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## CHAPTER 7: HELP STUDENTS ORGANIZE THE LEARNING PROCESS

*“You were born to win, but to be a winner, you must plan to win, prepare to win, and expect to win.” ( Zig Ziglar)*

More and more students are having trouble paying attention in class for longer periods of time.

Why? Either they get bored quickly, find other things to do, don't know how to organise themselves, get distracted by other activities that seem more interactive, or don't know how to organise their current activities properly. Many children complain that, after the online period, they no longer know how to learn.

In this case, it is important for both parents and teachers to pay attention to this and help children keep their attention for as long as possible.

Educational psychologists draw attention to the context in which children do not show 'sufficient' concentration. They recommend that lessons should be engaging and presented in an interactive way. It is also important to make constant efforts during lessons, not just at the beginning.<sup>1</sup>

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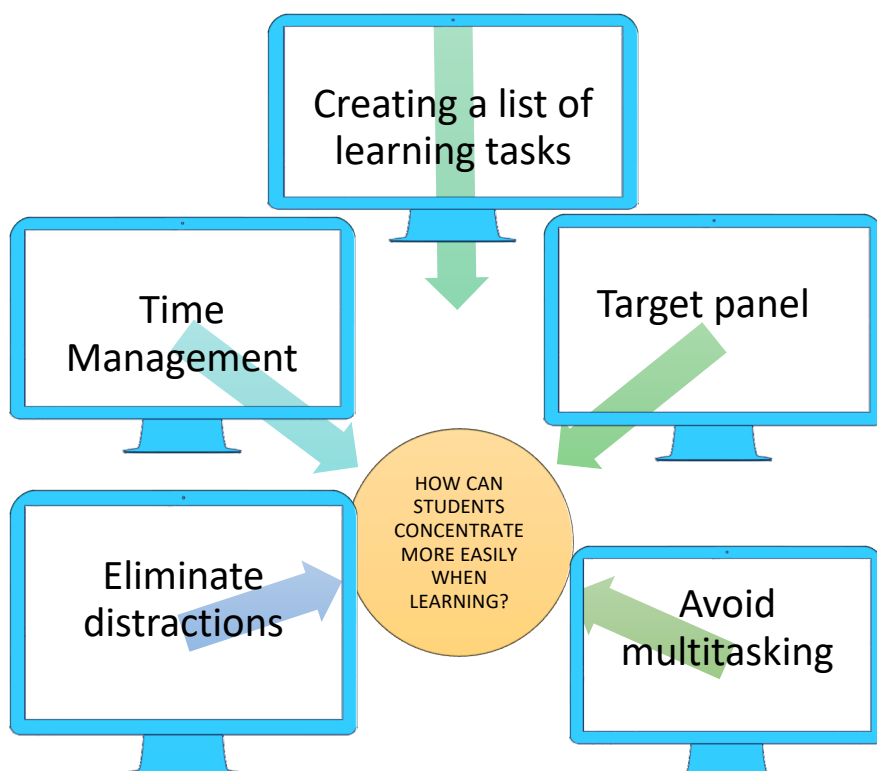
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.shakespeare-school.ro/cum-poate-un-elev-sa-se-concentreze-mai-usor-asupra-activitatilor-de-invatare/>



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Below are some ideas on how students can concentrate more easily in lessons:c



Because digital learning is self-organised learning, parents need to be able to help their children with this responsibility. The challenge in this case is to provide as much support as needed, but otherwise let students be in charge of learning this crucial skill. Parents need to learn to refrain from micromanaging the learning process.

Online school sucks much of the family's internal resources, as the family's role is defining in successful learning and school development.

Online education or home learning requires optimising the teacher-student-parent relationship and unconditional family support.

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Here are some **tips** to help you support your child:



### **Get to know the teachers to get to know their expectations**

Develop an effective and direct communication relationship with your child's teachers. You can use different communication mediums such as email, text messages, phone calls, video conferencing or you can set a day and time, even weekly, to connect with your teacher. Use this time optimally to talk about



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the challenges your child faces, review future instructions, understand the teacher's expectations and try to get their opinion on how they feel a parent should be involved in the education process. Ask the teacher for help if needed



### Create a friendly learning environment

Set up a designated learning space (workplace), a quiet, comfortable and clutter-free area with plenty of natural light in the room where they do their homework and make sure they have all the utensils they need on hand, such as: textbooks, notebooks, books, calculator, paper, pencils, glue, scissors, etc. The friendly environment will help children concentrate better.



### Set a clear homework schedule and stick to it



Establish a routine, a set schedule for doing homework. Some children work and learn best in the afternoon, after a snack and some play time, while others prefer to do their homework after dinner. Work out with your child what the best time for homework is and make sure this schedule is adhered to.



### Help your child make a plan



Finding time for learning requires planning. To keep up with school deadlines, a calendar is the best choice. At times when your child has a lot of homework or has a more complicated project to complete, encourage them to divide their tasks and work into stages that they can gradually work through. They should be taught to plan backwards, starting from due dates and stating specific strategies needed to complete it. By planning their activities, they will not have to work continuously on the task and will not feel exhausted. Make sure he takes 15-minute breaks every hour of study. Students can concentrate on a learning task (which requires voluntary effort) for between 20 and 35 minutes.



### Reduces distractions and disruptors



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Parents are responsible for reducing distractions. Explain to your child the importance of focusing on tasks and doing them quietly. Motivate this by saying that they finish homework faster and will have more free time. Distracting factors can be: doing homework with the TV or radio on or listening to music, interrupting homework to answer phone calls from friends, a dog can be a distraction, games or social media can reduce concentration. Occasionally, you can tell them that talking to a classmate about a project or homework can be helpful. You should block these distractors on your child's device during education time.



### Get plenty of exercise



Plan outdoor outings and brain breaks for your child as it has a positive impact on how they think and concentrate. Exercise helps memory in problem solving, improves attention and is a natural way to reduce stress and prevent anxiety. The best time to exercise might be just before school homework starts.



### Make sure he does his own homework



Encourage your child to find the solution themselves and allow them to make their own mistakes. As a parent, you can make suggestions and help keep him on track, but homework must be done by him.

*"Will power is like a muscle. The more you train it, the stronger it gets."*



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## Motivate and monitor your child



Ask your child about homework and tests received, discuss the status of projects. Ask him/her to show you the problems solved. Assure him/her that he/she can always come to you if he/she has any questions or if he/she feels that he/she is not able to progress with any task.



## Be a good example

BE THE  
*example*

Your child will follow your example not your advice. So don't be shy about showing them how you manage the family budget or by reading and learning new things you constantly want to improve yourself.



## Praise the child's work and effort



Being proud of your child's achievements doesn't mean you're spoiling them. It is very important that he knows that his hard work is appreciated and recognized by you and other family members.



## Look for ways to remove barriers to learning

*“When obstacles arise, you change your direction to reach your goal; you do not change your decision to get there.” (Zig Ziglar)*



If your child has learning difficulties, it's important to review the online and other learning materials your school sends you. They may not have been designed with your child's needs in mind.



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Work with your child's teachers to identify and remove any barriers.

If it's a challenge for your child, it's most likely a problem for other children.

When a student focuses their attention on a more difficult task, it can fluctuate, depending on both interest in the subject and effort.

There are various educational platforms where students can learn through audio-visual materials, simulations, interactive tests. In this case, attention can be more easily maintained for a longer period of time, due to the increased level of motivation, interaction, diversity.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xODEoIDJa70>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glgG2K29Pfg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yr9AlfFT2-Y>

#### **SOURCE:**

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

[www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)

<https://www.shakespeare-school.ro/cum-poate-un-elev-sa-se-concentreze-mai-usor-asupra-activitatilor-de-invatare/>

<https://www.reginamaria.ro/articole-medicale/10-sfaturi-pentru-ti-ajuta-copilul-sa-si-faca-temele>

#### **PARENTS` WORKSHOP. THE ROLE OF PARENTS (IN DEVELOPING THE ACADEMIC GROWTH MINDSET)**

**This workshop can be done both physically and online.**





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## PARENTS' WORKSHOP AGENDA

TIME	ACTIVITY	DURATION
9.00-9.05	Presenting the workshop (objectives, trainer, agenda)	5 min
9.05-9.15	Watching the animation "Growth Mindset Animation"	10 min
9.15-9.30	Individual and group work "Strong and weak points"	15 min
9.30-9.50	Exposure "Fixed academic mindset and growth academic mindset"	10 min
10.00-10.15	Questionnaire "Fixed / growth academic mindset"	10 min
9.50-10.00	<i>Break (optional)</i>	10 min
10.00-10.30/ 10.40	Groupwork "Parents role in children's academic motivation"	30-40 min



### Describing the activities

#### 1. 1. Viewing of "Growth Mindset Animation".



Watch the video with parents:

[https://youtu.be/-\\_oqghnxBmY](https://youtu.be/-_oqghnxBmY)

Emphasize that both the fable "The Tortoise and the Hare" and the metaphor of the tree (which, if cared for and nurtured, can grow taller and stronger than others) reflect the importance of growth mindset. Reinforce the idea that failure is the most important step to success and that every time you tell yourself you can't do something, it's important to add "not yet".

#### 2. Individual and group activity: "Strengths and Weaknesses"





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Suggest parents that, before identifying whether or not their own children have a growth mindset, they reflect on how they themselves relate to the goals they set themselves: how much effort they put in, how confident they are that they will succeed, how they react to obstacles they face.

Give parents a card on which they write down 2 strengths and 1 weakness of themselves.

Then ask them to reflect on how their children relate to the goals they have set and to write down 2 strengths and 1 weakness.

Afterwards ask parents to introduce themselves and share their and their children's traits, noted on cards.

### 3. Presentation of "Fixed academic mindset and growth academic mindset".



Based on the information conveyed in the video, recall that fixed mindset involves having the belief that our skills are fixed, unchangeable, while growth mindset means understanding that skills can be developed through constant effort, work and perseverance. Those with a fixed mindset who believe they are highly gifted and expect to succeed without commitment put in too little effort and are fragile in the face of obstacles, while people with a fixed mindset who believe they are not gifted and cannot change the situation see no point in putting in effort and cannot visualize themselves succeeding. In relation to the academic mindset, parents can reflect on whether their own children are focused on doing their homework, finishing their projects, getting the result as quickly as possible (attitude of the fixed academic mindset) or rather on the new knowledge they discover through learning, on developing and enriching their knowledge (attitude specific to the growth academic mindset). The fixed academic mentality assumes that the student looks at his intellectual, creative abilities, talents as something he either has or does not have, something he was born with, inherited from his parents, taking into account only the genetic factor or present results (a student may say "I am not able", "there's no point in trying", "I can't do it anyway", "It's too hard for me", "I'm not clever enough", "My parents weren't good at it either" or "I don't need to learn, I'm gifted", "I should have done it, I'm good at it"). The growth academic mindset implies that the learner realizes that their academic skills are developed through study, effort, competition and constant work.





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**4. Questionnaire: "Fixed/ growth academic mindset".** Ask parents to complete the following questionnaire first for themselves and then for their children.

Fixed / growth mindset Questionnaire				
<b>Instructions:</b> The aim of this questionnaire is to find out if you have a growth academic mindset, or if you have more of a fixed academic mindset. The questions will target your attitude towards effort, obstacles, rewards, mistakes, feedback/criticism. Circle a). or b). :				
<b>EFFORT</b>	a). I know I need to work hard to develop my skills, I make constant effort..		b). I don't have the willingness to make sustained effort, I don't see the point of making a lot of effort.	
<b>OBSTACLES</b>	a). I am persistent, I approach obstacles with a competitive spirit.		b). I am a quitter, when an obstacle arises, I get demoralized.	
<b>REWARDS</b>	a). I think about the long-term benefit, personal development and that there will be greater satisfaction from long-term involvement.		b) I'm thinking of finishing tasks as soon as possible and having immediate benefits, I find it hard to work for a distant reward.	
<b>MISTAKES</b>	a). If I make a mistake, I am curious to find out how I did it better, I am interested in learning from mistakes, I understand that mistakes are part of learning.		b). If I make a mistake, I feel uncomfortable thinking about mistakes and don't feel good enough.	
<b>FEEDBACK/ CRITICISM:</b>	a). Feedback, criticism from others is constructive for me, it helps me to develop.		b). I find it hard to tolerate feedback, criticism from others, it feels like a personal insult.	
<b>Age</b>	• 18 - 30	• 31 - 40	• 41 - 50	• 50+
<b>Studies</b>	• Secondary School	• High School	• University	• Post-University
<b>Gender</b>	• Masculin		• Feminin	
<b>Environment</b>	• Rural		• Urban	
Count how many statements you have circled a) and how many you have circled b), and if you have more than one variant of a), it means you have more of an academic growth mindset, while if you have circled more than one variant of b), you have more of a fixed academic mindset. The same try to do the same for your child.				



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### 5. Group activity: " The role of parents in motivating children academically "



□ Groups of 4-5 parents are formed. If the activity takes place online in Google Classroom, parents can be put in rooms where they will work only with the other members of the group.



□ The parents' task is for each of them, in turn, to describe what they scored on the questionnaire for themselves and their children and, having identified what academic mindset each has, to discuss with their group mates how they might motivate their children to develop academically.



□ Parents can also reflect on the similarities and differences between themselves and their children, but also on the ineffective ways they have tried in the past.