

CASE STUDY

Increased Executive Function Skills for Older Students

Maplebrook School, Amenia, NY

Hard Work, Engaged Students, and Resiliency Get Results.

At Maplebrook School, located in the Hudson Valley of New York, their mission is to provide quality academic programs for students with learning differences or learning disorders. For 100 students enrolled, this is accomplished through small group and individualized instruction to help learners reach their academic, social, vocational and physical potential. This instruction is delivered through a caring, supportive, and home-like environment that provides the necessary experiences to allow each learner the opportunity to assume a more independent role in society.

In the 2014–2015 school year, all students in the Postsecondary Programs aged 18–21 used ACTIVATE™ for at least 15 minutes daily with additional time spent during study hall and even at night in their dormitories.

Assistant Head of School for Postsecondary Studies and Dean of Admissions, Jennifer Scully, shared that Maplebrook looked at other programs used by similar schools but found that those programs didn't offer the flexibility and the engaging game-like environment found in ACTIVATE.

Significant Improvements in Executive Function Skills for Students—All Students

Maplebrook is seeing ACTIVATE get results. The school administers the Comprehensive Executive Functioning Inventory (CEFI) test to all students and saw impressive results after using ACTIVATE.

"Across our student population, we didn't see any executive function skills where students didn't make gains." comments Jennifer. -Jennifer Scully

Maplebrook has a unique program called Responsibility Increases Self-Esteem (RISE), whereby each student makes gains by showing responsible behaviors. Through positive reinforcement, students' self-esteems grow and they, in turn, become more independent. One fantastic feature of ACTIVATE is that each student's faculty/staff mentor can check progress on the program and set new goals for greater achievement. Mentors work one-on-one as advisors to help the students set achievable goals, especially with executive functioning.

"Our students are really engaged in ACTIVATE. They start and don't want to stop since they keep playing to beat the game," commented Jennifer Scully. She goes on to share that, "ACTIVATE affords Maplebrook the opportunity to reinforce our students' executive function skills in many ways through flexible use of the program."

-Jennifer Scully, Assistant Head of School for Postsecondary Studies and Dean of Admissions

BIG Growth with ACTIVATE.

100%

of students aged 18-21 made growth in

-  ATTENTION
-  EMOTIONAL REGULATION
-  WORKING MEMORY
-  ORGANIZATION
-  PLANNING
-  SELF-MONITORING

92% of students aged 18–21 showed growth in 3 or more areas.

Highest percentage of growth was made in emotional regulation.

Helping Create Responsible, Mature Young Adults who are Productive Members of Society.

The students' accomplishments with the program carried over into their daily lives. There was significant progress made in organizational skills and, more importantly, in their emotional regulation. As the year progressed, students were exhibiting better problem-solving abilities and engaging in more thoughtful responses to situations, rather than impulsively reacting. They also improved their planning as it corresponds to time management. Improvements include a better grasp on emotional regulation (e.g., remaining calm when facing small problems, reacting to situations with an appropriate level of emotion) and self-monitoring (e.g., applying prior knowledge, following directions). Improvements were also seen in the areas of working memory (e.g., following directions, retention of read information) and initiation (e.g., willingness to complete a task without prompting, avoiding procrastination on school assignments).

All in all, with the help of ACTIVATE, they became more responsible, mature young adults.

A perfect example of how the students feel about their progress comes from Haley: "I love using ACTIVATE. Not only is it fun, but I feel like I am becoming a better person."
-Student, Maplebrook School

A Look Ahead...More Growth with ACTIVATE.

Maplebrook School plans to expand their use of ACTIVATE by fully integrating the program into their time management plans. Maplebrook plans to:

- ✓ Expand their use of ACTIVATE by making it mandatory for students to use over their three extended vacation breaks
- ✓ Implement the physical education portion of ACTIVATE to expand the full benefits of the program
- ✓ Continue setting specific goals for students for use in ACTIVATE and for the physical activity integrated within Maplebrook's sports programs
- ✓ Extend use of ACTIVATE to all students aged 13–18 years old

Maplebrook looks forward to continued success with ACTIVATE resulting in improved executive function growth—all made possible through the hard work and resiliency of students. ACTIVATE is the exclusive executive functioning tool used at the school.

Lindsey says, "I feel as if I have developed more patience. I am more comfortable about reacting to an emergency, I am much better at time management, and I find following directions easier. I had a lot of trouble with these areas before coming here and ACTIVATE really helps me."

-Student, Maplebrook School
