

PSYCHOLOGY MONTH 2016

A DIFFERENT WAY OF LOOKING AT ADHD:



BUILDING SKILLS IN EXECUTIVE FUNCTION AND PROCESSING SPEED

Recent research, including brain imaging studies, has shown that some individuals with ADHD have weaknesses in executive functions, and a slow speed of information processing. Students with these weaknesses are more likely to exhibit academic and behaviour problems, but should not be seen as lazy or unmotivated. Executive functions include the following often inter-related skills:

Organization
Metacognition
Time Management
Flexibility
Self-regulation of Affect

Response Inhibition
Working Memory
Task Initiation
Planning
Goal-directed Persistence

Students with ADHD who have executive functioning and processing speed weaknesses need to acquire and internalize cognitive strategies to address these weaknessesThen break

down these tasks, utilizing the students' strengths to

These students may have difficulty following directions and performing complex tasks that require sequential steps, such as homework and projects. External cues and action plans can help, with a plan to phase out these strategies as the student acquires and internalizes the skill(s) being taught.

Difficulty in the ability to multi-task, reflect on their actions, monitor their progress, and exhibit self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses are common in these students. Specific and direct instruction, guidance, and self-monitoring may need to be taught, and phased out as the student acquires and internalizes these skills.

Classroom Interventions for Processing Speed Weaknesses

These students may need more time to complete tasks, assignments and/or process new information. They should be taught how to goal set, monitoring the time required for specific tasks, and record progress visually (e.g., graphs).

These students may require a longer time to answer oral questions in class, so teachers can mention that a particular question is coming up and give these students time to access their answer. This strategy avoids drawing attention to the students with processing speed difficulties.

For further information, please speak to your school psychology staff or contact the Chief Psychologist, Dr. Debra Lean, at debra.lean@dpcdsb.org

Adapted from www.teachadhd.ca