ADHD Challenges: Get by with a Little Help from Your Apps

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Overview

- 3 studies
  - Compilation of list of Apps
    - 131 Apps for post-secondary students with ADHD
  - Questionnaire: Use of technology for schoolwork
    - Apps most liked and used
  - Interviews: Students with ADHD as App users
   - Use, satisfaction, and wish list

Relevance of ADHD

- 10-20% of **S**tudents **W**ith **D**isability in your classes[1]

- 2/3 of SWD not registered for access services[2]

- Between 28% - 38% of SWD have ADHD[3]

- Poor academic performance[4]
  - Lower grades
  - Less likely to graduate

30%

70%

■ All other disabilities
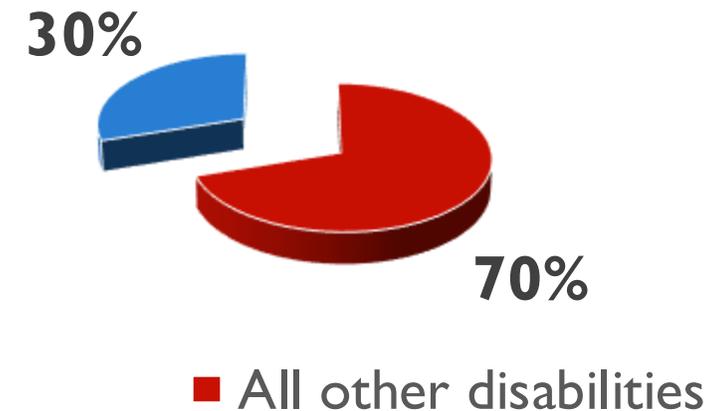
Main Characteristics of ADHD

- Deficits in executive functioning
  - Focus/impulsivity/distractibility
  - Time management
  - Organization
- Academic difficulties due to challenges with sustained attention
  - Reading comprehension
  - Lengthy writing assignments
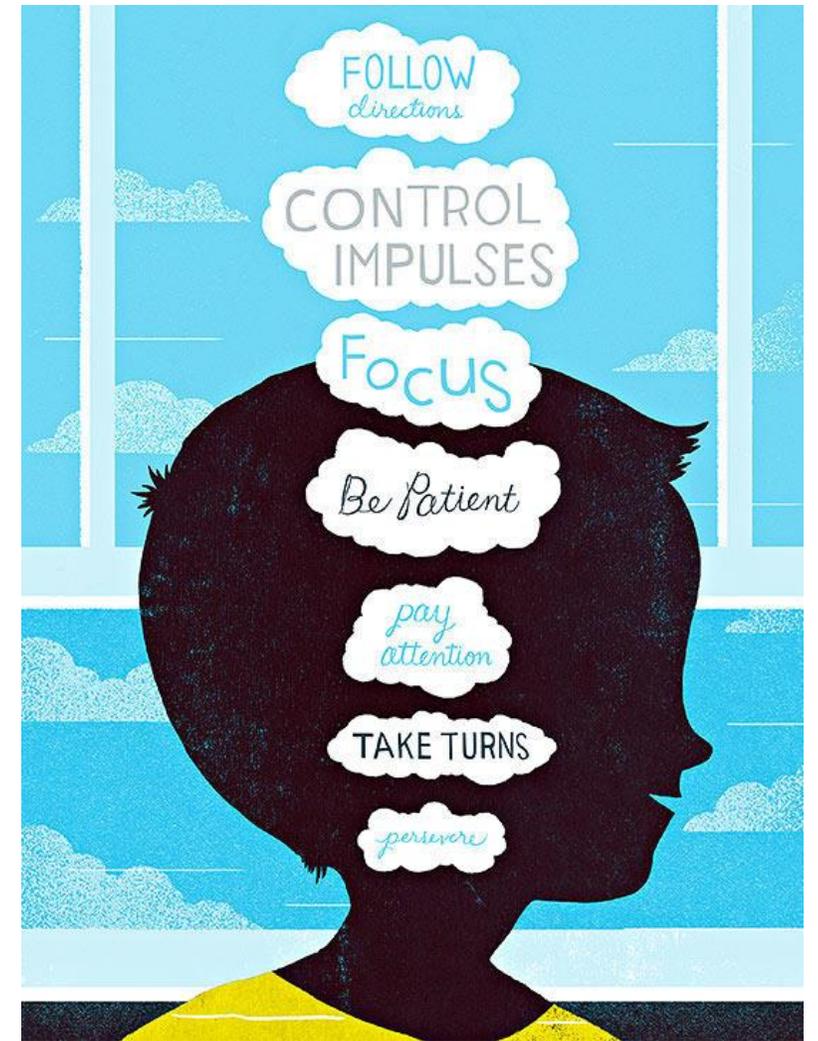
Focus of Study #1[5]

- Goal: Compile comprehensive list of apps for post-secondary students with ADHD

  - Impact on academic success

  - Directly support schoolwork

  - Also support daily life demands

Methodology of Study #1

- Examined 23 sources (2017-2020)

  - Google Scholar, Web sites, Facebook groups

  - App Store and Google Play Store (Canada)

- Adaptech focus group study (2018-2019)[6]

  - Composition (7 SWD and 9 professionals)

  - Conclusion: Mobile devices and apps are of extreme importance for SWD both inside and outside the classroom.

Results Study #1

- Annotated list of apps[7]

  - Total of 131 apps

  - All available (on August 1st, 2020)

  - Most free or <$10

  - Frequency each mentioned

    - Range of 1-9

  - Comprehensive descriptions

Schoolwork Apps – results of study #1

- Most common categories
  - Task management (e.g., Evernote, Microsoft To Do)
  - Focusing + distraction management (e.g., Freedom)
  - Time management (e.g., RescueTime/ Time Timer)
  - Organization (e.g., Dropbox)
  - Literacy (e.g., Read & Write)
  - Text-to-speech (e.g., Voice Dream Reader)

Daily Living Apps – results of Study #1

- Most common categories
  - Wake-up (e.g., Alarmy, FreakyAlarm)
  - Budget and financial tracking (e.g., Mint, YNAB)
  - Email management (e.g., Boomerang Mail, Unroll.Me)

What happened next? Study # 2

- Study: Use of technologies for schoolwork[8]
  - Online questionnaire Fall 2020
    - Content informed by focus groups (from Study #1)
  - 237 Canadian university and college students
    - With and without disabilities
    - Students with ADHD (our primary focus)

Apps Tried by Students

Participants with ADHD but no LD n = 35		All participants with ADHD n = 57		All nondisabled participants n=74	
%	name of app	%	name of app	%	name of app
63%	Dropbox	65%	Dropbox	59%	Dropbox
57%	Google Calendar	61%	Google Calendar	57%	Google Calendar
31%	Evernote	30%	Evernote	39%	Quizlet
26%	Quizlet	30%	Quizlet	18%	Evernote
17%	To Do / Wunderlist	25%	Read & Write	8%	To Do / Wunderlist

Apps Liked by Students

Participants with ADHD but no LD n = 35		All participants with ADHD n = 57		All nondisabled participants n=74	
%	name of app	%	name of app	%	name of app
43%	Google Calendar	47%	Google Calendar	45%	Google Calendar
34%	Dropbox	35%	Dropbox	36%	Dropbox
20%	Quizlet	25%	Quizlet	32%	Quizlet
11%	Read & Write	18%	Read & Write	8%	Evernote
9%	Evernote	7%	Evernote	4%	Pomodoro Timer & To Do List

What's Happening Now? Study # 3

- ADHD Interviews
  - Questions
    - Use of Apps for academic work
      - In-class
      - Out-of-class
    - Level of satisfaction
    - Wish list

Preliminary Findings – Study # 3

- So far, 6 students with ADHD interviewed
- Interesting quotes:
  - **Reminder app in Google Calendar**: "(…)to schedule daily tasks. Uses both the electronic calendar and a paper agenda. Finds schedule and reminders very helpful."
    - "(…)phone goes with me everywhere whereas a paper agenda can be forgotten at home."

Preliminary Findings – Study # 3 (positive quotes)

- **Microsoft OneNote**: "Perfect, as it is the one place where I can gather all my notes. It's like having a binder. Very helpful, due to my ADD – allows me to focus. All info is in one place, has helped to organize my studies. It's my # 1."

- **Pomodoro**: "(…)because it prevents me from going off task – like checking FaceBook. Study time is scheduled and so are breaks. I need this kind of structure."

Preliminary Findings – Study # 3 (negative quote)

- **Todoist**: "(…)an organizing program that sends reminders on tasks that need to be completed, however <u>didn't like it, and stopped using</u> it as it <u>created stress</u> by always indicating that tasks were not completed, even when they were being attended to over the course of several days or weeks."

Take-Aways

- Most apps work across various mobile devices

- Importance of daily life apps

- Technology rapidly changing

- Same apps tried and liked across groups

- Students need opportunities to explore apps

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Thank you! Questions?

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