

Focus and Attention Lesson Plan | Middle School (Grades 6-8)

The Great Focus Experiment

Lesson Goals:

- Students will design and conduct an experiment about multitasking
- Students will analyze data about their attention patterns
- Students will create evidence-based recommendations for effective studying

Estimated Time:

Two 50-minute periods

Materials and Resources:

- Printed [article about Stanford study](#)
- Data collection sheets (Find helpful information on guiding [student data collection here](#))
- Stopwatches/phone timers
- Various homework-like tasks
- Digital devices (for controlled experiment)

Activity Procedure:

Day 1:

1. **Close Reading Article Hook** (10 minutes) Facilitate a close reading of research from [Stanford University's 2020 study on media multitasking and attention spans in young adults](#).
2. **Experiment Design** (20 minutes) Students work in pairs to design simple experiments to test their focus and attention abilities. Some examples and suggestions include:
 - Reading comprehension with/without music
 - Math problem solving with/without phone notifications
 - Memory tasks with/without task switching
3. **Protocol Development** (20 minutes) Pairs create:
 - Testing procedures: What materials will they use in each test? What will happen during each test?
 - Data collection methods: How will they measure and record what occurs during the test?
 - Control measures: What will be the same in each test? What will be the one variable in each test?
 - Hypothesis statements: What do they predict the results will be?

Day 2:

4. **Review and Refocus** (5 minutes) Ask students to have a class discussion about what they learned from Stanford's research yesterday and how they are going to test that research today.

5. **Experiment Execution** (25 minutes) Students conduct their experiments, collecting data on:

- Task completion time with and without the variable
- Error rates with and without the variable
- Self-reported focus levels of the test subject

Data Analysis (15 minutes) Create graphs using the data collected and analyze results by writing a summary and reflection of how the results compare to the hypothesis.

Closing Activity/Homework Assignment:

Develop evidence-based personal study guidelines. Students can create infographics or slide show to share their experimental results and recommended study strategies.



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