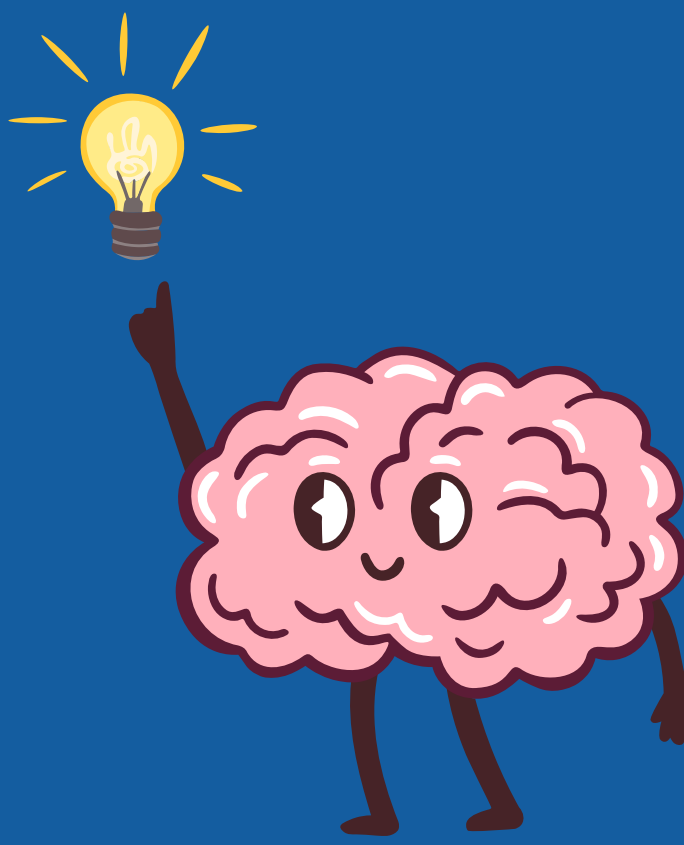
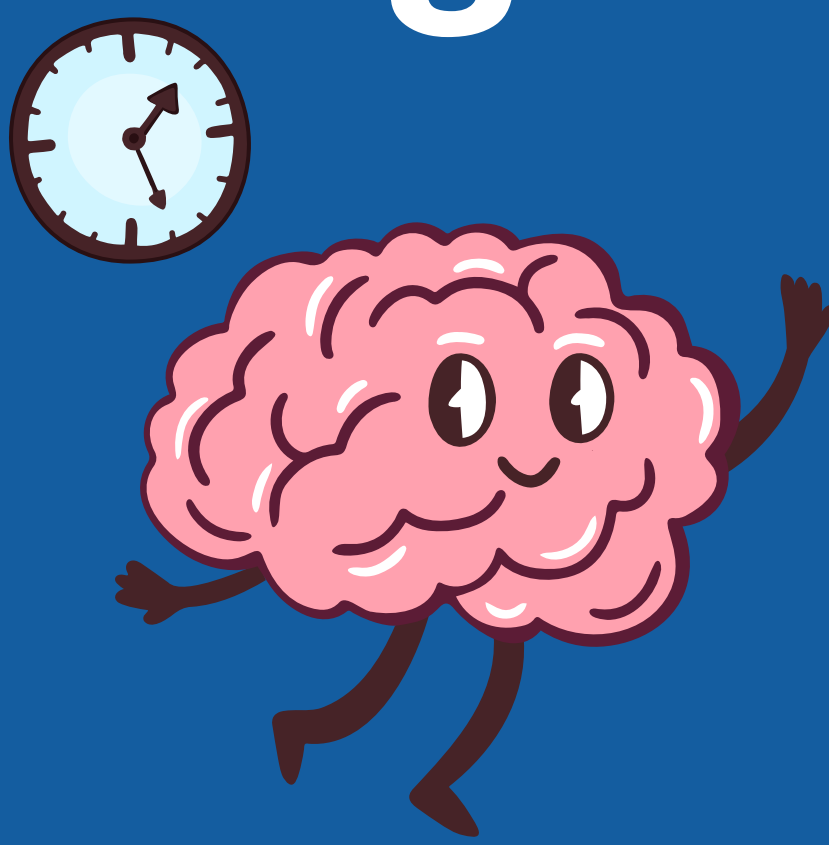


Making More Inclusive and Accessible Information Literacy Instruction for Students with ADHD



Jillian Beckwell - MLIS 2025 Graduate (WSU) and Instructional Design Librarian (RCU)
Email: jill.beckwell@rcu.edu

Abstract

Academic libraries serve a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff, often seeking ways to support their equally diverse needs. Students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) require different support than neurotypical students, both in the classroom and in the library. This poster will explore the needs of college students with ADHD and how to encourage them to become information literate through inclusive, accessible, and engaging library instruction.

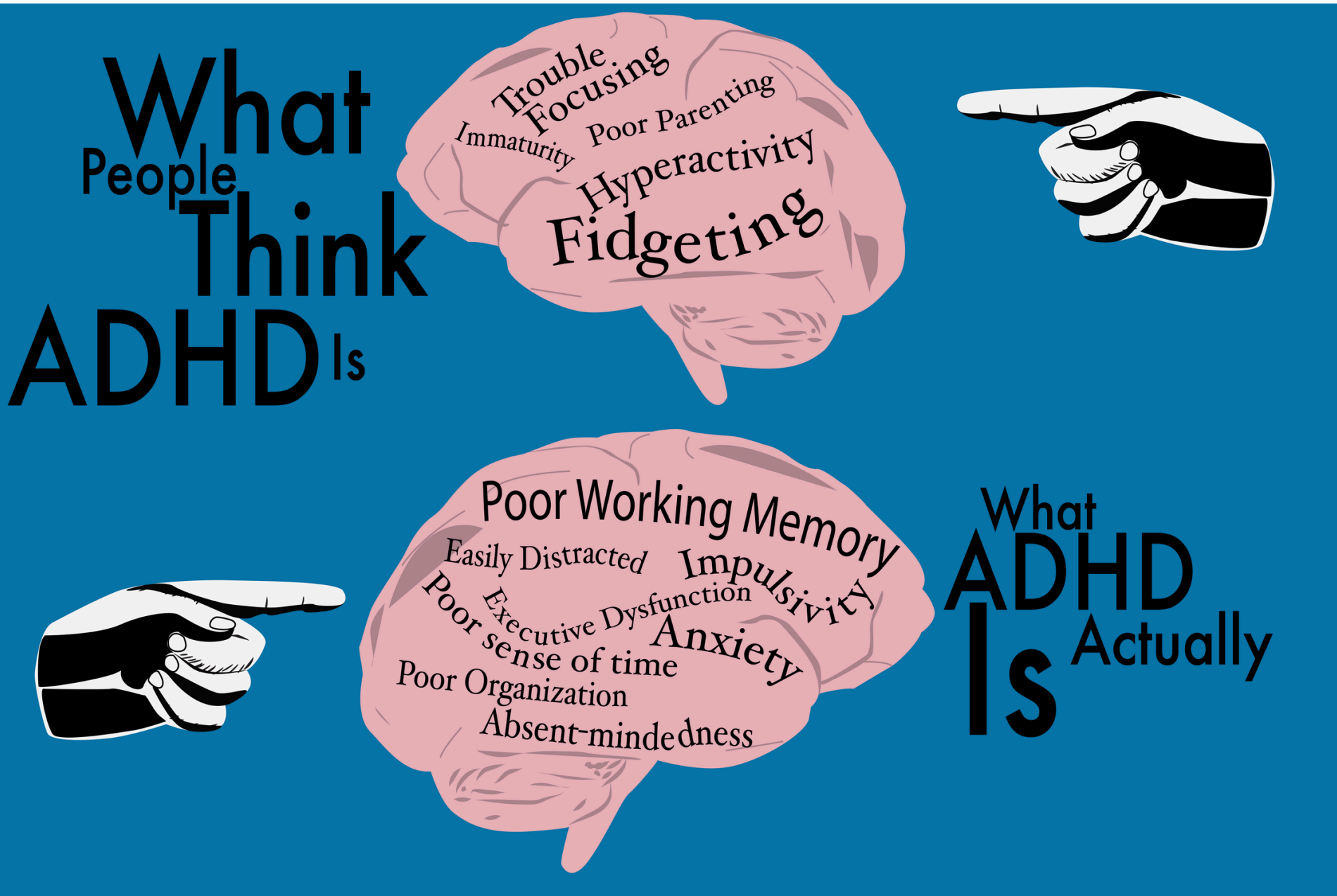


Figure 1. (Guerra, 2024)

Introduction - What is ADHD?

Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) presents in three types:
(CDC 2022; “Neurodevelopmental Disorders”, 2022)

- Inattentive**
- Difficulty:
 - Staying on task
 - Following through on instructions
 - Finishing work or chores
 - Sustaining focus
 - Being organized

- Hyperactive-Impulsive**
- Excessive motor activity when it is not appropriate
 - Excessive fidgeting, tapping, or talkativeness
 - Extreme restlessness
 - Trouble waiting or taking turns
 - Interrupting others

- Combined/Combination**
- Symptoms of both types of ADHD

Pedagogical Strategies for Instructing Students With ADHD

Look for ways to engage students

- Connect learning materials with everyday life examples (Reaser et al., 2007)
- Encourage students to create analogies based on information they learn
- Connect new and old learning material or information
- Use props, charts, and other visual aids (Segal & Smith, 2024)
- Set up a reward system - badges, prizes, etc.
- Share mnemonics for remembering important facts (O'Regan 2018)

Make the teaching space as conducive to learning as possible

- Remove distractions: clocks, phones, windows, decorations, aromas, visitors, noises from others, bright lights, etc. (Melago, 2014)

Be empathetic

- Remember that symptoms of ADHD are often out of a students' control (Zentell & Javorsky, 2007)

Why is this important?

Students with ADHD think differently, meaning they learn differently as well. This difference is not usually recognized or supported in the typical college classroom. For this reason, college students with ADHD have substantially lower need satisfaction and higher need frustration (Serrano, et al., 2023). It is important to know how to support these students as ADHD is a genuine medical condition that requires specific attention.

Examples in the Library

Gamification

Use computer games (the Wiki Game, Semantle, Kahoot) to teach elements of information literacy (Colder Carras et al., 2018)

Connect lesson with real life

Ask students to practice researching with a topic that they are interested in

Set up learning space for success

Reserve a learning space that is in a quiet, secluded space with minimal distractions

Conclusions

- Practice empathy and understanding
- Explore ways to engage students in your lessons
- Set your learning space up for success by removing distractions



College Students with ADHD



Stereotypes & Misunderstandings	In Reality
Only boys/men can be diagnosed with ADHD	ADHD in girls/women has been recognized only in the past few decades, leading to a substantial lack in research. In fact, ADHD often presents itself differently in women than it does men. This difference in the is the most cited explanation (Skogli et al., 2013)
Students with ADHD are lazy	What appears as laziness is actually an inadequate or variable self-application to tasks that require sustained effort (Serrano et al., 2023; Antshel et al., 2025; Melago, 2014)
Students with ADHD don't care about school or their studies	A student may be unable to sustain attention during a lecture despite their passion for the subject matter. Their attitude in general is positive. (Reaser et al., 2007)

References



Supplemental Materials

