

Helping Myself Plug In Mini Lesson (25-30 min, over several mini-lessons)

Mini-Lesson Goal: Children will identify aspects of the environment that support or distract from their own focus/engagement, and consider how they can use the things that help them get plugged in to maintain focus during deliberate practice.

Overall Lesson Outline (~25-30 minutes, whole group - break into several mini-lessons for Guided Practice)

Outline
• Set Lesson Purpose: Connect back to the lamp metaphor for being “plugged in.” Set purpose that today we will be learning about strategies from each other! (4 min) • Introduce Skill: We have discussed times when we have felt plugged in, or focused, and we have noticed when we get distracted and it is harder to focus. Recall examples from your life or children’s experience. (2 min) • Guided Practice: Guide children to brainstorm aspects of the environment that support or distract from their engagement / focus. (5-10 min, break into several mini-lessons) ◦ <i>Depending on children’s attention spans and the time you have available, complete this mini-lesson over several days by discussing only one or two categories per day. Recap the lesson introduction before diving into a new category.</i> • Debrief / Closing: Children share tips and ideas for greater focus. (5-10 min, as time allows)

Lesson Flow (~25-30 minutes, whole group)

Lesson Component	Description / Talking Points	Approx. Time	Annotations
Set Lesson Purpose	We have been paying close attention to our focus and engagement in the classroom. Remember when we compared being focused or engaged to a light being plugged in? Who can remind us what happens to the light when we are distracted? (The light goes out- demonstrate with your actual lamp.) Yes, if we are distracted, we are not able to focus on or engage with the important people or learning tasks in front of us. It is easy to get distracted, like we saw with the glitter jar! Now that we have been learning and talking about <i>focus</i> for a few weeks now, we can collect our experiences and learn from one another. One of the best parts of being in a community of learners is that we can learn from each other!	4 min	

Introduce Skill	We have discussed times when we have felt plugged in or focused, and we have noticed when we get distracted and it is harder to focus. <i>Give examples from children's experiences, as they shared on the T chart - it will help to have the T chart to reference.</i> You might have noticed things about what helps you focus and engage with an activity - like when you have a ball of dough to work on with your hands, you can focus more easily. Or maybe it helps you to sit somewhere quiet, or cozy, or even to stand up. Or maybe you like to have music playing on your headphones. Maybe having a clear workspace without anything else around you is most helpful. Maybe working with one friend helps you stay focused on your math game. The reverse of these is that we have noticed what distracts us from learning. For example, when I sit by my favorite friends, I want to talk with them about everything BUT math! So I know that's not a helpful place for me to choose to sit. Today we are going to think together about what helps us focus and engage, thinking specifically about deliberate practice time. If you know what helps you focus, you can try to set up your area and your Works so that it's easier for you to stay plugged in during DP.	2 min	<i>Have the T chart to reference</i>
Guided Practice	Now we will talk about what helps us stay focused, and what distracts us. As we talk about this, listen to your friends' ideas. You might discover another way to help you get plugged in! <i>Offer a few categories to kids, one at a time, and lead a conversation about what helps them. Kids will have differing experiences here! That's great! This is an opportunity to point out that the same strategies don't work for everyone, every time, and there is not one right way to be focused / engaged / plugged in. This is why it's important for kids to always be noticing their own thought bubbles and make the adjustments they need for that time / day.</i> <i>Have a chart paper page or other method ready to write down children's ideas for each category. You may also (for learners who are writing) offer clipboards and notes pages to children for them to record the ideas that work best for them out of the group's ideas.</i> Discussion question: What about ____ helps you stay focused? (Ex: "What about your location in the room helps you stay focused?") Categories and possible things kids might generate, or you can prompt them with: ● Location / area / physical environment ○ Being cozy ○ Sitting in a comfortable chair or beanbag	5-10 min	<i>Be ready to take notes</i> <i>Decide if you will offer clipboards</i> <i>Have examples ready in case kids need support</i>

	○ Standing up at a high table ○ Laying on the floor ○ Having no other materials except what I'm focused on ○ Keeping a timer near me ○ Sitting by the clock ○ Sitting by the window ○ Sitting in a cave space / sitting under a table ○ Being outdoors / in the sun ● Movement ○ Sitting on a wobble chair or swivel ○ Using a stretchy band on my chair legs ○ Having a fidget tool ○ Doing big-body activities (counting jumps vs counting cubes) ○ Marching in place while working at a high table ● Other people ○ Working alone ○ Working with a good friend ○ Working with someone I don't know as well ○ Working on my own activity but near others ○ Checking in with a friend or adult halfway through the time ● Sound / noise ○ Headphones with music ○ White noise ○ Quiet area ○ Bustling or busy area around me ● Other categories you think of!		Depending on children's attention spans and the time you have available, complete this mini-lesson over several days by discussing only one or two categories per day. Recap the lesson introduction before diving into a new category.
Debrief / Closing	After a single day's brainstorm, or after several days of brainstorming, ask children to share: A tip for focusing I use is... or One way I plug in and focus is... or I know I am focused when ... After they share, let them take a turn plugging the lamp into the plug so they can see it light up.	5-10 min	

Extension:

- Adults use noticing & naming to reinforce when kids are focused during deliberate practice.

- Ex: “Joseph is sitting under the table to help him stay focused on his math Work.” “Isabelle and Andrea chose a partner Work today to help them stay plugged in.”
- Adults prompt children to consider using a different strategy if they are having trouble staying focused during deliberate practice.
 - Ex: “Marco, you’ve been trying this Work for 10 minutes but you’re still on the first part. Are your thoughts swirling a bit? How can you help yourself get plugged in?”
- Discuss with your learners what is possible and not possible during different times of the day and learning environments.
 - For example, some learners may say they can focus best when outdoors, but that is not an option most of the time.
 - Make a menu of the available options for deliberate practice time (or other key times of the day).
 - As an extension to this lesson, discuss with learners how to be flexible to meet our needs when our preferred focus strategy is not available.
- Depending on your learners’ writing and peer collaboration abilities, extend the whole group conversation by having them use the [Focused vs. distracted](#) handout.
 - Could be done independently, in partners, or small groups.
 - Whole group could do focused or distracted, they could choose which one to do
 - Learners could work on their own first, then gather more ideas from other people
 - Learners probably don’t need to complete all 4 pages.
 - Could print back to back or tape page 2 below page 1 and make a long poster