

Cool Tool

North Tonawanda Middle School

Maintaining focus in the classroom

School-Wide Expectation:	Respect
Name of Skill:	Maintain focus
Setting:	Classroom

Purpose of Lesson:

- 1) When students are off-task, they can cause classmates to lose their concentration as well.
- 2) Students need to get to a certain point in their classes each year in order to be able to move into the next grade. If the teacher has to stop class when students get off-task, they may not cover as much material as is needed and be behind next year.

Teaching Examples:

- 1) Every night you and your friends pack up to go home. You have two or three books every night while your friends only have one or two. You start complaining about the amount of homework. One of your friends points out that while everyone else is working in class and study hall, you are looking around the room and sharpening pencils. If you stayed focused, you'd get more work done in school.
- 2) When progress reports come out your math grade is lower than you'd like. Math was always easy for you. On the report it says, "Wastes time in class". You decide to concentrate and watch your behavior so your grade will go up before report cards come out.

Kid Activities/Role Plays:

- 1) The teacher says:
"Please take out your pencils!" The teacher waits 10 seconds before speaking again, and then says, "No, get out your pens. I want to see your homework. (Wait 10 seconds more.) "No! Wait. Get out your journals, 1st write this sentence from the board. (Wait 30 seconds.) "Sorry! I changed my mind! Open your books to page 135."

Stop abruptly and ask the class how they felt. The students brainstorm while the teacher notes feelings on the board. The teacher asks - why does the teacher also need to maintain focus?

As you have experienced the class works as a team - the teacher + the whole class + each student!

Concentration helps alleviate frustration and confusion - especially with new material.

2) The teacher asks:

"What if a trainer of a seeing eye dog got distracted and couldn't stay focused?"

"What if a dentist talked on his cell phone while he/she was drilling?"

"What if the pitcher or outfielder of a professional baseball team wasn't concentrating?"

Why is this important? How is it important to our class? Now, each of you needs to write a what-if question relating to how important it is to maintain focus. When all students have finished, share in small groups and pick one from each group to share with the class.

3) The teacher has each student write on his/her paper the name of one profession that would require the person to maintain focus and concentrate. List the examples on the board. Why is it important for these people to stay on task? What might happen if they let their minds wander or did not pay attention?

Follow-up/Reinforcement Activities:

- 1) Role-play a situation where someone does not stay on task and the result is disastrous.
- 2) How frustrated do you feel when the teacher is not on task? Why is it a waste of time when the teacher lets the class time get away?