



Does Screen Time Kill Concentration?

Summary of Leonhardt et al. (2025)

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Academic Insights

This scoping review of 33 studies examines how recreational screen use relates to concentration and learning among individuals aged 6–25. The findings indicate a small but consistent association between higher screen use and concentration difficulties. Importantly, this relationship appears bidirectional: excessive screen use may impair focus, while individuals with weaker attention may be more drawn to high-stimulation media.

A key factor is media multitasking, which is consistently linked to poorer learning outcomes and increased cognitive load in academic settings. Additionally, sleep disruption, particularly from pre-bedtime screen use, emerges as a mediating mechanism affecting next-day attention.

However, effects vary depending on type of use, context, and individual differences, and causal conclusions remain limited.

Apply This Now

Create structured “single-task learning periods” where students minimize digital distractions and focus on one task at a time.

Add This

Introduce short “reset breaks” after screen use to restore attention and reduce cognitive fatigue.

Avoid This Mistake

Do not assume all screen use is harmful; outcomes depend on how, when, and why screens are used.

Keywords

screen use, concentration, media multitasking, learning outcomes, cognitive load

Reference

Leonhardt, C., Danielsen, D., & Andersen, S. (2025). Associations between screen use, learning and concentration among children and young people in western countries: a scoping review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 177, 108508.

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