

Here is the EF/Behavior "chart" that I created:

I have received several questions asking whether a student struggle is an executive functioning deficit or a behavioral issue. This is a very thoughtful question and demonstrates that you are really trying to get to the core of the issue in order to help.

The difference is in the attempt.

Behavioral issues and EF deficits can go hand in hand. Temper tantrums or a blatant refusal to do work can be attributed to an EF deficit. However, we want to teach our students that they CAN improve in these areas. If they attempt to improve, then no infraction is needed. If a student is trying to listen (sustained attention) but gets distracted by the classroom environment, then it's an executive functioning deficit. If they are playing a game on their computer during your lecture, then they are not trying to listen, which is behavior. The first example would be an executive functioning consultation request. The second would be a behavioral infraction on the hub. Regarding classwork, if the student is not attempting to use the time you provide to do classwork, then that's where you can use your professional discernment. If a student is blatantly not trying to complete any of the classwork for the entire period, it should be a behavioral infraction.

Here is a list of examples strictly based on the 11 EF skills:

Sustained attention

listed above

Impulse control

- Attempting your suggestions = move seats, write questions instead of saying them out loud, raise hand before speaking (they are still going to mess up from time to time) - EF deficit
- Refusing to attempt suggestion for an entire period - infraction

Emotional control

- Shows some level of self-awareness and tries to manage and regulate emotions (they are still going to mess up from time to time) - EF deficit
- Blatant aggression and defiance - infraction

Persistence

- There are many breaks (some longer than they should be), but the student continually attempts to keep going - EF deficit
- Immediately gives up and writes notes to other students, plays games on computer, etc. - infraction

Flexibility

- Frustrated and unsure how to proceed when things don't go as planned - EF deficit
- Unwilling to listen to anyone else including the teacher (his/her way or else) - infraction

Task Initiation

- Unsure how to begin - EF deficit
- Unwilling to begin - infraction

Organization

- Forgetful - EF deficit
- Refusal - infraction

Planning

- Unsure how to plan - EF deficit
- Dismissive of all future work, unwilling to participate in group work - infraction

Time Management

- Inefficient with the time given to them - EF deficit
- Unwilling to use the time given to them - infraction

Working Memory

- Forgetful, but willing to try new ways to retain information - EF deficit
- No attempt to improve or listen - infraction

Metacognition

- Struggles to see the bigger picture and incapable of evaluating their own work, but willing to hear feedback - EF deficit
- Verbally blames others for poor performance and shows unwillingness to hear or take in feedback - infraction

We are not asking students for their perfection. We are asking students for their effort. Please let me know if you have any questions.