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### Document

#### Classroom Observations of Students With and Without ADHD: Differences Across Types of Engagement

**File number :**  
CS-PC-30e

#### **Bibliographic reference :**

Junod, R.E.V., DuPaul, G.J., Jitendra, A.K., Volpe, R.J., & Cleary, K.S. (2006). Classroom Observations of Students With and Without ADHD: Differences Across Types of Engagement, *Journal of School Psychology*, 44(2), 87-104

#### **Abstract :**

In the United States, it is estimated that some 3% to 5% of elementary school-aged students have been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Quite often, these students experience difficulties at school, such as poorer academic scores and grade repetition. They are also increasingly at-risk of dropping out. To help these students perform better in school, the nature of the behaviours affecting their school functioning should be examined. Off-task behaviours and students' levels of academic engagement (e.g., writing, task participation, reading and reading aloud, asking and answering questions) were identified in literature as determining elements.

#### **Study Goal**

This study pursued two main objectives: (1) To examine differences in the frequency of off-task behaviours between students with ADHD and other students of the same age without ADHD; and (2) To examine the nature of academic engagement behaviours of students with ADHD.

#### **Methodology**

The sample consisted of 155 elementary school students in grades one through four from north-western Pennsylvania. The 92 students with ADHD selected to be part of the experimental group also had to exhibit difficulties in reading and/or mathematics. The remaining 63 students formed the control group.

Data was collected through direct observation of students during math and reading instruction, using the Behavioral Observation of Students in Schools method. Academic engagement behaviours observed were divided into two types, i.e. active engagement (e.g., writing, reading aloud, talking with the teacher) and passive engagement (e.g., listening, reading in silence). In addition, three types of off-task behaviours were observed, i.e. off-task motor, verbal and passive behaviours.

#### **Main Results**

Results revealed that students with ADHD were approximately 2.5 times more likely to engage in off-task behaviour than control group students. This finding applied to the three types of off-task behaviours (motor, verbal, and passive). These disruptive or inattentive behaviours interfered with these students' ability to attend to and complete their assigned academic tasks.

These students were less likely to adopt academic engagement behaviour than the control group students. However, additional analyses pointed to a significant distinction in this difference, which appeared more marked with regard to passive engagement behaviours. Academic tasks requiring this type of engagement, such as reading in silence, tended to be more problematic for students with ADHD. Therefore, academic tasks requiring active engagement on the part of students should be proposed to this clientele. As such, the authors suggested peer tutoring as an interesting means of action.

It appeared that the effect of academic engagement level did not offer the best explanation for the discrepancy in academic achievement between the two groups of students observed. This discrepancy was more likely linked to the observed higher frequency of off-task behaviour exhibited by students with ADHD.

**Key Words :**

Behavioural Disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ADHD, Academic Engagement, Off-task Behaviours, Direct Observation, ADHD and Academic Achievement, ADHD and Academic Engagement, Newsletter6

**Monitored Countries :**  
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