

Attitude Activity 1 – NAF and NACH

According to sports psychologists, there are two personality types when it comes to something testing or competitive:

Need to Avoid Failure (NAF)

These people tend to avoid challenges because they do not want to risk failing. They are sometimes slow workers who avoid responsibility. In class, they can be easily dissuaded from taking part or finishing a piece of work and do not like being assessed. **They may want to be successful, but the fear of failure outweighs the desire to succeed.** This means they will avoid situations where they might fail, by not handing work in, or telling everybody how little work they have done.

Need to Achieve (NACH)

These are the people that thrive on a challenge. They are usually determined workers who take risks and enjoy being assessed. Failure isn't a problem for these people. If they get a low score or a disappointing grade, they'll take it in their stride and move on. **The desire to be successful outweighs the fear of failure**, so even though they feel some fear, they still put themselves in situations where they might fail.

Last year, which were you?

We're all changing all the time – we can be NAF one day and NACH another. And since it's often easier to reflect on a period of time just passed, ask yourself, did you have a tendency towards one of these stances last year? Which one? And how did it affect your behaviour and grades?

This year, which are you?

Though we can change ourselves, we often get into habits of mind which mean we carry on doing the things we always have. Are you different this year, or the same?

Now...

Imagine you are a teacher trying to decide whether your students are NAFs or NACHs. Here's a list of behaviours you might see in your class. Do you think the student is a NAF or a NACH?

1. This student is struggling with understanding the work but won't ask questions in class to clarify their learning. When you ask why, they say they 'feel embarrassed'.
2. You gave this student a grade D for piece of work two lessons ago. They arrive this lesson with the piece of work re-done, and ask if you'd mind marking it again.
3. When you organise some group work, this student asks to work with a group of students who are doing much better than they are.
4. This student will often tell others, "I haven't revised for this test" or "I'd forgotten we were having this exam."
5. These two students, who are struggling with the content of this particular topic, ask a lot of questions during and after class, ("Can you explain that again?" "What do you mean?") even when other students roll and their eyes and tut!
6. These two students are both struggling and prefer to sit with each other, often talking about other things.

Further lists:

You might be able to define some further behaviours associated with NAF and NAch. Use the table below to capture another few:

NAF behaviours	NAch behaviors

A commitment

Now take two or three NAch behaviours that you might not currently be doing. Choose ones which look possible – the kind of thing you could integrate into your working week, and make a commitment to give them a try. They might not have an immediate impact, but they could be the start of improving grades!