Chapter 8

TRAINING VISUAL-SPATIAL ATTENTION IN DEVELOPMENTAL DYSLEXIA

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ABSTRACT

Recent studies have shown the critical role of the ability to actively select visual information (attentional focusing) in developmental dyslexia. A program specifically devised by Geiger and Lettvin to train selection of visual information and small-scale focusing has been tried out with a group of 16 dyslexic children. The results after a three-months training have been compared with those obtained by another group of 11 dyslexic children after the same period of customary reading training in a speech-therapy context. All children were assessed on reading, spelling and phonemic awareness and their FRFs (Form-Resolving Fields), i.e. the extent of their field of correct visual recognition, were measured. The children who followed the experimental training improved their reading and spelling performances as much as the children who were treated by speech therapists (no significant differences were observed between the two groups). However, separate analyses reveal that improvements after treatment for the experimental group on reading accuracy, reading speed, spelling, phonemic awareness reached statistical significance. The group receiving customary speech therapy, on the other hand, shows significant improvements on spelling only.

Keywords: developmental dyslexia, intervention, lateral masking, peripheral vision, visual attention.
as a perceptual or as an attentional process, has been put forward as the main mechanism which is fostered by VSAT and by other similar training programs, it is not unreasonable to suppose that more than one mechanism and more than one function may play a role in producing improvement.

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REFERENCES


