Approaches to learning and medicated ADHD: The potential impact on learning and assessment

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Learning and Individual Differences
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2015.12.029.

Abstract

The current study examined how student approaches to learning (ATL) and ATL's association with school achievement differ in children diagnosed with ADHD who are taking medication and children who are not diagnosed with ADHD. Results indicated that pharmacological interventions may be associated with a decrease in core symptoms of ADHD (e.g., ADHD-related ATL items such as concentration, keeping on task, and maintaining interest) as rated by parents; however, parents of children receiving medication also rated their children as lower on ATL items not typically associated with ADHD symptomatology, including creativity, eagerness, and initiative. Evaluation of a model examining the association between ATL and achievement revealed that as ADHD-related ATL items decreased, both reading and math achievement increased. However, the relationships between non-ADHD-related ATL items (e.g., creativity, eagerness, and initiative) and achievement scores differed for children with ADHD receiving medication. We discuss the implications for learning and assessment.