

Increasing Reading Stamina for Students with ADHD

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Sustained attention is required for reading stamina.
What is sustained attention?

- Sustained attention is an executive skill that requires focus over an extended period and usually involves task persistence and stamina.
- It is the ability to not let outside (or internal) stimuli distract one from the task at hand.



*Why are students with **ADHD** more likely to have issues with sustained attention and reading stamina?*

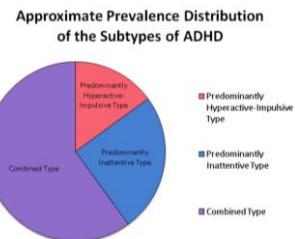
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- Differences in **brain system communication** (i.e. less efficient, sending neuron may not release enough neurotransmitters); **chemical differences** (less dopamine); **structural** - brain takes longer to grow and mature
- These differences result in difficulty with **self-regulation/emotional control**; **multi-tasking**; **quickly shifting focus** due to a distraction; holding information in **working memory**



The Neurocognition factor: ADHD and the reading brain

- ① Prefrontal Cortex**
Functions as an intersection for attention, behavior and emotional responses. For people with ADHD, attention is switched easily.
- ② Basal Ganglia**
Neural circuit system that regulates communication within the brain. In the ADHD brain, a "short-circuit" can cause inattention or impulsivity.
- ③ Limbic System**
Regulates emotions. Deficiency of dopamine in the ADHD limbic system may result in restlessness, inattention or emotional volatility.
- ④ Reticular Activating System**
The major relay system between the brain's pathways. A dopamine deficiency may cause impulsivity and hyperactivity.

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- ADHD causes issues with distractibility, holding information in working memory, set shifting, and prioritizing/sequencing, which can all affect reading progress. (i.e. working memory and decoding, set shifting and written response, sequencing and retelling/paragraph writing)



How does ADHD impact reading stamina?

- Students with ADHD are less likely to comprehend and retain text meaning due to inattention/distractibility. Thus, they are far less likely to complete a more challenging text selection or novel than their neuro-typical peers.
- Reading without adequate comprehension and retention is not interesting or fun, and so it is often not prioritized. (mental images)



How does ADHD impact reading confidence?

- Years of reading difficulty can affect confidence, which may further erode performance.
- Students with repeated reading difficulty may show hesitation, rebellion, or even defeat.
- Some may even show signs of anxiety and avoidance during reading instruction and remediation.



How has ADHD/lack of sustained attention impacted your literacy instruction?

- Reflect, write, quick share



STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS SUSTAINED ATTENTION WEAKNESS



REDUCE VISUAL AND AUDITORY DISTRACTIONS

- While cuing posters and charts are helpful tools, there shouldn't be so many of them that readers become distracted.



REDUCE VISUAL AND AUDITORY DISTRACTIONS

- Other distractions include: manipulatives left too close to the student, a clock or window right next to the reading area, and noise/activity too close to the reading table. Minimizing distractions can help students to focus on the text rather than the environment.



ONE THING AT A TIME

- For activities that require multiple steps, break it down so that the reader has just one task to focus on at a time.
- Students with ADHD and executive function weaknesses may have difficulty holding information in their **working memory**, so this helps to set them up for success.



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- **EXAMPLE:**

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- List three reasons why Lizbeth didn't want to try out for the team. Use text evidence and list page numbers. Then, explain how you think she feels about being left out.
 - 1. Look through the book and find examples of reasons she didn't want to try out. Mark with sticky notes.
 - 2. Start constructing your answer by restating the prompt.
 - 3. Use your marked pages to list examples of why she didn't want to try out. Remember to list page numbers in your response.
 - 4. Finish up your response by explain how you think Lizbeth feels about being left out.
 - 5. Read over your response to proofread before submitting.

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- Acting out scenes from the story in an impromptu fashion is a great way to give distractible students an ‘activity break’ while staying on task.
- As an added benefit, acting out scenes helps students with **content retention** as well as comprehending inferential elements, such as **tone** and **character motivation**.

ACT IT OUT

- This can include more structured activities (i.e. Reader's Theater), but can also be done on the spot and as you are reading.
 - *Where the Wild Things Are (unison)*
Beatrix and Ramona (select students)



USE TACTILE CUES

- Tactile strategies are great for keeping students 'in the moment' while working on reading skills.
- For decoding, this can be done by 'tapping out' sounds, using beads or letter tiles, or by putting items in a bag to select and then segment or rhyme.



USE TACTILE CUES

- Even comprehension activities such as retelling can become tactile by doing a 'five-finger retell' (character, setting, events, problem, solution), or by using felt boards, action figures, maps, or models.



TAKE A 'VIZUALIZATION VACATION'

- When a student (or group) is starting to get distracted, take a 'visualization vacation'.
- Have them close their eyes and picture a relaxing or fun scene (i.e. the beach). They should focus on the details of their mental image and take deep breaths. This will help to renew CALM and FOCUS.



USE VIZUALIZATION TO INCREASE CONFIDENCE

- Have the student visualize confidence.
- “Relax your body and mind; picture yourself relaxed, confident, and self-assured; think about how the ‘confident, relaxed you’ reacts to challenges; see yourself as someone who perseveres through difficulties; see yourself as someone who loves yourself and believes that you can overcome obstacles”



USE VIZUALIZATION TO INCREASE CONFIDENCE

- Goal Setting: Help students to set a very specific goal and then have them imagine themselves meeting that goal.
- For example, if a student needs to improve oral reading fluency, work with the student to set a words per minute goal for a specific passage. Then, have them close their eyes and very specifically imagine themselves reading with fluidity and expression.

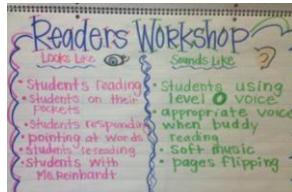


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- If a classroom activity (i.e. guided reading, intervention session) is scheduled for 30 minutes, start with less time and build up to that. Individualize; see when they have 'maxed out'.

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- If a classroom activity (i.e. guided reading, intervention session) is scheduled for 30 minutes, start with less time and build up to that. Individualize; see when they have 'maxed out'. Provide praise when time goal is met.
- For younger students, spend time reviewing what focused reading looks like and sounds like.

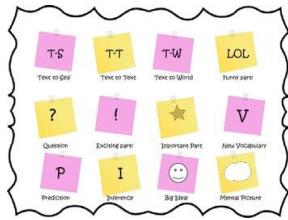


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- **Highlighting**
- **Using sticky notes to write down ideas, questions, etc.**
- **Use an interactive bookmark while reading**
- **Making an 'interesting words' list**



Name: _____	
Making Connections	
Strategy Response	
Title: _____	
Date: _____	
Tell about a connection you made while reading.	
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	
What kind of connection is this? Around Text to Text Text to Self Text to World	

SOLVE A 'MYSTERY'

- To increase intrinsic motivation, add a 'mystery' for students to solve in addition to regular lesson material.
- EXAMPLES:
 - Finding the answer to a 'mystery question' while reading (i.e. shoe color).
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 - Proving older students with the opportunity to research a 'mysterious topic' that is connected to a text or setting.



USE INTEREST INVENTORIES

- Texts on topics that interest students are naturally going to keep them more focused. The trick is to help students find books that are interesting to them, and to choose books for a group that several may find interesting.

Name: _____	Date: _____
Student Interest Survey	
Directions: Answer the following questions to help your new teacher get to know you.	
1. Your Favorites:	
Color:	Holiday:
Soort:	Food:
Book:	Season:
Hobby:	Subject:
Movie:	Animal:
2. What is a topic you would like to learn more about?	
3. What are you most excited about this school year?	
4. Are you already friends with anyone in our class? Who?	
5. What is your favorite memory from the summer? Why?	
6. If you could travel anywhere, where would you like to go?	

ALLOW TIME TO SHARE

- Give students unstructured time to share their thoughts and ideas as they relate to the text.
- **Students with attention issues tend to be talkative**, so they will appreciate this outlet.
- Younger students tend to naturally do this (they love to share), but older students may need some prompting:

If you were Jonathan, would you have walked into the barn after hearing that noise, or would you have done something else?

If you were the author, would you have ended the book that way, or would you have chosen a happier ending?

What is one strategy or idea that you plan to implement with your students to build sustained attention?

- Reflect, write, quick share



Wrapping up.....

THANK YOU!

Questions???

