



Developmental Learning Solutions

Everyone has the innate ability to learn, and the inherent right to the pursuit of knowledge.™

In this early Winter issue:

Executive Functioning for Better Efficiency & Calm

Practical Ideas from Educational Therapy

TWO January Workshops for more effective learning!
Jan. 12th: Beginning Essentials of Executive Functioning
and
Jan. 19th: Expectation, Motivation, Conflict (for now & the future)
See details, last page

Executive Functioning (EF) is the process of feeling, thinking & doing across multiple types of tasks. When they are working smoothly, EF skills help you gauge where you're at — non-judgmentally. EF awareness is critical to being effective with schoolwork and all tasks: it's what you use to organize your day, your work, and your to do list.

1. Executive functioning (EF) is a popular and global term for over a dozen skills and abilities.

2. On a basic level, it is using the process of feeling, thinking, and doing to **get things done**. John Fleming, BCET, uses this example to show how a difficulty with executive functioning can hinder learning:

You're asked to go to Chapter 1 of your Algebra 2 book. You're factoring polynomials, and you're asked to do a problem. How does this make you feel? For some, the feeling is one of overwhelm: "I can't do this," or "I hate this," or "This is totally confusing."

These feelings get in the way of the need for planning or problem-solving, such as looking up the process in a book to solve the math question.

3. What to do? First, change the feeling. The learner needs to be supported to project the feeling they want to feel. It's important NOT to judge oneself, as that can stop the process.

Next pages: tips and techniques from educational therapy

The DLS Executive Functioning Feeling / Thinking / Doing Model



The model above illustrates the DLS executive functioning approach, used to help learners understand and then identify where they are in the EF process. It can help in recognizing triggers or roadblocks to organizing one's day and the tasks in it.

**Set the “mission” of the day to support the planning and doing:
we want to do this in a way that moves the learner to the ideal feeling**

Parent/Guardian/Assistant: Model for yourself, and help your learner

Before you can organize your day, stop and ask: *How do you want to feel at the end of the day?* EF requires us to constantly be flexible as we organize and do tasks. Completion is the goal, but **flexibility** in organizing and prioritizing is critical to adapting and getting tasks done (or not done and re-prioritized)!

The Starting Point: Clarity of the day



Use the “feeling” part of the model to help define where the learner is, and where they want to be (on an emotional level). This checklist helps with the questions to ask yourself or your learner.

- How do you want to feel at the end of the day?
(If you’re the Learning Assistant, ask: How do you want to feel at the end of the day?*)
 - How are you feeling now?
 - How do you want to feel while you’re going through your day?
- *Note for Learning Assistant: model the way you want to feel, e.g. “I want to feel like I’ve helped myself and others”

PRO TIP: Avoid goal-setting. This approach uses a problem-solving methodology rather than goal-setting, e.g., “you must finish 5 pages by the end of today,” etc.

Next: Plan Out the List of Tasks

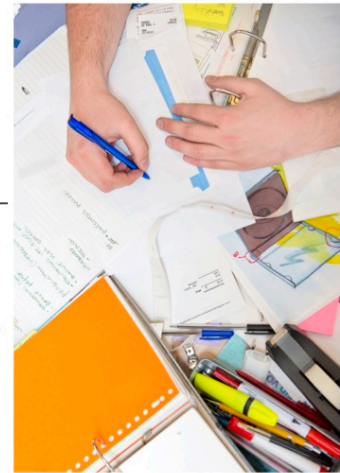


With your learner, write out what they need to do using a piece of paper, a spreadsheet, or a whiteboard.

PRO TIP: The process of having your learner describe their subjects can set the scene for planning out tasks later on. Creating the list of all the day’s subjects helps create structure.

Don’t assume that an assignment is easy to understand or to break into pieces.

By asking questions – helping your learner clarify assignments with an email or Zoom with a teacher – you can help build the skills needed for understanding the scope of work.



What about anxiety or shutting down?

For learners who struggle with EF, this can be very difficult. Referring to the model can be helpful. Ask:

1. Are these feelings promoting you (helping you) to do a task?
2. Are these feelings those that don’t help you; is there avoidance of tasks?
3. After identifying the feelings, ask yourself: What is your ideal feeling for the end of the task, and/or the end of the day?

Graphic of “feeling” portion of model below.



Please email us (info@dls-learning.com) for a copy of the full set of November workshop slides, with additional detail.


Use the Feeling/Thinking/Doing model to help your learner produce an expectation for themselves, their day, & their tasks

The Thinking Checklist

You're helping the learner to produce an expectation for themselves.

PRO TIP: If you "produce" it, a learner can't incorporate it into their thinking. Ask questions, scribe, help: but the learner needs to produce the idea/feeling. This is important in them being able to understand their own needs.

This checklist outlines the "thinking" portion of the model we use.

 Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is the task clear? (If the task isn't clear, the model can't work.) ○ Identify/clarify each task for school/day: do you have what you need to get through it as quick as you can effectively? ○ What are your innate abilities? ○ What can you do on your own? Examples: Creativity, problem-solving, communications, logic/analysis, determination, identify & use tools that would help ○ Identify your external supports Examples: Materials, computers, people (teachers, siblings, "assistants"), accommodations
---	---

One way to help your learner build a sense of their own abilities is by discussing the types of innate abilities that can be used to support some of the components of EF. The graphic (below) shows areas we have that can support EF. The bullets (lower right) are examples of innate abilities a learner might use to help themselves.

The idea is to learn what one can use within themselves. It's an exploratory process with a learner.



The Doing Checklist is also an "asking" checklist


"Doing" is now the process of getting onto paper or onto the screen.



Use the Feeling/Thinking/Doing chart from page 1 to help see where you or the learner are on the chart. (Email us for the full slide set from this workshop.)

PRO TIP: If regulation of feelings is difficult, then it's time to take a deep breath... and then look at the chart. Ask your learner: *What would help you feel good?*

If you're getting stuck, or can't remember what you're supposed to be doing... this is when you need to do something really different: changing the environment can help get another perspective and a "reset."

 Doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are you evaluating where you are on the "FTD" chart (feeling / thinking / doing) ○ Are you feeling "ideal," or are current feelings now getting in the way? If learner identifies areas where they get stuck ("I knew I couldn't do this") then go back to the ideal feeling for day, what will help the most, how can they get help? ○ Are you achieving what you want? (efficiency) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With Intrinsic support Intrinsic examples: Are you using your creativity, your problem-solving, your sense of humor? ○ With Extrinsic support systems Extrinsic examples: Are you using your tools, people, accommodations? ○ Do you need a change? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take a break ○ Move around ○ Try another modality (do you need to dance?) ○ Review your plan for the day and your tasks
--	--

The "doing" process (above) is a simplified, functional way to approach executive functioning priorities. It provides a way to evaluate where you are in a task, how to be more effective, how to plan for it. With consistent use, the process becomes automatic and learned.

New Year, New Skills: Join us for a parent workshop and discussion in January!

Tues. Jan. 12th, 6:30pm

Beginning Essentials of Executive Functioning: Understanding and Supporting Young Learners

-Pre-skill support for ages 6-10 and beyond-

Join DLS Founder John Fleming, BCET, and Sheila Cliff, MA, for a workshop that explains what developing executive functioning skills are all about and then provides ideas and examples for ways to support your learners at home. Topics will include:

- working memory
- short-term memory
- focus and attending skills

If your learner is struggling with getting things done (starting and ending tasks; knowing why they're not getting finished) this is a great introduction with practical advice.

Use this Zoom link to register and add to your calendar: <https://tinyurl.com/y37hxt5r>

New Program!

Our interactive, online executive functioning support launches in February – designed specifically to support you and your learner in skills that are missing when doing school online.

Tues. Jan. 19th, 6:30pm

Expectation, Motivation, Conflict: How strategic planning helps with today (homework) and tomorrow (beyond school)

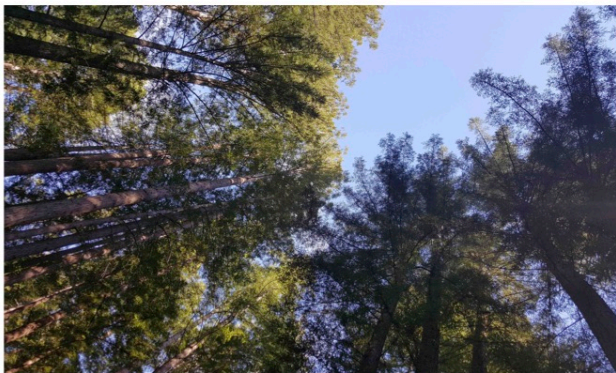
We have high expectations for our family, and we see motivation through our own lens. This workshop helps define motivation and expectations step by step, and then demonstrates how learners can use strategic planning in a practical way that decreases conflict and reduces concerns about the future.

Discussion includes these terms in the learning context with a focus on how strategic planning helps with concerns for today (homework is due in an hour?!) and in looking towards the future, whether it's planning for high school, work, college, or a job switch. Join John R. Fleming, DLS founder and BCET as he guides us through 3 basic areas:

- where are you now & how to look at it in multiple ways
- developing a strategic plan
- keeping the plan working

Use this Zoom link to register and add to your calendar: <https://tinyurl.com/yybvrapf>

Link to last month's workshop: <https://tinyurl.com/yyaxudcm> or email info@dls-learning.com for the slides.



DLS is currently offering targeted EF/ organizational support with:

- 1:1 educational therapy
- Frequent, brief coaching and check-in sessions
- Tutoring and Study Halls with EF scaffolding
- Coaching for parents supporting their learners

We're also offering limited appointments for in person assessments. Contact us to learn more.

For more information:
E: info@dls-learning.com
Ph: (831) 429-5987
www.dls-learning.com



Developmental Learning Solutions

Everyone has the innate ability to learn, and the inherent right to the pursuit of knowledge.™