


I Tried to Do My Homework

From the book "My Cat Knows Karate"



I tried to do my homework
but a show was on TV.
A song was on the radio.
A friend was texting me.

My email chimed, and so, of course,
I had to look at that.
It linked me to a video
of someone's silly cat.

I watched a dozen videos,
and then I played a game.
I almost didn't hear her
when my mother called my name.

I looked up at the clock
and it was time to go to bed.
I didn't get my homework done;
just other stuff instead.

I hope my teacher listens
to the cause of my inaction.
It's really not my fault the world
is just one big distraction.


— Kenn Nesbitt

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**Do your learners get
distracted easily?**

**What are the distractors
in your classroom?**

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Distractors

doodling
expensive tennis shoes
ticking of a clock
lateness
daydreaming
other things they enjoy
old notes on the board
chit-chat
old wall displays
talking
being unprepared
old outside the window
world cup stickers
new pencil case
pencil rolling off a desk
the class next door
the activity itself

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The Purpose of Attention

Teaching with the brain in mind (Eric Jensen)

- to promote survival
- to extend pleasurable states

*"When those conditions
are not met,
classroom attention is a
statistical improbability."*

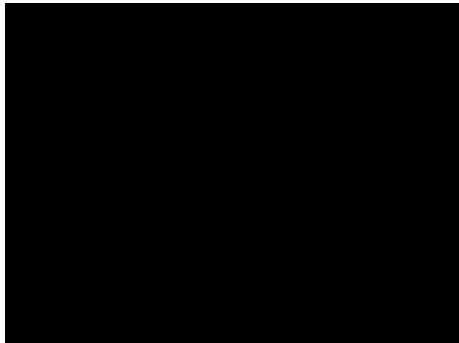


Selective Attention Test

Simons & Chabris (1999)

INSTRUCTIONS

Count how many times the players wearing white pass the basketball.



Types of Attention

Selective attention

The ability to select from many factors or stimuli and to focus on only the one that you want while filtering out other distractions



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The ability to switch your focus back and forth between tasks that require different cognitive demands.

Divided attention

The ability to divide your attention between two or more tasks simultaneously.



True or False?

1. Students become more distracted as the school year progresses.
2. Students are more likely to become distracted with longer lessons than with shorter lessons.
3. Students are more likely to become distracted during whole-group instruction than during individual or small-group instruction.
4. Girls are more likely than boys to be distracted by their peers.
5. In general, girls are more likely to stay on task than boys.

(Study carried out by the Institute of Education Sciences - <https://ies.ed.gov/>)

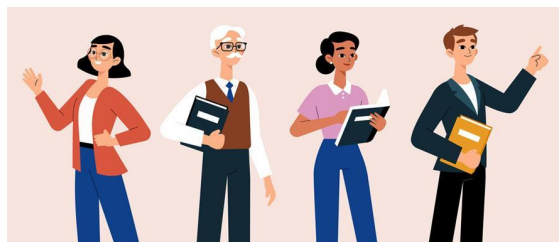
What options do we have?

- Do nothing! Be reactive.
- Befriend distractions! Be proactive.



What can you do?

- Plan to enhance class dynamics
- Think about your delivery



What can you do?

- Short and sweet is good = CONTRAST



What can you do?

- Find out what they're interested in

"People who are passionately devoted to the flute are unable to pay attention to arguments if they hear someone playing a flute, since they enjoy the flute-playing more than the activity that presently occupies them".

(Aristotle, Ethics)



(Share It! Macmillan Education)

What can you do?

- Give learners a role
- Be aware of the physical space
- Polish your classroom management strategies



Classroom management

- Signal systems
- Call and response

Teacher says:

Scooby Dooby Doo...

Hands on top...

Hocus pocus...

Classroom Management
Here's a useful tip for managing noise levels in the classroom during or after loud activities, such as Activity 2. Use a clapping rhythm to signal the end of the activity or item being read aloud. Have students repeat the rhythm. This will get the students to focus on you and will quiet the classroom for the next item.

Classroom Management
Observe which students are often fast finishers. Pair those students up with students who tend to need more time to finish a task. Students will enjoy and benefit from working with classmates with different strengths.

(Share It!, Macmillan Education)

Classroom management

- Signal systems
- Call and response

Teacher says:

Scooby Dooby Doo...

Hands on top...

Hocus pocus...

Learners say:

Where are you?

Everybody stop.

Everybody focus.

Classroom Management
Here's a useful tip for managing noise levels in the classroom during or after loud activities, such as Activity 2. Use a clapping rhythm to signal the end of the activity or item being read aloud. Have students repeat the rhythm. This will get the students to focus on you and will quiet the classroom for the next item.

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Classroom management

- Mix pairs and group members
- A change in location
- Brain breaks

Physical Brain Breaks: yoga, jumping jacks, running in place, dancing...

Breathing Brain Breaks: deep breathing, visualization, gentle stretches, rolling the neck, raising the arms above the head...

Mental Brain Breaks: playing a game, answering trivia questions, telling jokes, brain gym...

Classroom Management
Encourage creativity and engagement by regularly mixing up students so they're not always working with the same partner. Have a set of cards that contain sets of pairs, e.g., pictures, numbers, letters. Pass out the cards to all students. Students find the person with the matching card and work with that student as their partner.

(Share It!, Macmillan Education)

What can you do?

- Distract the distractor
- Use re-directing language
- Use the distraction

How's that work going, Maria?

Where should that book be?

What are we doing right now?

What is our rule about ...?

Competition games

Hot Potato

Students make a circle. Use a ball or wad of paper. Say the review word and toss the ball to a student who says another review word and tosses the ball to another student. If the word is incorrect or the student is unable to say a word, he/she sits down. Play until one student remains standing.

Hot Seat

Divide the class into two teams, A and B. One student from Team A faces the class. Write a word on the board. Team A students give hints without saying the word on the board for the student to guess the word. Repeat with Team B.

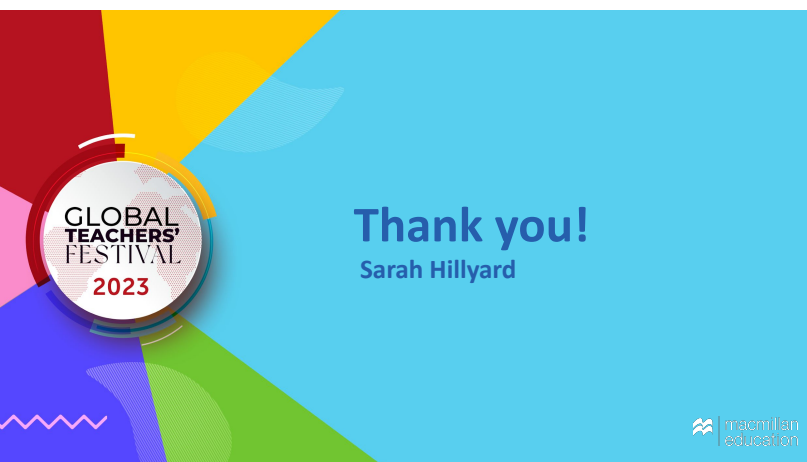
Board Race

Draw a line down the center of the board. Divide the class into two teams and have them stand in a line. Call out a category. A student from each team runs to the board, writes a word from that category, and then the next student goes until time's up. Teams get a point for each correct answer on the board. The team with the most points wins.





**Con-cen-tra-tion
Are-you-rea-dy?
If-so
Let's-go!**



Thank you!
Sarah Hillyard