



Can Digital Tools Improve Attention in Classrooms?

Summary of Gunnars (2024)

Excellent Educator, 3(9), 5, 2026

Academic Insights

This systematic review examines how digital technology influence executive function (EF) and attention in primary education, particularly for students with special educational needs (SEN). Findings show that digital tools can both support and hinder attention, depending on their design and implementation.

Structured interventions—such as goal-oriented tasks, assistive technologies, and personalized learning systems—can enhance participation and focus. However, unstructured or excessive use may contribute to distraction and cognitive overload.

The effectiveness of digital tools depends heavily on intentional design, teacher guidance, and alignment with learning goals.

Apply This Now

Use digital tools with clear objectives and structured activities to support attention.

Add This

Incorporate assistive technologies to support diverse learners and executive function skills.

Avoid This Mistake

Avoid using technology without pedagogical purpose—it can reduce rather than enhance attention.

Keywords

executive function, attention, digital tools, SEN, classroom intervention

Reference

Gunnars, F. (2024). A systematic review of special educational interventions for student attention. *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 39(2), 264–276.

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