

Temporal experiences of college students with learning and attention disorders: A qualitative analysis

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Background & Introduction

- Individuals with Learning and Attention Disorders (L/AD) face diagnostically related struggles with executive function including time management and organization.¹
- College students face challenges that affect their academic and daily life.³
- College students with L/AD need additional time for academic tasks.³
- Overall, there is a lack of research explaining and interpreting time further than the management of time.

Purpose

The purpose of this analysis is to identify experiences and perceptions related to temporal challenges for college students with L/AD.

Methods

- Participants: 15 undergraduate students with L/AD.
- The undergraduate students were involved in a larger study to develop university supports for students with LD (CS³LD project).
- Data are transcripts and field notes from 8 facilitated group discussions with undergraduates with LD held monthly for the study's first year.
- Data were repeatedly read and codes reduced into themes using constant comparison of the data to categories/themes.⁴
- Rigor was enhanced via researchers' attendance at meetings, use of constant comparison, and frequent discussions with the study team to achieve consensus.²

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Results

Misconceptions	Reframing	Strategies and Supports
Others having an inaccurate understanding of LD related needs regarding time	Student processing the compensation for time obstacles as personal strengths for themselves or a helpful tool for others	Ways in which students compensate for temporal struggles
"She viewed it as like I was doing this on purpose...by not being fast enough." -Undergraduate 1	"We are able to solve, we're able to fill in that missing piece of the puzzle and see what a normal person can't solve." -Undergraduate 29	"My mentor seems to really care...near exams she was helping me go through holistic ways to approach test anxiety." -Undergraduate 32

Initial Codes

School activities
Organization
Focus
Tutoring
Daily Life
Frustration
Misunderstanding
Anxiety
Diversity

Initial Categories

Making and managing time
Feelings about time
Daily decisions regarding time
Time-related challenges

Conceptual Categories

Misconceptions
Strategies and Supports
Reframing

Examples of Misconceptions

- Cop-out/excuse
- Behavioral issue
- Advice that is not helpful
- Instructors, family, friends, society

Examples of Reframing

- LD related strength
- LD strategies helpful for other students
- LD-needed teaching styles helpful for others

Examples of Strategies

- Double-dipping
- Strict routines & habits
- Planning systems
- Color coding
- Reminders to complete tasks

Supports

- Accommodations
- Approachable instructors
- Understanding instructors, family and friends
- Mentors

Conclusion & Discussion

- Temporal challenges permeate several aspects of daily life and functioning for the undergraduates with L/AD. Time for college students with L/AD is multifaceted.
- Findings expands understanding of LD-related challenges associated with temporal executive functioning difficulties.
- Understanding experiences that students with L/AD have regarding time can inform occupational therapy interventions for this population.
- Interventions should include strategies and supports for students' academic and daily lives.

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