

The Now Thing - Teaching Guide

Pre-reading Activity:

Have students perform a task which takes focus—such as walking on a curvy chalk line, or along a bench, or playing catch with a partner—while answering oral addition and subtraction questions.

Have students repeat the task, this time without doing anything else, enabling them to focus on the task at hand.

Ask students:

“Which way was easier?”

(Of course, some will say, ‘*Both were super easy!*’)

“Why do you think the second way was easier?”

We were only doing one thing.

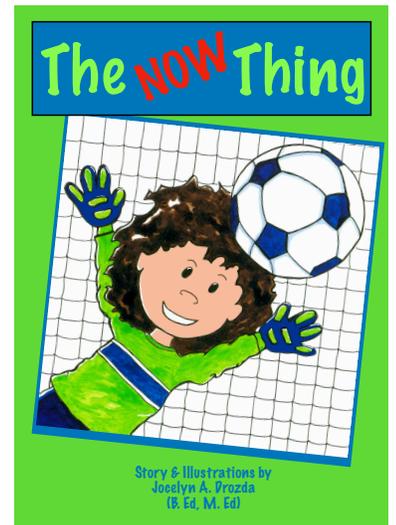
We could focus on only one thing at a time.

Your body and your brain were both doing the same thing.

What do you think this story is going to be about?

Read the back of the book.

Introduction - The character in this story is a boy named Xander, who is about your age. His side-kick is his pet duck named Alex. We often think about **the next thing** we will be doing or seeing, or the next place we will be going before we are finished dealing with what we are doing or where we are at **now**. Let’s read the story to see why it is called, “The **Now** Thing,” and why it is good to focus on the now thing, what you are doing at each moment, instead of looking too far ahead to the next thing.



During Reading Possible Questions

What was Xander thinking about while he was getting ready for school?
Getting to school to show his friends his new robot.

What happened because he was so anxious to get to school?
*He made a big mess in the bathroom.
He left the water running.
His mom got mad at him.*

What happened when Xander became so interested in his friend's new robot dog?
He forgot about his own new robot that he had really liked and it got broken and dirty. He left it in the mud. He didn't take care of it.

What was Xander's marker mishap?
He was thinking so much about drawing his picture that he wrote his story in markers and now he has to do his story all over again. His teacher does not let them write their stories in markers because then they can't change their mistakes.

Xander was SO EXCITED about going out for recess that he missed something. What was it? How did he miss it?
The new math the teacher was teaching them. He was thinking about recess so he missed what the teacher was saying, even though she asked them to carefully pay attention because the new math was tricky.

Do you think he really was in the bathroom while the new math was being taught?
No, he just was not paying attention.

After all Xander's excitement about going on the spinner at recess, what ended up happening? Why did this happen?
He was so busy thinking about the next thing, painting his robot, that he missed out on the very thing that he had been so excited about.

When he finally had a chance to paint, what were some of the things he was distracted by?

Billy building a castle with blocks.

Talking about hungry crocodiles reminded him he was hungry, and he became distracted thinking about lunch.

Then he started thinking about what his mom packed him for lunch.

When you see the cookie with a bite out of it, what message is the illustrator sending you?

It is now lunchtime and Xander did get the cookie with the candy pieces, as he had wished, and he is eating it.

Why is there only one bite out of the cookie, followed by Xander's complaint?

Xander now wants the cookie that his friend has. He is no longer satisfied by what he has, but just like the robots, he wants what others have instead of what he has.

Does this sort of thing happen in your life, where you like what you have ... until you see what others have? What sorts of things does this happen with?

Xander thinks everyone will be amazed at his awesome talent as a goal keeper during his soccer game. Why does this NOT happen?

He is distracted by thinking about the ice cream he will be eating after the game, so he did not stop the goals he could have stopped.

Has this ever happened to you, where you become so distracted doing one thing, that you do not do very well in what you are doing, even though you wanted to do well? When?

What is the name of Xander's Robot Factory X book?

The Backward Catastrophe.

What happened while he was so intensely thinking about what was happening in his book?

His ice cream melted and he missed enjoying this special treat that he had been looking forward to so much!

Why did the author use large, bold, capitalized letters to express Xander's distress when he discovered his ice cream had melted?
To show Xander is yelling, screaming, crying out very loudly.

How do we read this? Show me!

Loudly, with lots of expression! Like we are screaming and crying!

Xander's little sister, Ellie, pointed out to Xander why he was missing all the things he loved. What was the problem?

His brain was not where his body was.

His brain was too far ahead of his body—it was already on to the next thing so it missed what he was doing now.

He was not living in the moment like his mom talks about.

Post-Reading Discussion

How can having your brain and body being focused on the same thing at the same time help you do better in such things as sports and school?

Keeping your attention on what you are learning will help you learn more instead of being distracted.

By focusing on what you are doing, you will do it better.

By thinking about math during math time, and thinking about reading during reading time, you will learn it better.

What kinds of things will you do better or learn better, or enjoy more by putting your brain and your whole body together in the same place at the same time?