

# The Student Success Curriculum

## Topic 9: Concentration

Everyone has had the experience of sitting down to read and realizing, after a page or two, that the mind has wandered to everything except reading. Concentration is associated with effective learning. Everyone can concentrate some of the time, and everyone experiences problems with concentration at one point or another. The goal of this topic is to help students understand their concentration levels and to give them tools to improve concentration.

**Teaching Strategies:**

Lecture

Self-Assessment

Large Group Discussion

## Time Frames

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The implementation time for this material is approximately thirty minutes. This topic pairs well with Topic 8: Motivation.

## Instructor Preparation

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- ✓ Read Topic 9: Concentration in the *Student Success Guide*
- ✓ Review the PowerPoint slides side-by-side with the lecture outline for Topic 2.

## Resources

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Locate and read any of the following resources to support an understanding of the topic.

- ✓ *Concentration: A Guide to Mental Mastery* by M. Sadhu. Wilshire Book Company.
- ✓ *Concentration: How to Focus for Success* by Sam Horn. Crisp Learning.
- ✓ *ConZentrate: Get Focused and Pay Attention—When Life is Filled with Pressures, Distractions, and multiple Priorities* by Sam Horn. St. Martin's Griffin.
- ✓ *The Power of Concentration* by Theron Q. Dumont. Book Jungle.

## Supplies & Equipment

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- ✓ *Student Success Guides* (one per student)
- ✓ Whiteboard and markers, or chalkboard and chalk
- ✓ LCD/DLP projector, laptop, and PowerPoint presentation, or printed overheads and an overhead projector.

## Learning Objectives

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After reading Topic 9 and completing the worksheets associated with this topic, each student will:

- ✓ Identify his or her current ability to concentrate.
- ✓ List the three levels of concentration.
- ✓ Describe three strategies for improving concentration.
- ✓ Name three obstacles to good concentration.
- ✓ Brainstorm ways to overcome concentration obstacles.

## Lecture Outline

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This lecture outline is meant to be used in combination with the *Student Success Guide* and the PowerPoint slides included with this teaching kit. The information in this lecture/activity follows the information presented in the *Student Success Guide*, with page numbers of the associated materials provided to the right of the heading in parentheses. Instructors are encouraged to add or delete slides and information as they deem appropriate to meet the particular needs of their student groups. The PowerPoint slides can be shown with an LCD projector, or printed onto transparencies for overheads.

### **Slide 1: Title Slide (p. 102)**

Introduce the topic (concentration) and direct students to page 102 in their *Student Success Guide*.

### **Slide 2: Goals of this Lecture**

The goal of this lecture is to help students identify their current ability to concentrate and to provide tools to improve concentration.

### **Slide 3: Complete Worksheet 9-1 (p. 103)**

Ask students to complete the Concentration Evaluation (Worksheet 9-1) on page 103. Discuss the findings from the

### Tip!

Get the class to agree on a group prompt (slide 6), and then lead the students in the group prompt at the beginning of each lecture or anytime you need the students to focus.

For example, students might agree that they will focus on taking three deep breaths and as they exhale on the last breath, they say together “I will focus now!”

worksheet and have students talk about their current ability to concentrate.

#### **Slide 4: Levels of Concentration (p. 104)**

Review the levels of concentration described on the slide.

#### **Slide 5: Productive Versus Unproductive Study Session (p. 104)**

Use the figure shown on the slide to illustrate the effect of poor concentration on a study session. Talk about the drawbacks of unproductive study sessions.

#### **Slide 6: Focus at Will (p. 105)**

Describe the ability to focus at will and walk students through a verbal prompt, physical prompt, and combined prompt.

#### **Slide 7: Sustain Concentration for a Period of Time (p. 105)**

Ask students to describe some of the reasons why sustained concentration might be difficult and look at the common reasons.

#### **Slide 8: Dealing with Lack of Interest (p. 105)**

Discuss some of the reasons why students experience a lack of interest and explore some of the ways to overcome this concentration obstacle.

#### **Slide 9: Dealing with Lack of Motivation (p. 106)**

Discuss some of the reasons why students experience a lack of motivation and remind students that motivation and integrity are often closely linked. Goal setting is probably the best way to overcome a lack of motivation.

#### **Slide 10: Dealing with Internal & External Distractions (p. 106)**

Describe the types of internal and external distractions that can break concentration. Talk about ways to overcome these distractions.

#### **Slide 11: Concentration and Time of the Day (p. 106)**

Each person has a time of day when he or she concentrates best. Ask students to identify the time of day they feel most

**Tip!**

Ask students to keep a distraction log for one week and then discuss the distractions that are obstacles to student learning. Brainstorm solutions as a group.

alert. Whenever possible, classes and study sessions should be planned for this optimal concentration time.

**Slide 12: Focus on One Thing at a Time (p. 107)**

Oftentimes students jump from one assignment to another without completing the first. It helps students stay focused if they set clear study goals and well-defined time frames for study projects.

**Slide 13: Distraction Log (p. 107)**

Ask students to turn to page 107 and look over the distraction log. Keeping a distractions log helps the student identify a distraction and seek a solution.

**Slide 14: Concentration Processing**

To conclude the lecture, explore student attitudes to concentration. Did they learn any new ideas for helping them concentrate? What plan do they have for improving concentration levels in the future?

# Concentration Milestones Checklist

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

0 = The student does not have this skill.

1 = The student sometimes demonstrates this skill.

2 = The student almost always demonstrates this skill.

0	1	2	
			Assesses distractions in the study environment and takes steps to reduce or eliminate distractions.
			Completes a defined task before moving to a new task.
			Sets study goals, defines time frames, and works at a goal until it is achieved.
			Follows a well-defined study routine.
			Demonstrates the ability to organize and prioritize study tasks.
			Uses tools like verbal and physical prompts to promote the ability to concentrate at will.