**What executive functioning strategies could I adopt to enhance**

**student engagement for learning?**

|  |
| --- |
| **SUMMARY:**  Executive functioning strategies are purposeful and deliberate. They are goal directed behaviours which have the objective of processing information for learning.  This section provides a strategic framework with specific practical and explicit examples which have been shown to help students to   * learn more efficiently * cope more effectively |

**READ ON TO LEARN MORE:**

Using executive functioning language, students need to

* **STOP**  gain the required level of arousal / focussed sustained attention for task
* **SENSE** perceive sensory information relevant to task through looking and listening
* **THINK** engage in recall and planning strategies to develop a plan of action
* **DO** implement the plan

Using executive functioning language, teachers could state

* **STOP** Molly, **stop looking** around the room
* **SENSE Get your eyes ready to look** for the page where you need to start writing
* **THINK Remember** what you were writing before recess:

(the introduction to your argument from your mind-map)

**Look at** Section 2 on your mind-map

**Choose** which point you will write about first then

**Sequence** your points in order of importance

* **DO Start** writing. **Keep writing** till I tell the class to stop writing.

**PERCEIVE**

**We need to teach strategies to enable a student’s level of arousal, alertness and attention to match the situation**

**Tier 2 Strategies**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Executive functioning goal** | **Strategy** | | **How?** |
| Ignore distractions | Purple zone |  | Ignore what is outside the zone as if it doesn’t exist |
| Stay focussed | Puzzle concept |  | Keep going, keep going till finished |
| Attend to important detail | Binoculars  Earnoculars |  | Look closely and focus on what is really important  Listen carefully and focus on what is really important |

Additional teacher strategies include using ‘sensing’ questions / statements:

* Are you switched on?
* Are you calm and alert for learning?
* Get your body ready to….
* Get your brain ready to….
* Tell yourself what you are looking at
* Think with your eyes
* Get your eyes ready to look
* Are you listening to what is happening around you?
* Listen to what is important in this next instruction
* Listen to your thinking
* Think with your ears
* Feel what it is like to be still
* Your engine is running too fast. You need to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Focus here
* Look until you find\_\_\_\_

Additional student language

* I feel\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I need to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Associated with having a just right level of arousal and alertness is the need for children to have adequate sleep and nutrition

**Sleep**

****

The National Sleep Foundation (USA) states that preschool students (3-5 yrs.) require 10-13 hours of sleep and school aged students (6-13 yrs.) require 9 – 11 hours of sleep. The University of Chicago has confirmed that reduced sleep can result in higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

Occupational therapists work with parents to help students settle to sleep, stay in their own bed and stay asleep. Strategies might include using

* task analysis to establish consistent routines
* social stories
* proprioceptive activities to enable self-calming e.g. firm hugs, tight bedding

**Nutrition**

Sensory intolerances to specific tastes, textures and temperatures may result in students having a rigid and limited intake of fuel into their body.



Occupational therapists work with parents to increase a student’s comfort level by helping students interact with food in a playful, non-stressful way, beginning with the ability to tolerate the food in the room and in front of him or her; then moving on to looking at, touching, licking, and eventually tasting and eating foods. Strategies might include programmes such as the Sequential Oral Sensory (SOS) Approach to Feeding. For some students, who have additional difficulties with food additives and intolerances, referral to a paediatric dietitian can be useful.

**RECALL**

**We need to teach strategies to enable a student’s memory to be more durable**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Facilitate emotional engagement | http://www.theculturedoctor.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/emotional-engagement.png | When limbic system in brain is activated, arousal works like glue for memory |
| Attach meaning |  | Ben designed a half pipe using mathematical concepts because it was meaningful for him |
| Make connections |  | Link what is already known to what student is learning today |
| Create visual images |  | ‘Click take a mental picture or a movie with the pretend camera in your eye’ |
| Create auditory images | http://www.howtolearn.com/HTL/media/GirlwithHugeEars.jpg | Acronyms  Crazy phrases  Chants  Rhymes  Songs: most powerful – rap! |
| Use repetition | http://brainathlete.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/visual-subliminal-messages.png | Practise, practise, practise |
| ‘My brain is a filing cabinet’ |  | Student actively sorts, categorises and stores colour coded and bullet point information into a card filing system – their brain – and then physically locates and retrieves that information when required |

Additional strategies include asking ‘recall’ questions:

* Do you remember how easy the last spelling test was when you used

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_strategy? Why don’t you try that again?

* Do you remember that last time you used a text-type plan before writing your

discussion? Wasn’t it much easier to write when your ideas were organised?

* This is really important. I want you to remember it.
* The next thing we do is really important because \_\_\_\_\_\_
* I want you to go into your brain and remember the last time we did this
* What do you already know?
* Go inside your head and find \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Take yourself back to yesterday when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Is it the same as what you did before?
* Teach me how to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PLAN**

**We need to teach strategies to enable a student to manipulate and apply new information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Know goal  Keep goal in mind | Student tells brain what specific goal is for this activity. Adult may have stated goal but needs to ask the student to relay the specific goal back to ensure that the student goal matches adult targeted goal.  **Very important. On topic. Exact match**  **Bit linked. Not exactly**  **Not important. Not linked to topic. No match** |
| Know critical steps in task | Task analysis  # Break task down into small, more manageable steps  # Identify steps needed to start and complete task  Then:  # Chunk / Divide into sections  # Colour code with highlighter  # Number order in which sections are to be completed |
| Follow task written instructions | Highlight key words |
| Generate, organise, sequence and expand ideas for task | Colour code and number mind-map |
| Organise belongings | Colour code bins, drawers  Use see through containers |
| Organise self to be at right place with right equipment at right time | Create structure through  # Picture sequence  # Visual timetable  # Social story  # Flow chart  Use  # Smart board  # Noticeboard  # Diary  # iPad  Sand timer  Kitchen buzzer  ‘Time timer’ (refer to Sue Larkey website) |

Questions, instead of statements, are a powerful strategic approach. ‘Plan’ questions include:

* What? When? Where? How? Why?
* What if?
* What about?
* Then what?
* What really matters?
* What are you going to do next?
* What steps are involved?
* What might be possible barriers to accomplish this task?
* What strategies could you use to complete this task?
* What materials are you going to need?
* What do you need to do first, second, third.....
* How will you know when you are completely finished?
* Why is this working?
* Are you ready to start?
* Are you being asked to express your opinion, compare two things or give an explanation?