

Executive function is a set of specific skills that helps us to stay organized and manage our time. Executive function enables us to make plans, keep track of the tasks at hand, including when they need to be done, and make educated estimates about how long tasks will take to complete. It enables us to break big tasks into a manageable series of little tasks. In simplest terms, executive function is in charge of making sure things get done. For a student, it controls the planning stages of an assignment or test, and all the steps necessary up to the physical act of turning in the assignment or taking the test. Think of it as the brain's air traffic controller: It makes sure all the planes land on time and safely, while juggling multiple flight plans, departures and arrivals. Executive function is a set of skills that permits us to demonstrate our cognitive capability in an efficient way.

It is not a form of intelligence.

For those with weak executive function, any task that requires planning, organization, memory, time management or flexible thinking becomes a challenge. Weak executive function makes one feel there's all the time in the world to complete things. If the assignment

is not due in the next second ... it's not due, simple as that. Tasks are relegated to the black hole of "I will do it later". When the individual finally peeks into the hole, there's so much piled up in there that he or she is overwhelmed, and can't get started.

We now know that many individuals like this are amazingly smart, with profound intellectual horsepower. When burdened by weak executive function, however, they are often unable to deliver results in a way that reflects their true ability.