

# CGS Skills: Executive Functioning

**Fitzgerald**  
**23-24**

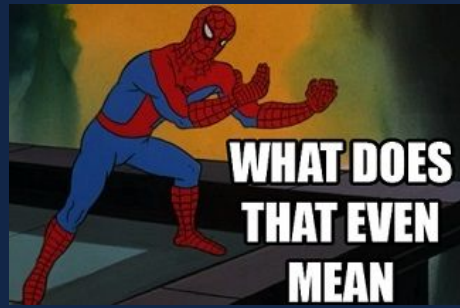


# What *is* executive functioning?



**According to Harvard's Center on the Developing Child, "executive function skills help us **plan**, **focus attention**, **switch gears**, and **juggle multiple tasks**—much like an air traffic control system at a busy airport."**

# Understanding Working Memory



IS:

★ Temporary storage

DOES:

- ★ Manipulate visual and auditory information
- ★ Sustain attention
- ★ Impact school performance

CAN:

★ Be trained!

# Understanding Working Memory

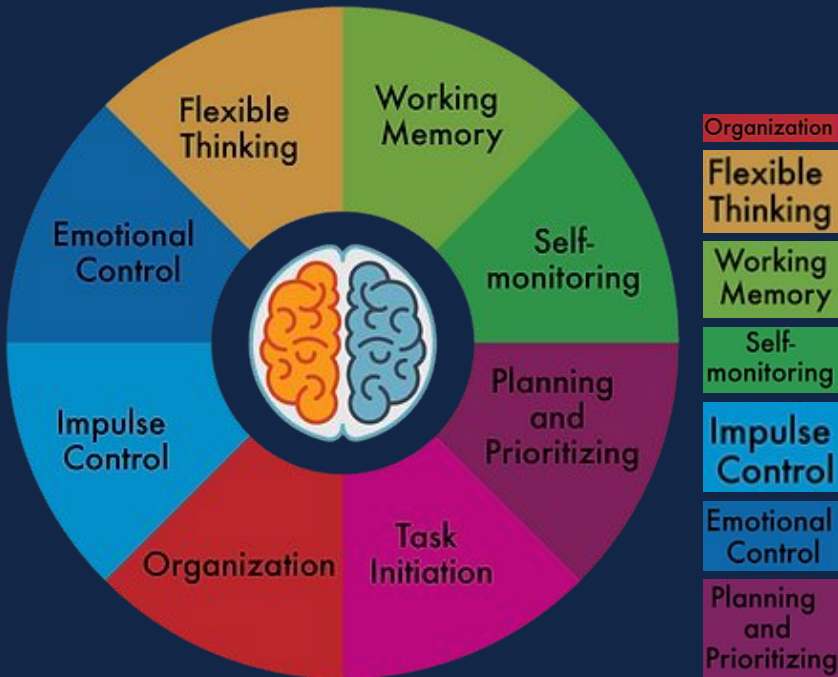


## How does working memory impact learning?

- Concept formation requires sufficient working memory (Cowan)
  - *Sufficient working memory is necessary for learning new concepts!*
- Effectively storing information in retrievable long-term memory requires sustainable presence in working memory (Cowan)
  - *We must first hold information in our working memory temporarily before we will be able to remember it later.*

# Executive Functioning Sort!

WHICH COMPONENTS OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING ARE MOST LIKELY TO AFFECT SCHOOL PERFORMANCE?  
WHICH ARE MOST LIKELY TO AFFECT BEHAVIOR?



School Performance	Behavior
Task Initiation	

# Solutions for Executive (dis)Functioning



- Organized Sports
- Games that require constant monitoring of the environment (yes, even video games!)
- Brain Teasers (like crosswords, sudoku, and Rubik's cubes)
- Playing an instrument
- Singing
- Dancing
- Card games (spades, hearts, bridge)
- Strategy and/or fantasy games (ex: Minecraft, Dungeons and Dragons)
- Logic puzzles
- Journaling
- Positive self-talk/growth mindset
- Keep a calendar

*For more information on exactly how these activities build executive functioning, see the linked resources!*

IDEAS FROM



Center on the Developing Child  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



## Resources:

- ★ Activities to Develop Executive Functioning Skills (7-12yrs):  
<https://harvardcenter.wpenginpowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Executive-Function-Activities-for-7-to-12-year-olds.pdf>
- ★ Activities to Develop Executive Functioning Skills (Adolescents):  
<https://harvardcenter.wpenginpowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Activities-for-Adolescents.pdf>
- ★ Working Memory Underpins Cognitive Development, Learning, and Education by Nelson Cowan: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4207727/>
- ★ What is Executive Function and How Does It Affect Childhood Development?:  
[https://harvardcenter.wpenginpowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ExecutiveFunctionInfographic\\_FINAL.pdf](https://harvardcenter.wpenginpowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ExecutiveFunctionInfographic_FINAL.pdf)