Lesson 7  ■  Dealing With Distractions

Lesson Plan

Materials:
- copy of Script A and Script B for each student, pages 51-52
- Tune Out Distractions mini-poster, page 53
- chart paper
- markers
- chairs
- desks
- paper
- pencils
- journals
- rubrics, pages 235-236

Introduce the concept:  Cough, cough, cough.  Hiccup . . . hiccup.  Hmmm.  Tap, tap, tap.  Ugh!  Sometimes the noises in the classroom can be sooo annoying!  Ever notice how once you start paying attention to noises they seem to get louder and almost impossible to ignore?  What's a kid to do?

What are some actions or noises in a classroom that make it difficult to concentrate?  (Encourage discussion and write ideas on chart paper, such as humming, tapping, coughing, kids moving around, noises in the hallway.)

What strategies help you tune out distractions and concentrate on your work?  (Encourage discussion and write ideas on chart paper.)

Review Guidelines for Being a Good Actor and Respecting the Actors and Audience Members (page 12).

Distribute the scripts and assign the parts.

Read the scripts and complete the discussion questions (answers on pages 54-55).

Extension activity:  Create distractions in a classroom and have the students practice strategies that help them focus.  Pass out paper and pencils and ask the students to write down as many animals (or fruits, colors, etc.) as they can think of in one minute.  While they are working, be as distracting as you can (e.g., walk around the room, clap your hands loudly, hum or sing, cough, open the door).  Then, talk about the difficulties the students experienced and the strategies they used to stay focused.

Wrap-up:  Review and discuss the Tune Out Distractions mini-poster.  Add suggestions as appropriate for your students.  Complete the rubrics.
Lesson 7  ■  Dealing With Distractions

Characters:  Tom, John, Bill, Jill, narrator

Setting:  classroom

Background:  The students are writing in their journals.

Script A

Narrator:  It's time for quiet journaling in Mrs. Jones's classroom.

Tom:  (humming a tune as he works)  Hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm.

Narrator:  Jill glares at Tom.

Tom:  What's the problem?

Jill:  (sarcastically)  Oh, nothing at all.

John:  (walking around the room, shuffling his feet)

Jill:  Ugh!

Bill:  (coughing loudly)  Mrs. Jones, I'm going to get a drink.

Jill:  (yells out)  I can't take it anymore!  I can't concentrate!

Narrator:  Bill, John, and Tom look at Jill and laugh quietly.

Jill:  It's not funny!  I can't get my work done!

Questions for Discussion

1.  Why was Jill so mad at the end of the script?
2.  What distractions did she experience in this script?
3.  What could Jill have done to stay calm and focused?
Script B

Narrator: It’s time for quiet journaling in Mrs. Jones’s classroom.

Tom: (humming a tune as he works) Hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm.

Narrator: Jill glares at Tom.

Tom: What’s the problem?

Jill: (sarcastically) Oh, nothing at all.

John: (walking around the room, shuffling his feet)

Narrator: Jill cups her hand to her forehead to make a blinder around her eyes. This helps her focus only on her paper and not on John walking around the room.

Bill: (coughing loudly) Mrs. Jones, I’m going to get a drink.

Narrator: Jill breathes deeply and quietly to stay calm. She mouths the words she wrote on her paper to help her stay focused on her schoolwork.

Questions for Discussion

1. What strategies did Jill use to remain calm, focused, and ignore the distractions?

2. Have you ever used any of these strategies? If so, were they successful for you?
Tune Out Distractions

- If possible, move to a quieter location.

- If someone is making noises that are bothering you, politely ask him to stop.

- Put on your blinders (hands cupped to the outside of your face) to block out any visual distractions.

- Look intently at your work or at a person you are trying to listen to.

- Try mouthing the words you are reading as you try to think through difficult problems.

- In general, try to make the thinking in your head louder and more important than the noises around you.