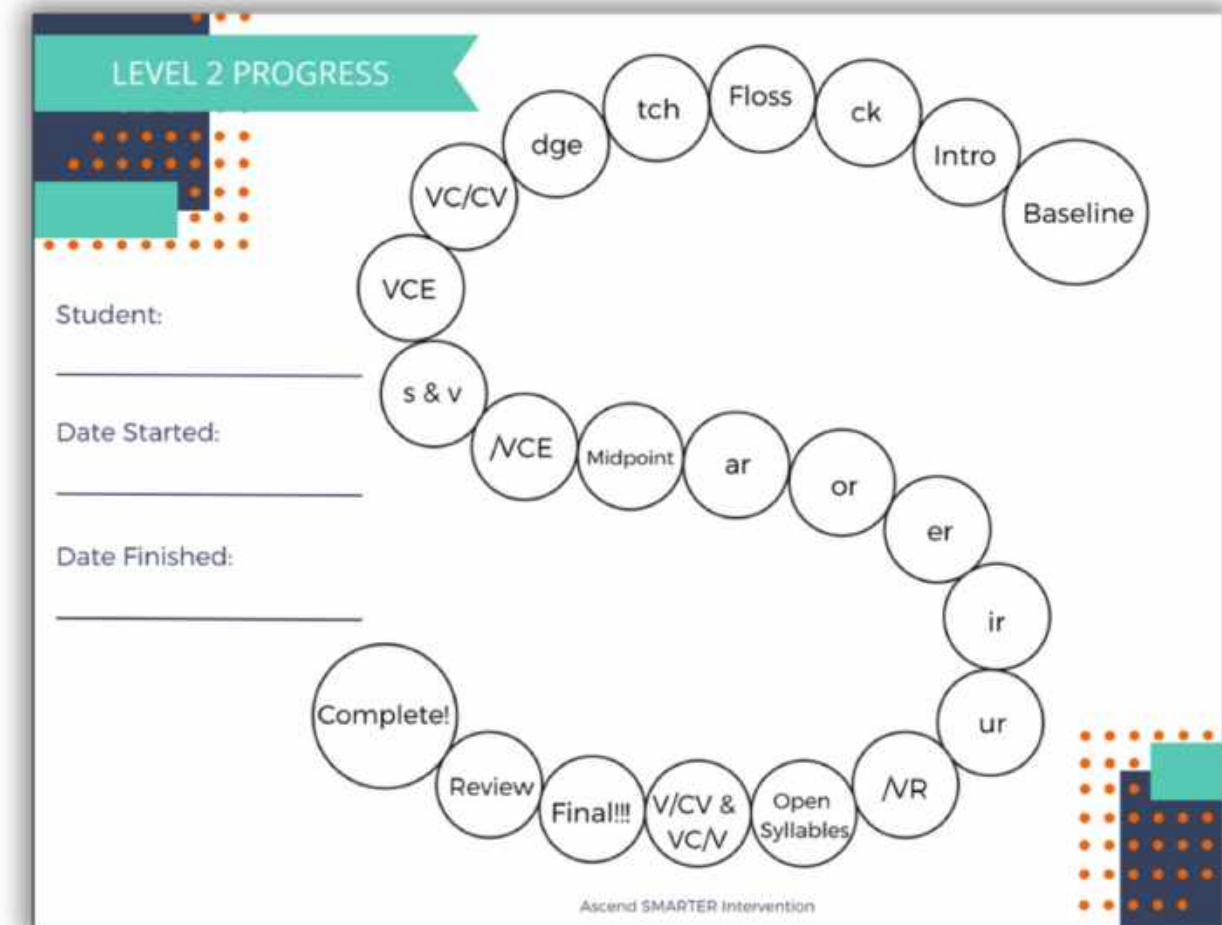
2 Regulation	
What is my current state?	
How would I label it?	
Where am I feeling this?	

- **What will I get when I've achieved the goal?**
  - Intrinsic: I will be one step closer to knowing all the patterns.
  - Extrinsic: No homework, working toward a prize, get to leave, etc.
- **What might block me from getting this done?**
  - I might get distracted, etc.



- **How does this fit into the priorities/schedule?**

- How long is this going to take?
- What sacrifices will I need to make?
- Can I commit to showing up?





Reflection -



**In your notes...**

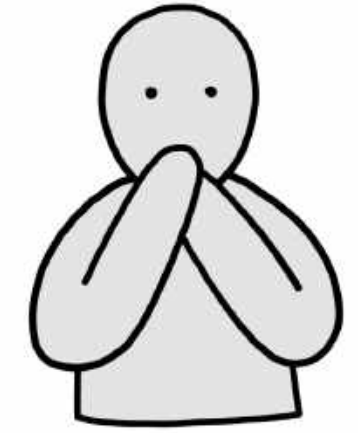
**How might you incorporate  
goal setting into your  
instruction?**

2

# Regulation

We need to be able to regulate ourselves in order to be available for learning.

# Regulation





- What is my current state?
- What can this state cause and activate?
- What do I need to be aware of?
- What are the strategies I can use?

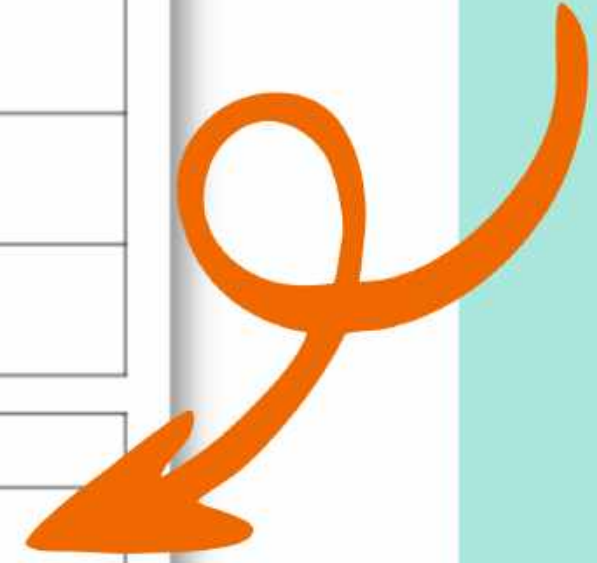
# • How am I feeling?

- Take a quick moment to reflect
- Name/label the feeling
- Where am I feeling it?

1 Goal Setting	
What is my goal?	
Why is it important?	
What will I get when I achieve the goal?	
What might block me from getting it done?	
How does this fit into my priorities?	

2 Regulation													
What is my current state?													
How would I label it?													
Where am I feeling this?	 <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Head</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Mouth</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Arms</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Eyes</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Throat</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Hands</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Ears</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Chest</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Legs</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Face</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Stomach</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Feet</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Head	<input type="checkbox"/> Mouth	<input type="checkbox"/> Arms	<input type="checkbox"/> Eyes	<input type="checkbox"/> Throat	<input type="checkbox"/> Hands	<input type="checkbox"/> Ears	<input type="checkbox"/> Chest	<input type="checkbox"/> Legs	<input type="checkbox"/> Face	<input type="checkbox"/> Stomach	<input type="checkbox"/> Feet
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- **What can this feeling/state activate?**
  - If I'm in a yellow, blue, or red state, am I activating the sympathetic nervous system (fight/freeze/flight)?
  - If so, what strategies can I try in order to get into a "learning-ready" state?

- **If we are feeling “green,” we can:**

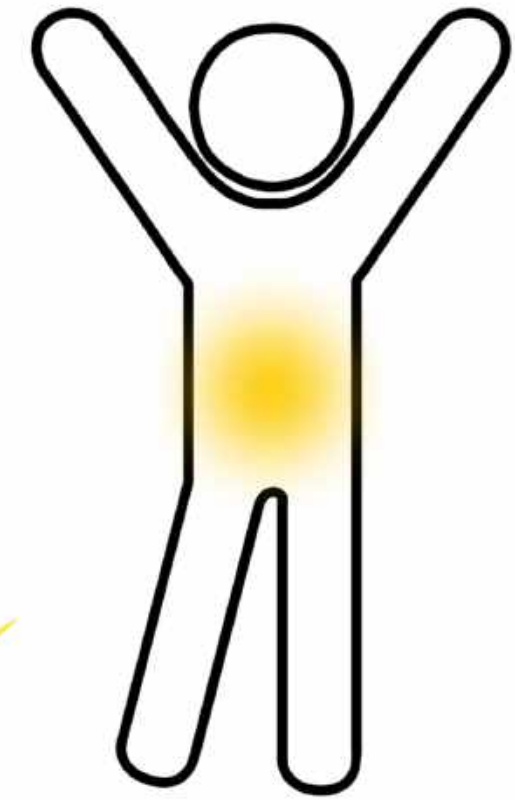
- Label the emotion (builds emotional vocabulary)
- Identify where the feeling is occurring
- Try a strategy
  - Get started
  - Share/help someone out
  - Write/say a gratitude



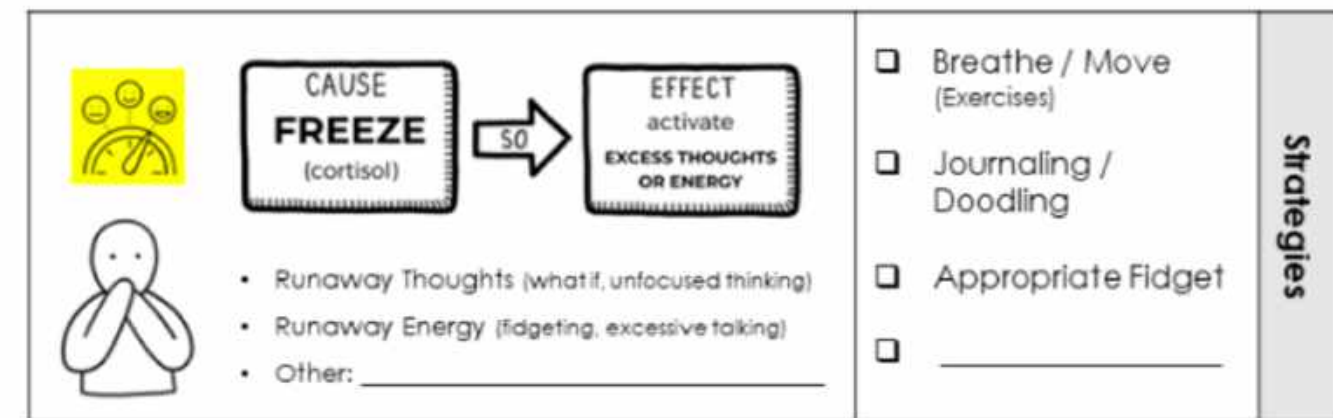
	<p>CAUSE <b>READY</b> (dopamine)</p>	<p>SO</p>	<p>EFFECT activate <b>PREFRONTAL CORTEX</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Get started</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Share Knowledge (where appropriate)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Practice gratitude</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> _____</li> </ul>	<p>Strategies</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unawareness (of others thoughts or perspectives)</li> <li>• Grandiosity ("this is so easy!" bragging, etc.)</li> <li>• Other: _____</li> </ul>				

- **If we are feeling “yellow,” we can:**

- Label the emotion (builds emotional vocabulary)
- Identify where the feeling is occurring
- Try a strategy
  - Breathing/moving
  - Provide doodle breaks
  - Try an appropriate fidget

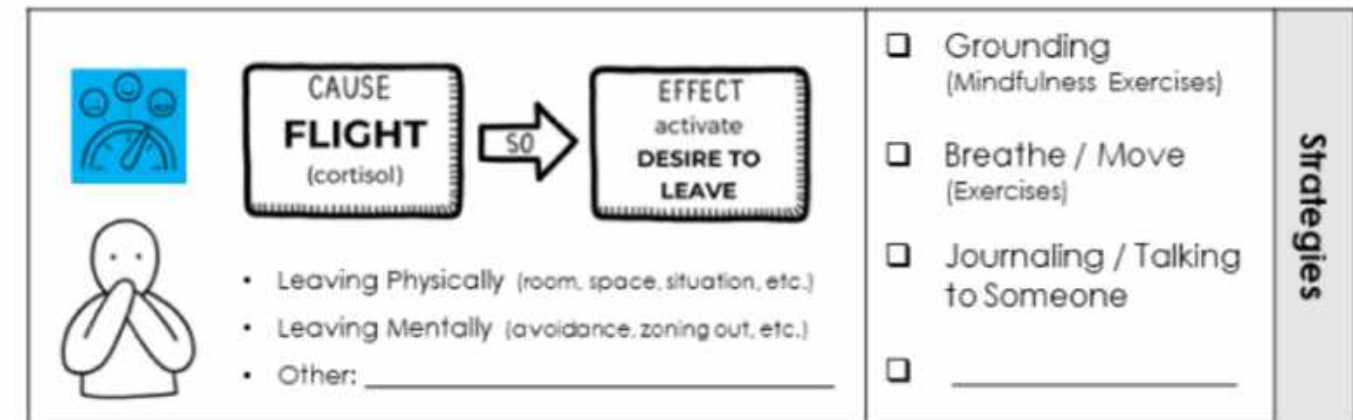


Worried



- **If we are feeling “blue,” we can:**

- Label the emotion (builds emotional vocabulary)
- Identify where the feeling is occurring
- Try a strategy
  - Grounding (5 Things...)
  - Breathe/Move
  - Talk about it







- **If we are feeling “red” we can:**

- Label the emotion (builds emotional vocabulary)
- Identify where the feeling is occurring
- Try a strategy
  - Sip of cold water
  - Take a minute
  - Breathe



2 Regulation – Inhibitory Control & Strategies	
	<b>CAUSE</b> <b>FIGHT</b> (adrenaline)
	<b>EFFECT</b> activate <b>AGGRESSION</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cold Water (Sip or Splash)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Create Space (e.g., walk away)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Breathe (Exercises)
	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
	<b>Strategies</b>

• Verbal Aggression (loud volume, hurtful words)  
• Physical Aggression (big actions)  
• Other: \_\_\_\_\_

1

# Cause

Adrenaline - Fight

Cortisol - Freeze

Cortisol - Flight

Dopamine - Ready

2

# Effect

Activate Aggression

Excess Thoughts or Energy

Desire to Leave

Activate Prefrontal Cortex

3

# Strategies

Cold Water (sip or splash)  
Create Space (walk away)  
Breathe (exercises)

Breathe / Move (exercises)  
Journaling / Doodling  
Appropriate Fidget

Grounding (mindfulness)  
Breathe / Move (exercises)  
Journaling / Talking to Someone

Get Started  
Share Knowledge (where appropriate)  
Practice Gratitude

Reflection -



**In your notes...**

**How might you incorporate  
regulation strategies into your  
instruction?**

3

# Attention

we need to be able to attend to meaningful  
information in order to learn


# Attention



- Where is my attention?
- Am I able to hold onto the information I need?
- How can I redirect my attention if necessary?
- Can I maintain my attention or persevere?

- **Where is my attention at?**
  - Take a moment to reflect. Where are my eyes? What are my ears doing? Where are my hands?
  
- **What is it that I need to attend to or hold onto right now?**
  - I am reading a passage I need to be able to read accurately and understand what I am reading.
  
- **Do I need to redirect my attention in order to achieve my goal?**
  
- **Can I maintain my attention/persevere?**

3	<b>Attention</b>
Where is my attention?	
What do I need to attend to / hold onto?	
Do I need to redirect my attention for success?	
Can I maintain my attention/persevere?	
4	<b>Planning - DONE</b>
The task is...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Something new <input type="checkbox"/> Similar to something I have done before	
What does done look like?          	



Reflection -



**In your notes...**

**What strategies are you currently using to help students with attention?**

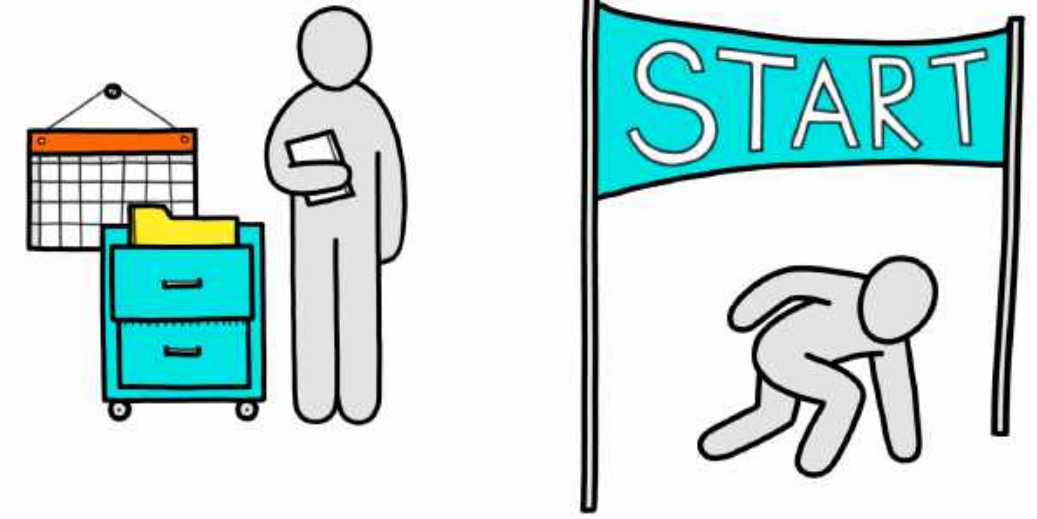
4

# Planning

We need to be able to work backward, understanding what “done” looks like so that we can create a plan, get the things we need ready, and get started.



# Planning

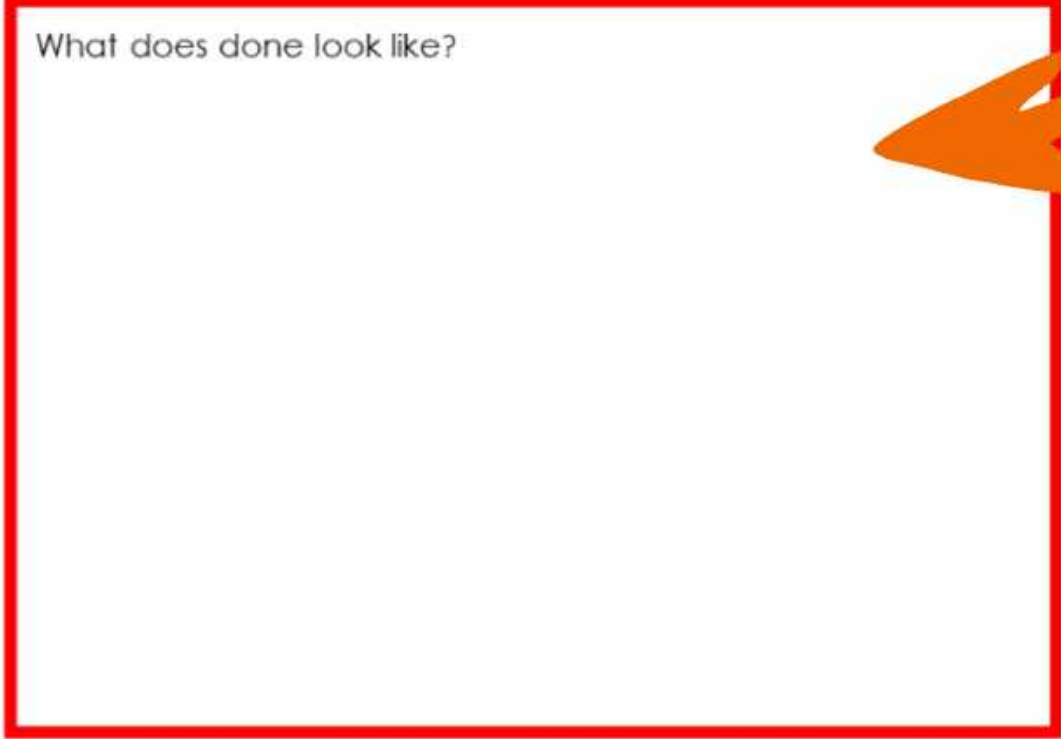


- What am I trying to accomplish? What does done look like? (*Planning*)
- What needs to be accomplished step by step? (*Organizing*)
- What do I need to have ready? (*Preparation*)
- Can I get started? (*Initiation*)

# Planning - “Done”

- **Is this a task that is new or is it similar to something I have done before?**
  - Take a moment to reflect.
- **What does done look like?**
  - Discussion of end result
  - Picture of end result
  - Rubric

<b>3</b>	<b>Attention</b>
Where is my attention?	
What do I need to attend to / hold onto?	
Do I need to redirect my attention for success?	
Can I maintain my attention/persevere?	
<b>4</b>	<b>Planning - DONE</b>
The task is...	
<input type="checkbox"/> Something new <input type="checkbox"/> Similar to something I have done before	
What does done look like?	







# Initiating - “Get Ready”

- **What are all the materials I will need to get started?**
  - I need a writing utensil, and my lesson workbook.
- **Do I have all the materials on hand?**
  - Take a moment to reflect.
    - If not, where can I find or get these materials?

4 Planning & Initiation – GET READY			
What materials do I need?			
Material	Do I have it?		
	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5 Self-Monitoring & Reflection			
Am I ready to get started?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No, because _____ _____	
Once I finish, I can reflect...			
How did it go?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Well	<input type="checkbox"/> Fine/Okay	<input type="checkbox"/> Good/Great
What might I do differently/try next time?			

Reflection -



**In your notes...**

**How might you incorporate this process into your instruction?**

5

# Reflection

We need to be able to self-monitor (metacognition) and think flexibly. If our plan isn't working, what can we do differently?

# Reflection



- What will I do if I get stuck?
- Am I where I should be/did I meet the goal?
- How did the process go?
- Are there other directions or perspectives to consider?
- What might I do differently next time?



- **Am I ready to get started on the task?**
  - Take a moment to reflect.
- **If not, why am I not ready?**
  - Am I distracted, do I not have all my materials, etc.
- **Now that I am done, how did it go for me?**
  - Take a moment to reflect.
- **What might I do differently or try next time?**
  - Try completing tasks in a different order or read the other passage option.

4 Planning & Initiation – GET READY	
What materials do I need?	
Material	Do I have it?
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Self-Monitoring & Reflection	
Am I ready to get started?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No, because _____ _____
Once I finish, I can reflect...	
How did it go?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Well <input type="checkbox"/> Fine/Okay <input type="checkbox"/> Good/Great
What might I do differently/try next time?	



Reflection -



**In your notes...**

**How might you incorporate  
reflection into your  
instruction?**



1

2

3

4

## WHY

Why do we need to consider EF as part of our literacy instruction?

## WHAT

What are the specific skills we should be considering?

## HOW

How do we incorporate EF instruction into our schedule?

## WHAT IF

Reflection +  
Q & A

# LET'S TRY IT...

4	<b>Planning &amp; Initiation - GET READY</b>	
What materials do I need?		
Material	Do I have it?	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	<b>Self-Monitoring &amp; Reflection</b>	
Am I ready to get started?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No, because _____ _____
Once I finish, I can reflect...		
How did it go?	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Well	<input type="checkbox"/> Fine/Okay
<input type="checkbox"/> Good/Great		
What might I do differently/try next time?		

4	<b>Planning &amp; Organizing - DO</b>		
What are the steps/tasks I need to complete?			
What is the order of priority?			
How long will each step/task take?			
Step	Task	Time	
If I get stuck, I can...			

3	<b>Attention</b>	
Where is my attention?		
What do I need to attend to / hold onto?		
Do I need to redirect my attention for success?		
Can I maintain my attention/persevere?		
4	<b>Planning - DONE</b>	
The task is...		
<input type="checkbox"/> Something new		
<input type="checkbox"/> Similar to something I have done before		
What does done look like?		

# 5-Part EF Framework

1

Goal Setting

2

Regulation

3

Attention

4

Planning

5

Reflection

## All Operations (A)

Calculate each sum, difference, product, or quotient.

$16 \times 5 =$	$19 - 6 =$	$240 \div 20 =$	$32 - 19 =$
$32 - 15 =$	$17 + 19 =$	$204 \div 17 =$	$12 \times 17 =$
$19 \times 15 =$	$19 + 16 =$	$16 \times 17 =$	$10 + 2 =$
$15 \times 17 =$	$20 - 12 =$	$170 \div 10 =$	$9 \times 10 =$
$13 + 6 =$	$96 \div 12 =$	$10 \times 9 =$	$285 \div 19 =$
$30 \div 3 =$	$14 \times 5 =$	$22 - 19 =$	$30 - 13 =$
$17 - 4 =$	$6 \times 6 =$	$270 \div 15 =$	$17 + 17 =$
$3 \times 9 =$	$247 \div 19 =$	$7 + 11 =$	$14 + 17 =$
$11 \times 10 =$	$228 \div 12 =$	$4 + 13 =$	$112 \div 7 =$
$16 \times 4 =$	$15 + 7 =$	$32 - 14 =$	$20 + 1 =$
$39 \div 13 =$	$9 \times 9 =$	$16 + 13 =$	$19 + 17 =$
$32 - 19 =$	$85 \div 17 =$	$1 \times 16 =$	$20 \div 4 =$
$17 \div 1 =$	$16 - 9 =$	$16 - 3 =$	$18 - 13 =$
$3 + 3 =$	$12 \times 11 =$	$17 - 4 =$	$200 \div 20 =$
$5 \times 6 =$	$16 \div 8 =$	$2 + 17 =$	$96 \div 8 =$
$14 \div 7 =$	$19 - 15 =$	$121 \div 11 =$	$11 \times 1 =$
$13 + 13 =$	$26 - 11 =$	$6 \times 20 =$	$300 \div 20 =$
$6 \times 17 =$	$2 + 15 =$	$119 \div 7 =$	$10 \times 10 =$
$72 \div 18 =$	$20 + 1 =$	$8 + 17 =$	$300 \div 20 =$
$25 - 14 =$	$13 - 5 =$	$90 \div 6 =$	$18 + 2 =$
$2 \times 12 =$	$17 - 12 =$	$15 + 13 =$	$9 - 1 =$
$3 + 8 =$	$9 \times 17 =$	$18 \times 2 =$	$20 \times 1 =$
$2 + 8 =$	$1 + 16 =$	$9 + 6 =$	$133 \div 7 =$
$23 - 13 =$	$30 \div 2 =$	$36 \div 6 =$	$20 + 3 =$
$19 - 6 =$	$7 - 1 =$	$5 \times 19 =$	$192 \div 12 =$

- ① *What are we doing?*
- ② *How are you feeling? Label it.  
Would a quick strategy help?*
- ③ *What are we focusing on?  
For how long?*
- ④ *Plan - What does done look like?  
What materials do you need?  
Can we get started?*
- ⑤ *How did it go?*

All Operations (A)			
Calculate each sum, difference, product, or quotient.			
$16 \times 5 =$	$19 - 6 =$	$240 \div 20 =$	$32 - 19 =$
$32 - 15 =$	$17 + 19 =$	$204 \div 17 =$	$12 \times 17 =$
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$39 \div 13 =$	$9 \times 9 =$	$16 + 13 =$	$19 + 17 =$
$32 - 19 =$	$85 \div 17 =$	$1 \times 16 =$	$20 \div 4 =$
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$19 - 6 =$	$7 - 1 =$	$5 \times 19 =$	$192 \div 12 =$

Math-Drills.Com

Reflection -



**In your notes...**

**How/where can you try to  
incorporate this?**

QUESTIONS?

