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Duke University Project Abstract

Principal Investigator: David Rabiner

Title: *A Randomized Trial of Two Promising Interventions for Students with Attention Problems*

Purpose: Attention problems, even when not severe enough to warrant a formal diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, are strongly associated with academic achievement difficulties and have an adverse impact on school success for thousands of students each year. Currently, there are no interventions that have been clearly established to enhance attention and achievement among students with attention difficulties. The purpose of this project is to conduct a rigorous, school-based evaluation of two promising interventions for inattentive students.

Setting: Participating students attend five public elementary schools in a large Southern city.

Population: Participants are 128 second-grade students identified as displaying high levels of inattentive behavior by their teacher. Based on information obtained in a prior study in the same school system, about 65 percent of participants will be male, and the approximate racial composition will be 20 percent white, 75 percent African American, and 5 percent Hispanic. Approximately 75 percent of the sample qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch and a majority are achieving below grade level in reading and/or math.

Intervention: Computerized attention training and computer-assisted instruction will be examined in this study; both have shown promise in preliminary studies with inattentive students. The computerized attention training software being used for this project is Captain's Log, which is designed to train multiple components of attention. The computer-assisted instruction software being used is Destination Reading and Math by Riverdeep, courses I and II. The interventions are being delivered in four 30-minute sessions per week over a 15-week period.

Research Design and Methods: Students are randomly assigned to 1 of 4 experimental conditions: computerized attention training, computer-assisted instruction, computerized attention training and computer-assisted instruction, or a wait list control group.

Control Condition: Students in the wait list control group do not receive any intervention during the experiment. The interventions are made available to these students during the following year provided they have yielded promising results and the child's parent wishes for their child to receive the intervention.

Key Measures: Measures of academic achievement, academic productivity, student attention, and student behavior are being collected before, immediately after, and 6-7 months following intervention completion.

Data Analytic Strategy: A series of planned comparisons in analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) are being carried out to test the relative effectiveness of each software program alone and in combination. Multilevel modeling techniques are also being used to examine the main and moderating effects of classroom on intervention outcomes.

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