



Stress Reduction Activity Overview

Based entirely in long-term and recent research on the brain, these stress reduction activities promote increased success in academics, self-regulation of emotions and reactions, and greater understanding and compassion for one another.

Long-Term Classroom Goals

1. Students use these techniques in the moment to increase their ability to focus, resulting in greater recall for test and academic improvement, better listening skills, and increased attention span.
2. Students learn to sustain their focus for 15 minutes (or 30 minutes for MS/HS).
3. Students use these techniques to self-manage stress, resulting in fewer peer-to-peer interruptions during the school day and decreased harm to self and others.

What It Is

Stress Reduction Activities are designed to reach all students; we include imagery (for visual students), auidial (for auditory learners) and kinetic (for physical learners) prompts. During these five-minute activities, students focus on prompt suggestions ranging from general slowing of breathing and thoughts to a focus on a physical place they hold stress and tightening and relaxing the muscles in that area.

How It Works

The teacher gives instructions (if needed) and then plays an instructional recording for all in the room to follow. The recorded session may last for the full five minutes, or it may last for four, ending with the instructions for all to turn to their partner and express something about their experience.

Why It Works

Both long-term and current research indicate that activation of the vagus nerve by use of easily learned breathing techniques increases compassion, self-regulation of emotions, and improves brain function and academic outcomes.