

Fostering Focus:

Limiting Distraction & Multitasking

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Strategies for Fostering Focus:

Most Likely to Multitask:

Teens...

- ...with multiple social media profiles.
- ...who are sensation seekers.
- ...from household with multiple TV-oriented days of the week.
- ...who have a personal computer or smart phone.
- ...working near a visible television.

Multitasking Side Effects:

Learning never integrates or reaches higher-level thinking.

A reduction in meaningful memory.

ADD/ADHD-like inability to focus.

Sleep disorders, irritability, & even depression may occur.

Encourage teens to work for 30-60 minutes focused on one task, and then allow for balance by having them take a short break to socialize.

Be proactive and establish limits for technology use. Set an electronics curfew. If homework is not completed before the curfew, the student should suffer the natural consequences of a late assignment.

Remove distractions. Work on homework that doesn't require a computer first (math, reading, vocabulary) to minimize possible distractions.

Teens should work in a public space where passers-by can see their screens and naturally monitor focus. Avoid migration of technology to the bedroom.

Consider all rules a work in progress. Work with your teen to continually evaluate rules and develop constructive suggestions for improvement.

Model the proper behavior. If you are going to demand the students not multitask and use social media, then you need to hold yourself to the same standard.

Additional Resources:

<http://yourteenmag.com/2011/01/is-multitasking-helpful-or-harmful-to-teenagers/>

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/video/blog/2011/01/the_teen_brain_on_technology.html

<http://www.schoolfamily.com/school-family-articles/article/10824-todays-multitasking-teens>