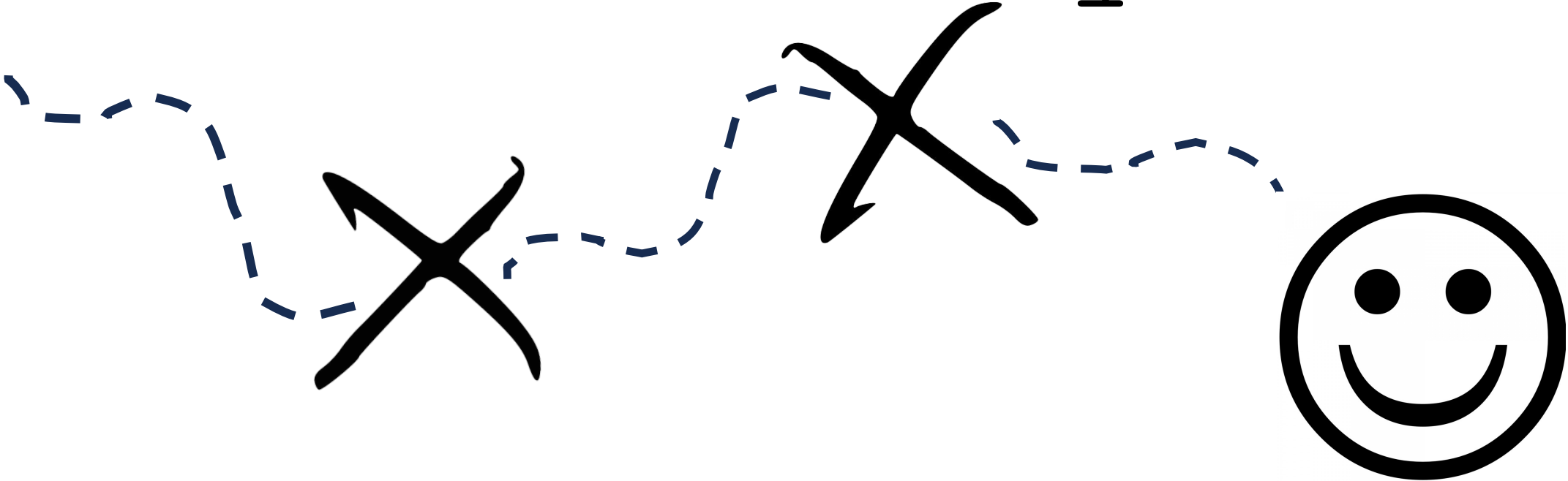


# Executive Function Field Day



# Today...

We are going to play a lot of games to get to know ourselves and each other. We are going to learn about a type of thinking called EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING.

# Hand Clapping Activity

- ❑ Find a partner.
- ❑ Create a pattern of hand clapping that is so simple you don't even have to think about it. This is the way our brain typically operates. It is easier to do things that are routine, repetitive, and easy.
- ❑ Now, add a move where you have to work on two motions at one time (like tap your head and rub your tummy). This is harder. This uses working memory to WORK on things in mind at once. What is the term? WORKING MEMORY!
- ❑ Now, add a move that has a few different surprise versions. One person leads this surprise move and the other partner has to adapt quickly with the right response (like when you sometimes go *up high* and sometimes go *down low*). This requires COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY. You have to be flexible to adapt to surprises. What is the term? FLEXIBILITY!
- ❑ Now, add a move where you have to stop yourself from doing something you want to keep doing (like freezing in the middle of a pattern). Stopping yourself when you feel like doing something takes INHIBITION. What's the term? Your term to say it. INHIBITION!



# THESE are EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS!

Working on two things at once takes  
**WORKING MEMORY**

Responding to something surprising takes  
**FLEXIBILITY**

Stopping yourself takes  
**INHIBITION**



DISCUSS: Here is a basketball player trying to defend the net. What EF is he using? Why? How about the juggler? Discuss with a partner and draw a line to connect these three pictures to the correct definitions. What did you decide? Why?

# Your Executive Functions (EF)

*Fill in the power bar to show your strength...*

## Working Memory

I can remember a  
number backwards  
(35721).

I can talk and  
dial a phone at  
the same time.



## Flexibility

I can change my  
mind easily.

I can go with  
the flow when  
things change.



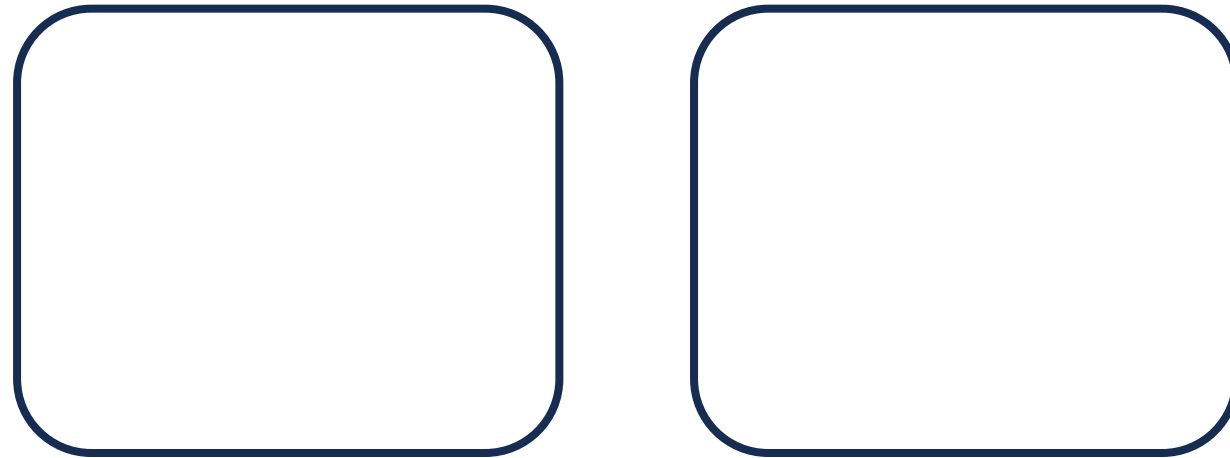
## Inhibition

I don't get  
distracted by my  
phone.

If we disagree, I  
can just stop  
thinking about it  
and let it go.



Walk around and find two people who have the same kinds of **executive function** strengths as you..



..get them to autograph this page.  
Come back together and discuss. What did we learn about each other?

# Rock Paper Scissors Faceoff



Rock



Paper



Scissors

Students walk around an area, facing off with different players. They say, "Rock, paper, scissors, go!" and then make one of these signals. If you are defeated, you have to follow your opponent into their next match.

If you beat someone with a large line behind them, the whole line has to follow you.

The LAST match is decided based on which team gives the most creative, insightful, and believable explanation for how all three EFs are involved in this game. Write your answers on the next page.

In case of a tie (teacher judges), a final R-P-S match is held.

# How are Executive Functions (EF) used in Rock Paper Scissors?

Working  
Memory

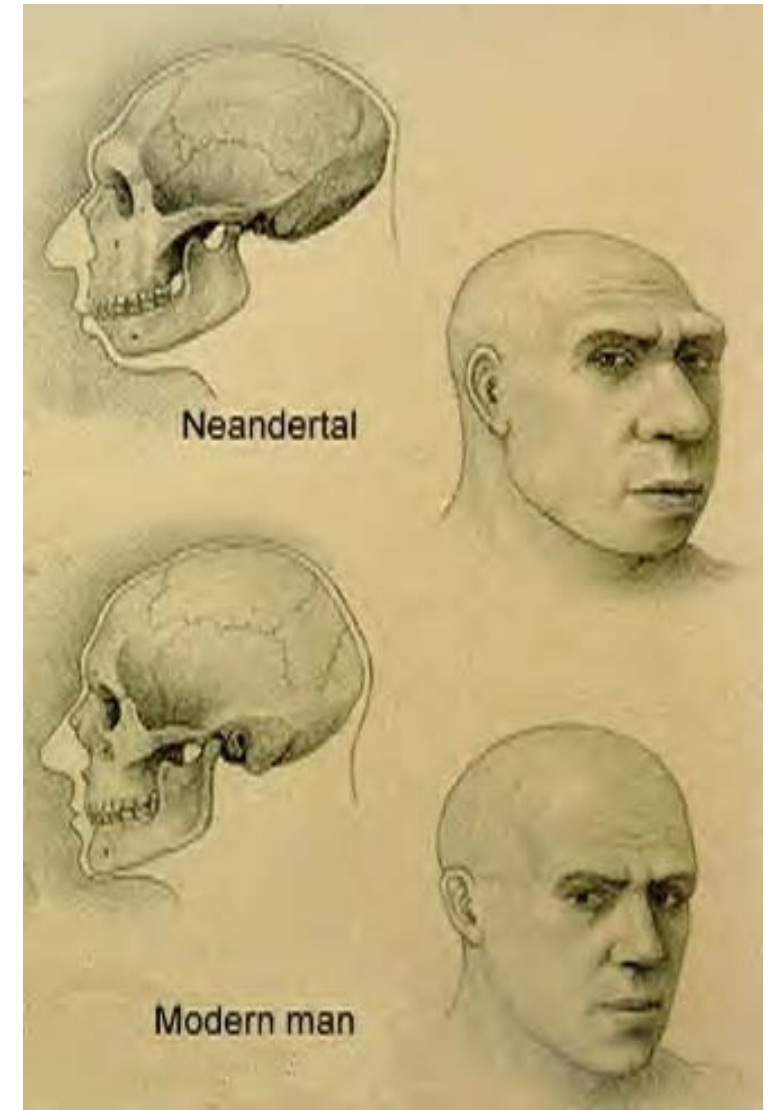
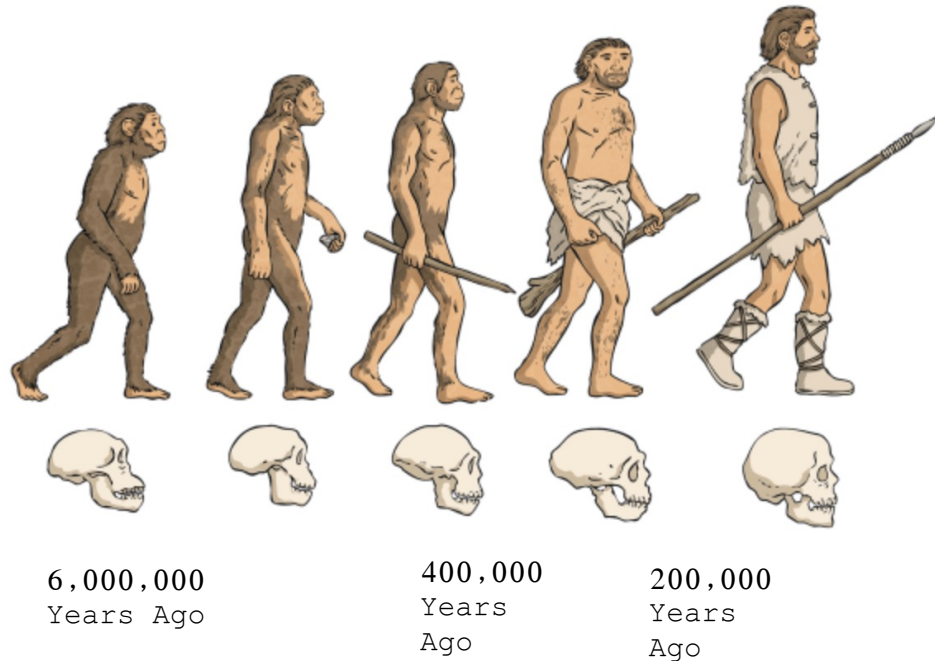
Flexibility

Inhibition



# Can you figure it out? Study the diagrams...





**Discuss:** EFs allow us to solve problems, innovate, and do challenging work. They developed more RECENTLY than the rest of our brain. Find a partner and look at these pictures. Can you see changes in the shape of a human skull? Where in the head do you think EFs developed over time? Mark the spot with an x.



You can share this information with a caregiver/parent tonight. Make up one fake fact, read them all the facts, and see if they can detect the fib.

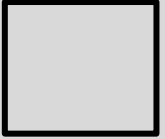
True facts about EF

Fake fact about EF


 <p>Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses, like a fingerprint.</p>	<p>EFs help <u>you</u> express your creativity and smarts.</p> 
<p>Incredibly smart people, like teachers and parents, have EF challenges too.</p> 	<p>EFs will slowly get better with age.</p> 



Fooled parent/caregiver



Did not fool parent/caregiver



# EF Ball Game



Students stand in circles of six. They must pass a ball around the circle without dropping it. Slowly, other objects with different sizes and weights can be added, like wiffle balls, stuffies, etc. Larger balls can be used, and kicks and simple passes to the person beside can be used as desired to make the activity more accessible. Students should naturally seek more challenge but can also be encouraged to stretch their skills!

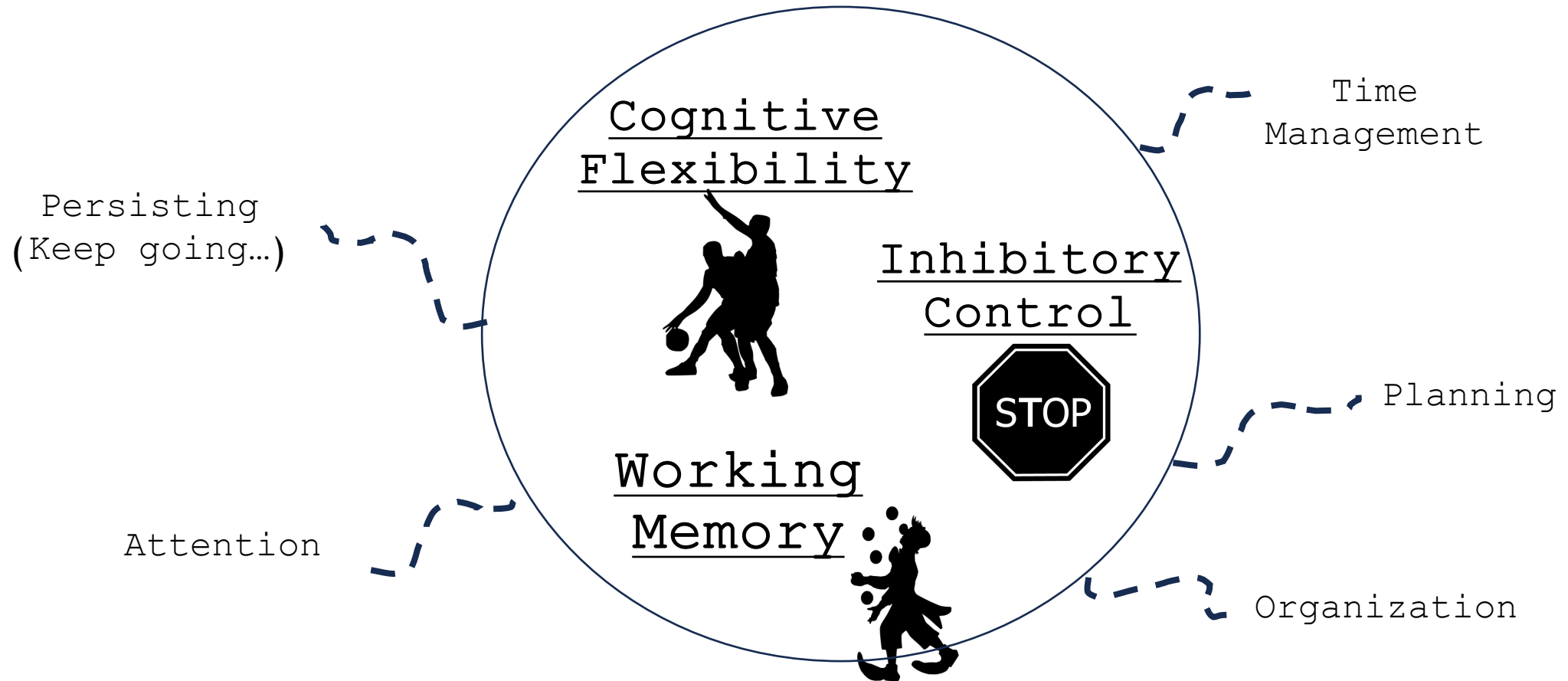
Throughout the activity, students should be stopped to discuss how the game is like life, when we work in teams and juggle many different responsibilities.

Participants should be encouraged to discuss the different EFs involved in the task - Working Memory, Cognitive Flexibility, and Inhibitory Control.

Students should be encouraged to be innovative and design strategies to go faster and be more accurate.

After the game, gather in a circle to discuss the following page. You can introduce the other EFs that we use to succeed. What other EFs did they use to succeed in the ball toss game?

# Even MORE EF Skills...



Everyday skills like being organized, paying attention, and planning are also EFs! Think about the ball game you just played. Which of these skills did you use? Put a check next to each one.

# How I use EFs – How many lines can you make?

Interests

Video Games

Basketball

Dogs / Cats

Art

Dance

Math

EF Skill

Working Memory

Flexibility

Inhibitory Control

Planning

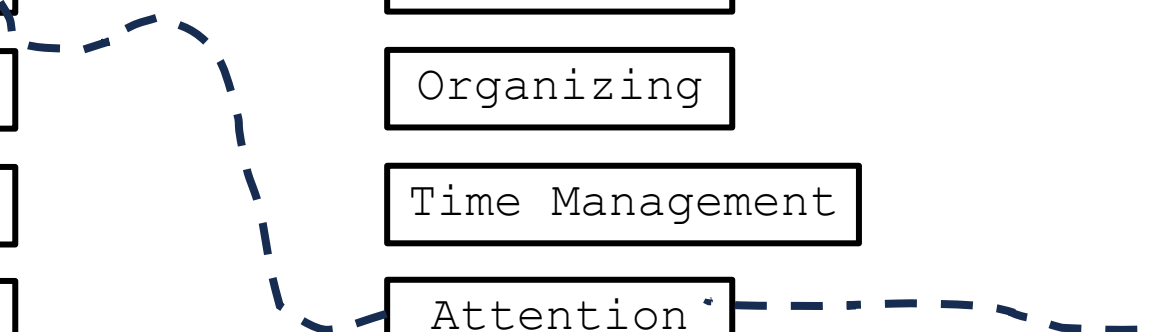
Organizing

Time Management

Attention

How it is Used

*To make it precise and detailed.*



# Write a Verse for a Rap About EF

Words that  
Rhyme with  
EF or  
"Function"

Junction

Chef Steph

Malfunction

ref

Treble clef

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Prepare to share! Students can share their verse as part of a larger song.