

Attention Strategies for Educators

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Attention - Definition



The process of selecting the most relevant stimuli while filtering out less relevant information.

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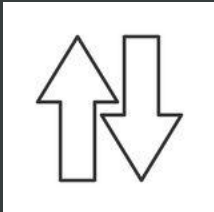
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Conceptualizing Attention

Bottom-Up  
Stimulus Driven

Top-Down  
Goal Oriented



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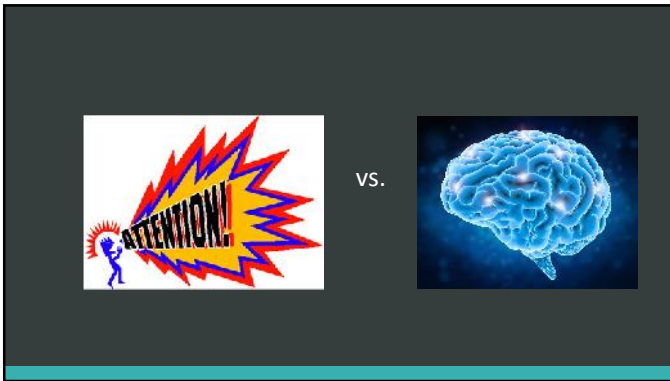
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### Types of Attention

- Selective attention
- Divided attention
- Alternating attention
- Sustained Attention

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graph TD; Attention((Attention)) --- Sustained((Sustained)); Attention --- Selective((Selective)); Attention --- Alternating((Alternating)); Attention --- Divided((Divided));
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### Selective Attention

The ability to choose one stimuli over another.

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### Divided Attention



The ability to attend to more than one environmental factor at the same time.

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### Alternating Attention

The ability to switch your focus from one stimuli or activity to another.

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### Sustained Attention



The ability to focus on a particular task for a continuous amount of time.

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Attention

The basis for all higher level skills and cognition.



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Attention post-TBI vs. ADHD

- Different anatomical framework
- Recovery/improvement differences

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Attention Difficulties - Manifestation



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### Deficits in Selective Attention

- Easily distracted
- Difficulty remembering
- Off task and can't return independently
- Difficulty following rules

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### Deficits in Divided Attention

- May become easily confused
- May not start a task

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### Deficits in Alternating Attention

- May complete one task but not switch to another.
- Difficulty with change in schedule/routine.
- May demonstrate difficulty attending to a new task, may stay stuck on the previous task.
- May make off-topic comments.

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## Deficits in Sustained Attention

- Difficulty attending to task for more than a short period of time
- Difficulty with increased length and complexity of language
- May not complete the assignment
- Appear spacey and forgetful
- Presents with inconsistent performance
- Difficulty following conversation/lecture
- Difficulty working independently

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## Treatment for Deficits in Attention

- Pharmacological Treatment
- Cognitive Retraining
- Classroom-based Strategies



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## Strategies

ABC's of Addressing  
Attention in the Classroom  
Setting



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### Accommodations

- Explicit instruction, direct attention to task
- Reduce distractions
- Clear desk
- Automatization of skill
- Help with organization to provide framework for attention
- Break assignment into manageable parts in accordance with attention span
- Provide copy of notes and directions
- Teach one concept at a time

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### Accommodations

- Encourage self-talk
- Number steps/tasks
- Use pictures/use bottom-up attention as needed
- Actively engage the student
- Review/overlearning
- Reduce complexity
- Reduce amount of information

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### Behavioral Interventions

- Provide breaks
- Frequently check for on-task behavior
- Complete FBA and BIP

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### Consistency

- Predictable routine
- Structure throughout day
- Consistency from all providers

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### Direct Instruction

Teach "attention"

<http://www.understood.org/~media/5c05e59b4dc14a27bd0b1daf1a694359.pdf>

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### Environmental Cues



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### Functional Impairment/Functional Solutions

- Make instruction real and meaningful.
- Pair with overlearned skill.
- Make instruction motivating.
- Use Multi-sensory instruction.
- Make the material relevant.
- Use bottom-up attention.




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### Goals

- Ensure the student understands the task.
- Have the student retell the directions to ensure focused on what needs to be done.
- Ensure attention concerns are documented on the IEP in the form of a goal.

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### Help

- Teach the student to ask for help.
- You, as the teacher, seek help when needed. If strategies are not working, stop and revise.




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### Summary

- Implement "A,B,C's" strategies
- Importance of Data collection
- Provide support when needed
- Role of teacher



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