

Classroom Strategies for Supporting Students with ADHD & Executive Function Challenges

Build independence, motivation, and confidence in the classroom



Introduction

Every educator has worked with bright, capable students who struggle to stay on task, follow through, or manage emotions. These challenges aren't about effort — they're about executive function (EF) skills.

Executive function skills help students manage attention, time, and emotions, yet they develop unevenly, especially for students with ADHD. Supporting EF in the classroom can lead to measurable gains in academic achievement, engagement, and emotional well-being (Pandey et al., 2018).

At [GrowNOW ADHD](#), we coach students and families to strengthen the internal skills that build independence and confidence. We also partner with schools to translate those same principles into practical classroom strategies educators can use right away.



What Is Executive Function?

Executive function is the brain's management system — it enables students to plan, prioritize, focus, regulate emotions, and follow through on tasks.

Research shows that EF interventions focusing on planning, working memory, and self-monitoring improve classroom performance and emotional regulation for students with ADHD (Al-Saad et al., 2021).

The four core executive function skills we focus on are:



Self-Awareness

Understanding how they think, feel, and learn best



Self-Motivation

Starting and persisting through non-preferred or challenging tasks



Self-Regulation

Managing emotions, attention, and behavior



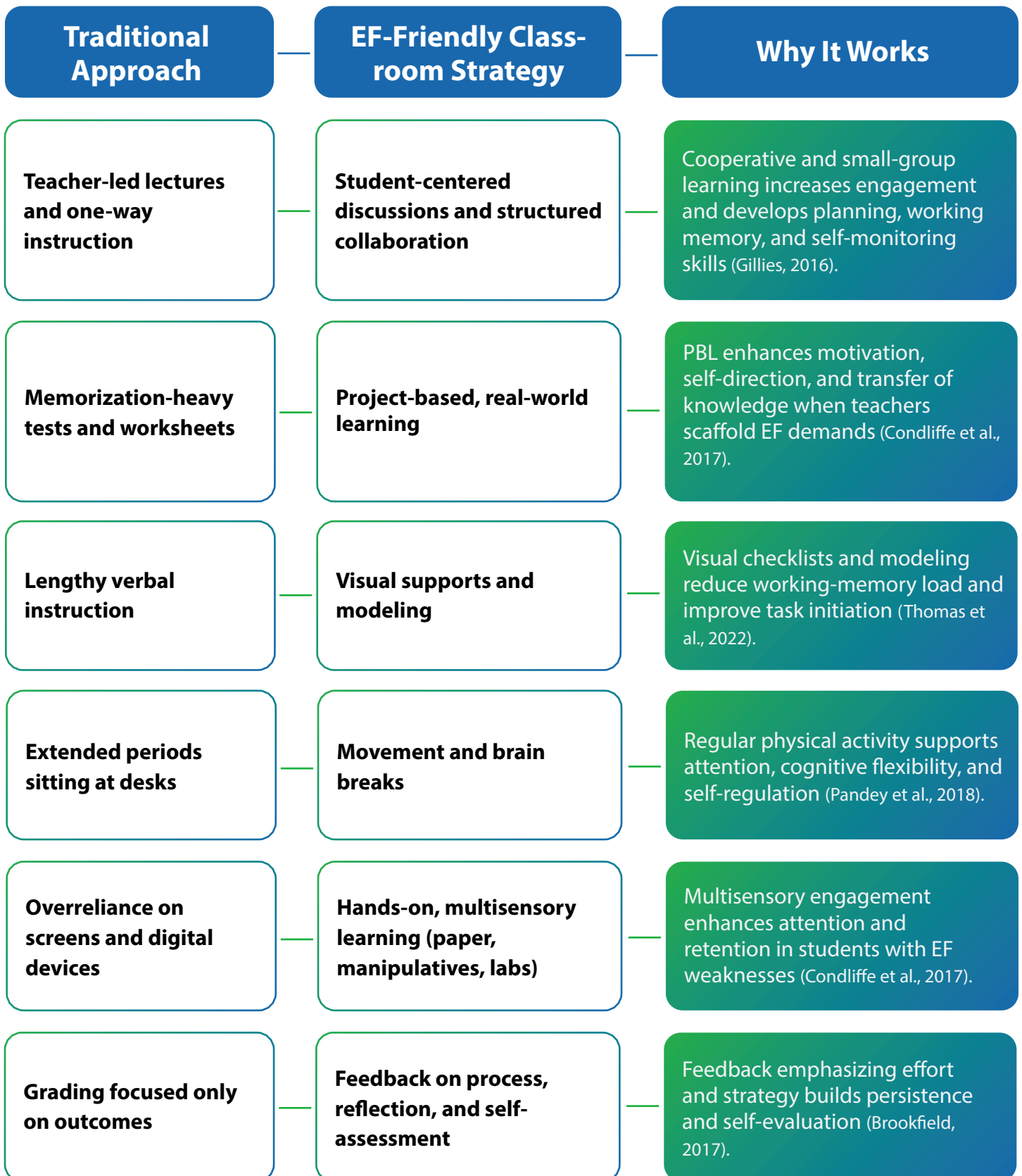
Self-Evaluation

Reflecting on performance and adjusting strategies



Classroom Approaches That Work

Traditional Approach -> EF-Friendly Approach



Reflection Checklist (for Teachers & Staff)

Where do my students struggle most?

- Starting tasks
- Completing and turning in assignments
- Staying focused during lessons
- Managing emotions or frustration
- Transitioning between activities

What strategies do I already use successfully?

One new strategy I'll try this month:

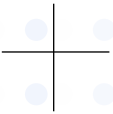
Regular teacher reflection and small, consistent adjustments are linked to improved engagement and executive function growth in students (Brookfield, 2017).

When to Seek Extra Support

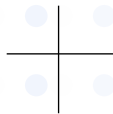
Some students need more than classroom strategies to build lasting independence. Executive function or ADHD coaching can help when a student:



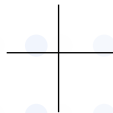
Needs constant adult prompting to begin or complete tasks



Frequently avoids or shuts down during non-preferred work



Struggles to manage frustration or transitions



Feels overwhelmed balancing academic, home, and social expectations

Targeted EF coaching and self-regulation interventions can improve academic productivity, emotional regulation, and adaptive functioning when paired with consistent school support (Pandey et al., 2018; Al-Saad et al., 2021).

GrowNOW ADHD partners with schools and families to help students build meaningful, sustainable skills across school, home, and social settings.

References

- **Al-Saad, M. S. H., et al. (2021).** *A review of working-memory training in ADHD.* *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews.*
- **Brookfield, S. D. (2017).** *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher (2nd ed.).* Jossey-Bass.
- **Condliffe, B., et al. (2017).** *Project-Based Learning: A Literature Review.* MDRC.
- **Gillies, R. M. (2016).** *Cooperative Learning: Review of Research and Practice.* *Australian Journal of Teacher Education.*
- **Pandey, A., et al. (2018).** *Effectiveness of Universal Self-Regulation–Based Interventions in Education: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.* *Educational Psychology Review.*
- **Thomas, N., et al. (2022).** *The Efficacy of Visual Activity Schedule Intervention in Reducing Problem Behaviors in Children with ADHD: A Systematic Review.* *Frontiers in Psychology.*

Next Steps

Want to learn more about partnering with GrowNOW ADHD?

We work with schools nationwide to help students succeed through our proven Internal Skills Coaching Model®.

Learn more at ->

www.grownowadhd.com