

Building Executive Function Skills



## Seeing Time

A Visual Instruction Model

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To experience difficulty with time management is one of the hallmark traits of someone with executive functioning deficits. When I first started developing the Seeing My Time program, I thought that the concepts, activities and strategies that help the time-challenged would have no value for those without time management issues. However, over time I have discovered that just about everyone benefits from being taught time concepts and strategies.

This series of lectures provide a hands-on instruction model to teach people to see the spatial aspect of time. There are activity sheets for seeing the space of time in a week and two worksheets to help students develop an awareness of the amount of time homework takes on a given day and then over the span of a week.

I encourage you to use this model to teach students and adults to see their time. It is the basic foundation needed for developing the executive function skill of time management.

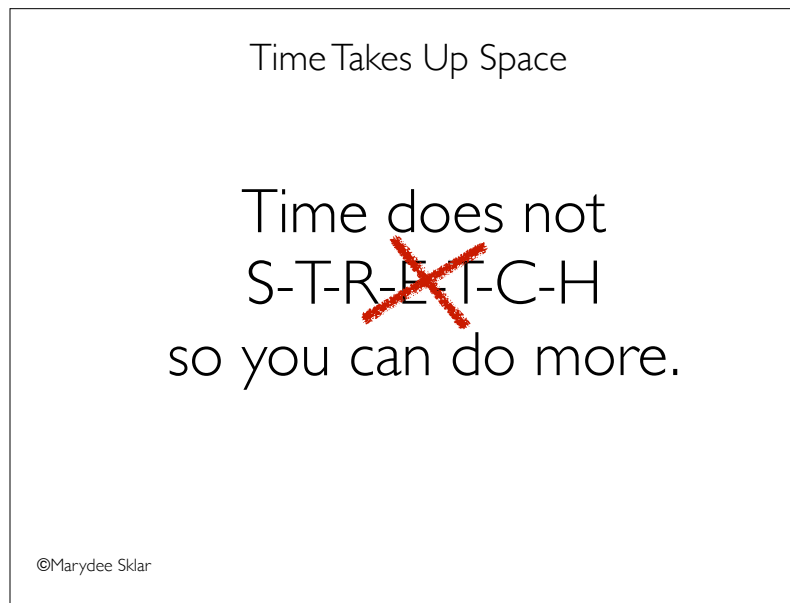
The Trouble with Time....

It is invisible!!

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The first thing you need to be aware of is that the trouble with time is TIME, because time is an abstract concept. If you ask a student to show you five minutes they might show you five fingers. That's not time. That is five fingers.

The real problem with time is that it is invisible. We can't see it. We can't get our hands on it. In order to teach someone about time, we are going to have to make it visible and concrete so he or she can SEE their time.




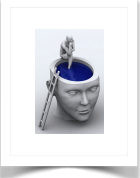
I always teach that time takes up space. This is what sets me apart from other people who teach time management. I stress the spatial aspect of time. The reason I do this is because our brain lies to us about time. When we time things, we discover that when we do something that we LIKE to do, time goes really quickly. In a blink the time is gone. How could I have been reading for that long?

Likewise we will think, ugh, I don't want to clean up this kitchen, or do the cat box, because we feel like it is going to take SO much time. In reality, many of the everyday tasks we don't want to do, don't actually take that long. Our brain "plays" with our feelings about time.


What I want you to realize is that time does not stretch so you can do more. It is not like one of those suitcases with the extra zipper that allows you to bring home more stuff than you took for your vacation. That zipper helps your suitcase to expand. Time DOES NOT do that. It does not stretch.

This is very important to realize. I want you to conceptualize it more like little metal boxes. You can only fit so much into that little box. Or imagine a glass of water. Only so much water will fit into a glass.

It is critical, and difficult, to let go of the concept that time is kind of stretchy. Sometimes time seems to go fast, sometimes it seems to go slowly. WRONG. Time passing is a constant, like the ticking of a pendulum clock. You can only do so much in a given space of time.



Pause and draw a picture  
that represents the concept:  
Time Takes up Space.



I want you to pause and draw a picture representing the concept: Time takes up space. There is no right or wrong answer for this. Your drawing will be unique. You will have students create some really cool drawings. If you are doing this with a group of people, you will want to have them turn to their neighbors and share their pictures and discuss them before you move on to the next step of seeing your time.

### Thoughts for Using this Information