Promoting Executive Functioning

Scenario 1

Chris is an enthusiastic and energetic boy who is sociable and generally well liked by his peers. Chris has a history of struggling academically. His parents report having difficulty getting him to do his homework and he often waits until the last minute, like the morning of, to complete. Chris does not always have the materials he needs to complete assignments at home and often comes to class with materials scattered in his backpack. His teacher reports Chris spends more time looking for his assignments than actually working on them. He also has difficulty prioritizing information read and generally responds to comprehension questions without identifying the main idea or major themes. His writing is often a stream of thoughts without a definitive beginning or end. Chris has shared that he hasn’t been able to find a strategy that he can use to be more successful in school.

Potential Strategies:

* Map out writing assignments using graphic organizer
* Use planning sheets for long-term projects with goal, tasks, and timelines
* Complete checklist of materials needed to complete homework/bring home
* Color code folders and notebooks
* Other

Reflection Questions:

1. Which Executive Functioning Skill(s) is Chris still learning?
2. What might strategic instruction and corrective feedback look and sound like?
3. What will be your next steps working with students with similar behaviors?

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Scenario 2

Jenna is an extremely social young lady with above-average verbal reasoning and language abilities. She is an active class participant who does especially well with collaborative and hands-on projects in her classes. However, her academic performance has been inconsistent. She has struggled with multi-step problems in math and has difficulty taking notes in class. She has difficulty remembering important information and loses track easily when reading. As a result, she has performed poorly on tests, which does not reflect her knowledge level. Her parents have acknowledged she struggles to complete chores at home and prefers to spend time with friends.

Potential Strategies:

* Use verbal associations (mnemonics, acronyms, crazy phrases) to remember important facts
* Summarize paragraphs and chapters using STAR strategy when reading long passages/text
* Use procedure lists to solve problems in Math
* Prepare daily/weekly schedule, including times for after school activities
* Other (see Chapter 5 for additional ideas)

Reflection Questions:

1. Which Executive Functioning Skill(s) is Jenna still learning?
2. What might strategic instruction and corrective feedback look and sound like?
3. What will be your next steps working with students with similar behaviors?

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Scenario 4

Mahri is a good student and is involved in sports and many other school activities. During the past year, Mahri has had difficulty staying focused in required classes that are not inherently interesting to her, such as US History. Her notes on lectures and readings are brief and disorganized, and she lacks a consistent method of studying for exams. She stays up late the night before an exam, spending time rereading text. As a result, her GPA has been affected and she has shared with her parents that she is concerned about being able to manage her course load for the coming year.

Potential Strategies:

* Use Cornell Notes for note-taking in class
* Use Triple Note Tote strategy for active reading
* Underline and indent notes so can differentiate between main ideas and details
* Develop study plan on day notified of upcoming quiz/test
* Other

Reflection Questions:

1. Which Executive Functioning Skill(s) is Mahri still learning?
2. What might strategic instruction and corrective feedback look and sound like?
3. What will be your next steps working with students with similar behaviors?

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Scenario 5

Charlie is an average student who hopes to be a Chef someday. During a recent Science class, he refused to take an exam. When the teacher asked if he would rather take it in the library, he said no and ripped up the test. The teacher asked that he report to the office. The student refused to leave the classroom and swore at the teacher. When Charlie’s parents were notified of incident, they reported that Charlie has been working more hours at his Uncle’s restaurant which has reduced his study time.

Potential Strategies:

* Determine future goals and roadmap to accomplish
* Create study plan and use study guide to prepare for test
* Break assignment into smaller parts to make it more manageable
* Recognize stressors using 5-point scale and use coping strategies to alleviate
* Other

Reflection Questions:

1. Which Executive Functioning Skill(s) is Charlie still learning?
2. What might strategic instruction and corrective feedback look and sound like?
3. What will be your next steps working with students with similar behaviors?