Course Description
This course is designed to enable teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors PK-12 to effectively support students who may have challenges with executive functioning. The frontal lobe section of the brain may develop later in a child's life and is thought to be crucial in decision making, organization, impulse control, and conceptualizing novel situations (executive functions). Supporting P-12 students’ academic growth and achievement effectively depends on appropriate educational strategies related to executive functions. Participants will develop a deeper understanding of student executive function strengths and challenges. Through interactive discussions, reading current research, and reflective practice, participants will increase their understanding of effective interventions, strategies to strengthen student deficiencies in executive functioning, and ways to help students further hone existing executive function skills. Multicultural factors, diverse learning challenges, and educational settings PK – 12 will be explored.

The course is 10 units of discussion based on reading/video/websites provided within the course site or through Whittemore Online Library.

Unit topics:
1. What is Executive Functioning?
2. Executive Functioning and Theory of Mind
3. Executive Functioning in Elementary School and Beyond
4. Academic Skills and Executive Function
5. Developing an Inner Control System
6. ADHD Symptoms and Executive Function
7. Executive Function Assessment
8. Can't vs. Won't
9. Skills for Life and Executive Function
10. Sharing What We Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Reading/website/video</th>
<th>Thumb discussions (2 unit samples for course approval)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is Executive Functioning?</td>
<td>The Developing Child, Harvard University, The Center on the Developing Child: In Brief:</td>
<td><strong>PLEASE see discussion rubric.</strong> Responses to prompts must be at least 250 words and be written at the graduate level. Participants must respond to at least 2 classmates' posts.</td>
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<td>2. Executive Functioning and Theory of Mind</td>
<td>Autism Speaks: Executive Functioning and Theory of Mind <a href="http://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/documents/as-hfa/ef_tm_as-hfa_tool_kit.pdf">http://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/documents/as-hfa/ef_tm_as-hfa_tool_kit.pdf</a></td>
<td>The authors' definition: &quot;Theory of Mind can be summed up as a person’s inability to understand and identify the thoughts, feelings and intentions of others&quot;. What do you think about this definition? How would yours agree or differ?</td>
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<td>3. Executive Functioning in Elementary School and Beyond</td>
<td>Hooper, S. R., Swartz, C. W., &amp; Wakely, M. B. (2002). Executive functions in elementary school children with and without problems in written expression. <em>Journal Of Learning Disabilities, 35</em>(1), 57-68.</td>
<td>The authors state, &quot;.....this study examined the utility of an executive function model including four executive function domains and reading decoding for writing competence in a sample of fourth- and fifth-grade students.&quot; Did you agree with the findings? why/why not? Are the applicable to other grade levels? Why/why not?</td>
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<td>4. Academic Skills and Executive Function</td>
<td>Latzman, R. D., Elkovitch, N., Young, J., &amp; Clark, L. (2010). The contribution of executive functioning to academic achievement among male adolescents. <em>Journal Of Clinical &amp; Experimental Neuropsychology, 32</em>(5), 455-462. doi:10.1080/13803390903164363</td>
<td>The authors state, &quot;Given that testing has become a federally mandated benchmark for evaluating children and schools, the current findings have implications for curriculum considerations and educational interventions. Children with EF difficulties may be particularly disadvantaged with regard to performance on these high-stakes tests.&quot; What are your thoughts about high stakes testing and EF? How does EF impact academic functioning?</td>
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<td>5. Developing an Inner Control</td>
<td>Building the Brain’s “Air Traffic Control” System: How Early Experiences Shape the</td>
<td>This working paper discusses the following, &quot;As essential as they are, we aren’t born with the skills that enable us</td>
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<td>System</td>
<td>Development of Executive Function <a href="http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/reports_and_working_papers/working_papers/wp11/">http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/reports_and_working_papers/working_papers/wp11/</a></td>
<td>to control impulses, make plans, and stay focused.&quot; They go on to say, &quot;Among scientists who study these functions, three dimensions are frequently highlighted: working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive or mental flexibility.&quot; How does the development of inner controls impact the learning of your students? Why?</td>
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<td>7. Executive Function Assessment</td>
<td>Thorell, L. B., &amp; Nyberg, L. (2008). The Childhood Executive Functioning Inventory (CHEXI): A New Rating Instrument for Parents and Teachers. Developmental Neuropsychology, 33(4), 536-552. doi:10.1080/87565640802101516</td>
<td>Thorell states, &quot;The most interesting finding is that ratings on the CHEXI-WM factor explained additional variance, beyond the influence of EF laboratory measures, in mathematics, language skills, and ADHD symptoms.&quot; How might schools use the CHEXI to support appropriate decision making with regard to effective instruction for all learners?</td>
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<td>8. Can't vs. Won't</td>
<td>Executive Functioning <a href="http://www.ncld.org/types-learning-disabilities/executive-function-disorders">http://www.ncld.org/types-learning-disabilities/executive-function-disorders</a> Rick LaVoie: <a href="http://www.ricklavoie.com">http://www.ricklavoie.com</a> Batteries NOT Included, I can't vs. He</td>
<td>Please connect the work of Rick LaVoie with the information from NCLD. How may these resources support you in your work? Please share additional sources you have</td>
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What do you see as the skills needed for our more complicated world? How does EF play a role in preparing for that world? |
| 10. Sharing What We Know | Please post you PPT | Please respond to classmates' PPT presentations |

**Reading:**


**Website Sources:**

The Developing Child, Harvard University, The Center on the Developing Child:

In Brief: Executive Function: Skills for Life and Learning video

http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/multimedia/videos/inbrief_series/inbrief_executive_function/

Building the Brain’s “Air Traffic Control” System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function
Autism Speaks:
Executive Functioning and Theory of Mind

National Center for Learning Disabilities:
Video: What Is Executive Function?

Executive Functioning

LD Online:
What Is Executive Functioning?
By: Joyce Cooper-Kahn and Laurie Dietzel (2008)
http://www.ldonline.org/article/29122/

Rick LaVoie: http://www.ricklavoie.com/
Batteries NOT Included, I can't vs. He won't http://www.ricklavoie.com/batteriesart.html

Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, participants will have had the opportunity to be able to demonstrate:

1. An understanding of executive function.
2. An understanding and application of effective instructional strategies, enhancing student academic learning and performance to improve student executive function skills.
3. Student development of self regulation skills and inner control
4. An understanding of appropriate executive function assessment
5. An appreciation for students with diverse cultural, economic, language, and learning styles.
6. Skills necessary to ethically support students, families, school staff with regard to effective executive function development, support, and interventions.
7. Skills in the area of consultation and collaboration strategies with regard to students, families, and school community.
8. Development of ongoing reflective practice with regard to effective, research based pedagogical strategies.
9. An understanding of the relationship of executive function and academic achievement
10. An understanding of the differences and similarities of ADHD and executive function

Participants will be expected to:

1. Actively participate in threaded discussions (see attached rubric). These discussions reflect the learning of material presented and are expected to be at least 250 words for initial response to prompt. They are written at a graduate level, include references, and are written in formal language.
2. Present a PPT with resources detailing a specific behavior analysis/intervention skill/strategy developed for the participant’s current content area, including criteria and rubrics for student success
Participants will develop a PPT model detailing an intervention/support for executive function to reach diverse students including rubric and research resources in APA format. The PPT will be one which can be shared with school professionals, families, school community to enlighten participants with regard to effective support of students with this challenge. Graduate level presentation skills are expected and APA format is required including cited references and sources. The PPT will illustrate the information and skills acquired while participating in the graduate class.

**PPT Rubric**

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<th>5 points</th>
<th>10 points</th>
<th>20 points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Addresses some, but not all areas of executive function interventions/support and is not in a format that can be shared with others</td>
<td>Addresses most areas and is readily able to be shared with others</td>
<td>Addresses all areas and is readily shared with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is presented in a somewhat confusing manner</td>
<td>Is presented well and with good clarity and with some graphics</td>
<td>Is presented with exceptional clarity and with appealing graphics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Includes some research based resources, but not in APA format</td>
<td>Includes some research based resources in APA format</td>
<td>Includes several research based resources in APA format</td>
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**Discussion Rubric**

Students are expected to post throughout the week/unit. It is extremely important to post before the end of each unit in order to fully benefit from peer coaching/peer relationship building and receive credit. Discussions reflect the learning of material presented and are expected to be at least 250 words for initial response to prompt. They are written at a graduate level, include references, and are written in formal language.

Threaded Discussion activity will be awarded 0-8 points/week/unit for the following:

- **Quantity of Postings.** How many times did you post? Was it the minimum (twice/week per thread) or did you post more often. Did you take over the forum by excessive posting? Informal conversations should take place in the Student Lounge Thread.

- **Quality of Postings.** Were the posts relevant to the question and thoughtful or were they simply “Yes, I agree”? Are they written at a graduate level and reflect research pertinent to the topic?

- **Quality of Interactive Discussion and Community Building.** Did you weave other postings into your own posting?

- **Understanding of the Reading.** Did you weave your understanding of the literature into your posting?
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<th></th>
<th>0 points</th>
<th>4 points</th>
<th>8 points</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Postings</strong></td>
<td>Postings are not relevant to the question posted.</td>
<td>Postings reflect the reading but no information given to source of information.</td>
<td>Postings reflect the readings and information source is cited.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quantity of Postings</strong></td>
<td>Responds to the question posted and one of the following: neglects to respond to any student postings OR dominates the thread with excessive postings</td>
<td>Responds to the question posted and responds to one student posting.</td>
<td>Responds to the question posted and responds to 2-3 students and responds throughout the week (not just at one time during the week).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding of Readings</strong></td>
<td>Responds to the question posted but does not mention material from the readings.</td>
<td>Responds to the question posted and makes reference to the readings.</td>
<td>Responds to the question posted and makes reference to the readings and provides links to other sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interweaving other postings into discussion</strong></td>
<td>Responds to question posted and to student posting but does not weave information into posting.</td>
<td>Responds to question posted and to student posting and weaves information into own posting.</td>
<td>Responds to question posted and to student posting and weaves information into own posting. Additionally, weaves information in from links to outside sources.</td>
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**COMPUTER SKILLS**
Participants are expected to have basic computer skills, know how to search the web, understand how to send an email and attach a file, and have basic file management skills. A fairly new computer connected to the internet works best with Blackboard and familiarity with the learning management tool is also advised. Mozilla Firefox is the preferred browser to use with Blackboard.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**
All students enrolled in courses at Framingham State University must abide by the University Policy Regarding Academic Honesty, as published in the Framingham State University catalog and the RAM Student handbook. All forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating on exams and plagiarism, are serious offenses and are subject to scrutiny under due process. By logging into Blackboard, you agree to the university Acceptable Use Policy which also covers academic honesty. To become more familiar with this policy click here.

**QUESTIONS**
If you have general questions or need assistance, please post your comments to the Ask Deb discussion board of the course. Most likely, someone in the class has the same question. If the question is specific to your work, please email dmerriam@framingham.edu or phone 508 359-2710. Questions will be answered within 24 to 48 hours.