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## READY, SET, GO! THE POWER OF FOCUS IN THE SUCCESS OF 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS

**LOIDA G. LAINEZ-LAGRISOLA, PhD.**

According to Resilient Educator (2016), the attention and interest span of students in a single activity can be 10-18 minutes and even go lower than two minutes. In this knowledge, educators and curriculum creators learned the importance of restructuring lessons in a way that constantly engages students through varied activities. These strategies in teaching lessons are vital, for focus plays an important role in the overall success of mastering a learning competency. With proper preparation, set expectations, and efficient implementation, 21st century learners' attention can improve beyond desired.

**READY.** The first thing a teacher must do is prepare everything. This starts with thinking and organizing everything to be used in the lesson. From an excellent student-centered lesson plan to all the required materials, a teacher must ensure that everything is set. When a single component of a lesson is not ready, missing, or disorganized, the implementation of the lesson may turn out chaotic. Moreover, preparation of the self is equally important if not more. The teacher must be emotionally and mentally ready to face the class. Based on a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.), teacher preparedness "incorporates what the teacher brings to the classroom." Teachers' logistic and self preparedness transcends beyond the classroom and impacts students in a lot of ways. On another note, according to Education Week (2014), poor preparation of teachers leads to a learner's poor performance. Therefore, one must realize the value of preparation in education.

**SET.** Clear expectations must be set by the teacher so that learners will know what to focus on. One factor that triggers poor classroom management is the lack of clarity of instructions

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and expectations. When they are unaware of the learning outcomes we expect from them, they will not be able to function meaningfully in the classroom. As teachers, what do we really want our learners to achieve? It is important that we set clear learning expectations and allow them to guide the students, eventually sustaining focus and attention.

**GO.** Once the teacher has prepared all of the needed materials, and has set clear expectations, the next thing to do is implement the lesson and strategies efficiently. Proper conduct of the lesson ensures focus from the learners. Once attention is secured, learning can easily take place.

Focus is an important aspect of learning. Without it, it is impossible for one to successfully understand the lesson, which is the main goal of education. One must know when and how to get ready, to build and clarify expectations, and efficiently implement lesson plans. If all of these are achieved, then the competencies and standards in the curriculum will be met, making the educational system more effective for the 21st century learners.

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