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| **EF Area** | **Areas of Common Difficulty – Middle School** | | | | |
| ***Writing a Paper*** | ***Studying for Tests*** | ***Long-Term Projects*** | ***Homework/ Notebook Organization*** | ***Note-Taking*** |
| ***Emotional Control*** | * Identify “soft signs” of anxiety or stress * Identify/ troubleshoot stressors prior to starting task * Specific feedback on what was done well * Teach coping strategies | * Identify “soft signs” of anxiety or stress * Identify/ troubleshoot stressors prior to starting task * Use stress-reduction techniques * Teach coping strategies * Set attainable goals for improving performance and develop a plan for improvement * Offer 2nd chance for mastery learning * Give a “pep talk” to encourage * Recognize anxiety soft signs in students and do a “tap back” to de-escalate and | * Identify “soft signs” of anxiety or stress * Teach coping strategies * Identify/ troubleshoot stressors prior to starting task * Specific feedback on what was done well * Recognize avoidance and talk with students * Have check-in times on a timeline to support completion of project chunks. | * Identify/troubleshoot stressors prior to starting task * Communicate among pod/grade level team to prevent overload * Teach coping strategies * First/then to allow student to look forward to an activity they enjoy | * Identify/troubleshoot stressors prior to starting task * Teach coping strategies * Scaffold support for notetaking by providing various forms of notes forms * Provide brain breaks |
| ***Inhibitory Control*** | * Idea mapping (avoid tangents or unrelated info) * Reduce distractions * Use reinforcers/incentives * Provide appropriate praise when a student is on task during a situation you know would be distracting. * Use competing distractors (interests/social situations) as either reinforcers, motivators or manipulate into choices/topics for the paper (ie Minecraft) | * Reduce distractions * Use headphones/ music if helpful; avoid if not * Offer chewing gum, fidgets * Create an environment with all essential materials * Use reinforcers/incentives * Provide appropriate praise when a student is on task during a situation you know would be distracting. | * Provide appropriate praise when a student is on task during a situation you know would be distracting. * Use competing distractors (interests/social situations) as either reinforcers, motivators or manipulate into choices/topics for the paper (ie Minecraft) | * Use reinforcers/incentives * Provide appropriate praise when a student is on task during a situation you know would be distracting. * First/then to allow student to look forward to an activity they enjoy. This can help them suppress the desire to do the “fun” thing first. | * Parking lot for extraneous questions/ideas * Teach students how to recognize/ prioritize key information |
| ***Goal setting/***  ***planning*** | * Break paper into sub-steps and set deadlines for completion; give feedback prior to moving on * Use reinforcers/incentives | * Students collect their own data and set goals for future tests * Offer a study strategies menu and have students select method which best matches test content * Use reinforcers/incentives | * Use reinforcers/incentives * Have check-in times on a timeline to support completion of project chunks. | * Use reinforcers/incentives * “First/then” so they can predict and have some control over what and when they do it | * Students, using scaffolded note-taking guides, can set goals to complete a certain number of sections in their notes. |

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| ***Organization*** | * Outline/writing organizer * Use post-it notes/sheets to visually organize ideas * Break tasks into sub-components (first, next, last) | * Teach students to read texts and highlight/take notes for key information * Study guide * Break tasks into sub-components (first, next, last) | * Break tasks into sub-components (first, next, last) * Have check-in times on a timeline to support completion of project chunks. | * Break tasks into sub-components (first, next, last) * Folder system with a homework folder with a “to do” side and “turn in” side. Keep in a trapper. | * Allow students to choose different note-taking formats depending on the level of scaffolds they feel they need that day. * Use of warnings/cues when something important is being said. (“this is important”, “listen closely to this example”, etc.) * Provide scaffolded notes with key words, key concepts, big ideas, critical questions, etc. to guide what to write down. More scaffolding would be giving ppt to student to highlight important/key ideas. |
| ***Initiate***  For more anti-procrastination strategies:  http://tinyurl.com/bz73x39 | * Worst-first * Break task down into chunks or steps; pre-teach as necessary * Begin with end in sight * Make the topic of interest or give choice to increase motivation to begin * Use competing distractors (interests/social situations) as either reinforcers, motivators or manipulate into choices/topics for the paper (ie Minecraft) | * Integrate mini-study sessions to the end of each period * Create a studying to-do list with tasks broken into manageable chunks, with a plan for strategies to study for each type of content * Look for ways to integrate technology or social interaction to make studying more motivating * Electronic reminders to study (email, text message, etc.) | * Worst-first * Break task down into chunks or steps; pre-teach as necessary * Begin with end in sight * Provide examples of the end product to clarify thinking * Walk through the chunks, timeline, procedures, rubric, etc. with the student to check for misunderstanding or what might decrease motivation to begin * Teach student to use timers * Use competing distractors (interests/social situations) as either reinforcers, motivators or manipulate into choices/topics for the paper (ie Minecraft) | * Consistent routine/location/ prompt for turning in homework * “first/then” to get them going. They also know there is an end in sight. | * Use of warnings/cues when something important is being said. (“this is important”, “listen closely to this example”, etc.) |
| ***Working Memory*** | * Research/writing step checklist * Grading rubric * Reduce distractions * Idea map or writing organizer * Make the topic relevant and connect with something the student knows/understands or has experienced. * Chunk, pause, repeat * Bookmark with reminders, steps, vocabulary words to include, etc. Can also use to organize topic and subtopics. | * Study guide * Integrate use of mnemonics when appropriate (e.g., PEMDAS, Soh-Cah-Toa) * Integrate sensory experiences/ideas into instruction to help students activate memory * Give copies of teacher presentation materials, as well as students’ own notes * Design questions that make connections, integrate and apply knowledge and are relevant. * Self-talk and metacognitive discussion to make connections to transfer into long-term memory * Chunk, pause, repeat (during test review) | * Design projects to make connections, integrate and apply knowledge and are relevant. * Use rubrics for expectations on content and format | * Design homework to practice skills not already mastered, but similar to what was learned in class and practiced. * Use key words to cue * Homework list and explanations/expectations (post on a blog or allow students to take pictures of the assignments on the board) * Video or voice-record a reminder of assignments for the evening. Students access from school website. | * Chunk, pause, repeat * Choose a few important vocabulary words and use them many times during the lesson. Manipulate the words, set up peer discussions and relate them to something relevant to students. * Begin each class with a quick notes review. * Before class, pre-teach some students key words concepts through repetition using motivating talking avatars |
| ***Shift*** | * Idea mapping (avoid tangents or unrelated info) * Research/writing step checklist * Prompt/teach transition sentences * Using and reinforcing connecting words within the sentences | * Use strategies to reduce distractions and increase inhibitory control, to prevent loss of momentum when studying * Ensure that students study in a comfortable environment with familiar materials, vocabulary, setting, etc. so they are not distracted by novelty * When appropriate, offer closed-ended tasks to avoid tangents and novelty * Study Buddies: students can help each other when they get stuck |  | * Set up a homework routine * Use a timer to indicate brain breaks. Also, when to come back from a break. | * It is difficult to shift from listening to info and writing it down and back again. Provide scaffolded notes with key words, key concepts, big ideas, critical questions, etc. More scaffolding would be giving ppt to highlight important/key ideas. |
| ***Self-Monitor*** | * Rubric with clear expectations, including grammar/ mechanics * Students self-evaluate with rubric and match teacher evaluation * Timeline with specific dates/subtasks to be completed * Cultivate student ownership of EF strategies and evaluate effectiveness of each strategy used * Use 5-point scales to rate anything from emotions to effort to organization, etc. | * Create a studying to-do list and/or study guide, students check off progress toward completion. * Offer a study strategies menu and have students select method which best matches test content * Cultivate student ownership of EF strategies and evaluate effectiveness of each strategy used * Use predetermined cues to keep the student on track and cues to let the adult know they know they are on track. Check-in, for example, when a student completes a “chunk”. * Use 5-point scales to rate anything from emotions to effort to organization, etc. * “how did I do?” | * Individual expectations/ accountability for group projects * Rubric with clear expectations, including grammar/ mechanics * Students self-evaluate with rubric and match teacher evaluation * Timeline with specific dates/subtasks to be completed * Cultivate student ownership of EF strategies and evaluate effectiveness of each strategy used * Use 5-point scales to rate anything from emotions to effort to organization, etc. | * Develop consistent mechanism for reviewing work completion and setting goals * Cultivate student ownership of EF strategies and evaluate effectiveness of each strategy used * Use 5-point scales to rate anything from emotions to effort to organization, etc. | * Cultivate student ownership of EF strategies and evaluate effectiveness of each strategy used * Use 5-point scales to rate anything from emotions to effort to organization, etc. * In a goal notebook, have student rate the usefulness of the notes he/she took. * Decide which level of scaffolding is best for them and how they are feeling at the time. (tired, alert, distracted, etc. so they can strategically choose their level) |

**Consider ideas for providing low- and/or high-tech supports in each of these areas, depending on resource availability and student preference.**