

Review of the literature:

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Effective Intervention Strategies To Improve Attention

Zeigler Dendy Summary

AD/HD predominately Inattentive (also called ADD)

Inattentive (1994)

Selective Attention (first 4 criteria)

- Easily distracted
- Doesn't pay attention to details; "careless errors"
- Doesn't seem to listen
- Difficulty organizing tasks and activities

(See DSM-IV-TR for details)

Evidence-Based Interventions for Selective Attention

(is the student focusing on the main information?)

Change the task

1. Eliminate irrelevant cues, such as
 - Too much verbal detail within listening tasks
 - Conversations during complex thinking tasks
 - Offer quiet working area if needed.
 - Non-relevant visual novelty that overlaps visual information
 - Toys or cartoons that compete with the task

Zentall, 2005

Change the Task (cont)

2. Highlight relevant information

(global structure and relevant detail)

- Use global cues or models to focus on the big picture (it looks like", rather than "it has the following parts")
- Focus on essential elements; reduce complexity.
- Use verbal highlighting; vary tone, speed, & pauses
- Use verbal questions to review earlier social experiences; ask to tell what happened to help identify social problems; Lavoie's social autopsy
- Use color, bold emphasis, animation or verbal cues to draw attention to relevant details

Zentall, 2005

Change Task Instructions or Sequencing

1. Start with simple formatting and easier tasks; use easy words first, increase difficulty after practice.
2. Ask students to set own goals & evaluate them.
3. Teach self-instructional strategies: "what is my problem, what is my plan, am I following my plan, how did I do?"
For younger children teach, "start at the top".

Zentall, 2005

Change the Setting

1. Provide cues for self-monitoring.
(Best cognitive behavior strategies: self monitoring, self reinforcement, & self-evaluation)
 - Use a device such as electronic diary, PDA, taped signal, or hand-held computer to cue a student to self-attend to behavior: could measure on-task behavior, anger, or anxiety (mark presence or absence of behavior)
 - Add self-administered reinforcement (stars, stamps, self-charting, or self-evaluation)
 - Add mirror for student to view self while working.
 - Use camera/observer to increase self-monitoring.

Zentall, 2005

Researchers Correct Misinformation

Teachers now know that...

- Elements of the task cause off-task behavior, not environment (too long or hard)
- Students can look away from task without reducing performance.
- Reducing stimulation, e.g. placement in cubicles does not improve performance.

Zentall, 2005

AD/HD predominately Inattentive (also called ADD)

Inattentive (1994)

Sustained Attention (last five criteria)

- Loses things necessary for tasks or activities
- Difficulty sustaining attention on tasks/ activities
- Doesn't follow through or finish chores/schoolwork
- Avoids school work and homework
- Forgetful in daily activities

(See DSM-IV-TR for details)

Sustained Attention

Students with ADHD...

- Tend to make errors near end of task.
 - Have difficulty with long, rote, repetitive or non-active tasks.
1. Medication most effective intervention.
 - Outcome: Improved speed, reduced errors, decreased careless errors, increased work completion and task accuracy.
 2. a) Behavioral consequences, b) altering antecedent task, c) environmental conditions help.
 3. A strong stimulus helps maintain attention.

Zentall, 2005

Change the Task

1. Shorten assignment or reduce time spent.
 - 3 short reports, multiple breaks, distributed practice
 - Use fast-paced responding to rote tasks
(Not practical for ADDers with slow processing?)
2. Use fewer words: concise & global directions
3. Increase novelty at intervals, esp. near the end
4. Decrease repetitiveness of tasks
5. Use high interest instruction: computer, YouTube, Mp3, cell phone

Zentall, 2005

Change Task Instructions or Between-tasks Events

1. Increase movement between tasks:
 - Reduces out-of-seat, talking, hyperactivity & aggression.
2. Allow child initiated movements:
 - active games, drills, calculators, organizing or filing materials, cleaning board, choices, assign two seats, exercise cycle.

Zentall, 2005

Change the Setting

1. Add music (not fast) or sound.
 - Do more work accurately, fewer reading errors
2. Add visual and auditory novelty (tests, film, free time, music):
 - improve attention & reduce talking
3. Use teacher proximity.
 - Move child or stand near
 - increased sustained attention, reduce off-task;
 - however must change instructional strategies

Zentall, 2005

Change Consequences

1. Increase intensity for positive feedback;
 - > fewer negative behaviors;
 - > alone does not increase on-task
2. Increase frequency of reinforcement.
3. Increase immediacy of feedback.
4. Decrease frequency & intensity of negs.
5. Use soft, firm private, non-emotional reprimands from between 1 & 2 yards away
 - > Quiets behavior & reduces disruptiveness
 - > If adult raises voice, students respond in kind (Zentall 2005)

ADD/ADHD: Lessons Learned

- May be very complex!
- May be mild, moderate, or severe!
 - May coexist!
- May include EF Deficits!

- May be a disability!

“The typical classroom is a terrible place for a child with ADHD... after all we are asking children who have profound problems attending, organizing and controlling their actions to spend hours per day attending, organizing, and controlling their actions”

Michael Gordon, Ph.D.

Publications by Chris Dendy and son, Alex Zeigler include:

Teenagers with ADD and ADHD, 2nd ed. (100,000)

Teaching Teens with ADD and ADHD

A Bird's Eye-View of Life with ADD (a teen survival guide)

Coming in 2010: Real Life ADHD!

A DVD for children and teens by teens!!

Videos:

Teen to Teen the ADD Experience

Father to Father: the ADD Experience

ADD / ADHD Iceberg poster (11x 17, color)

Available at bookstores and www.chrisdendy.com