

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

The aim of this seminar is to look at the special educational needs of children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and how these needs impact on their learning. The participants will gain an understanding of ADHD and practical strategies for teaching learners with ADHD in their mainstream classroom. There will be resources that the participants will be invited to read or listen to, and there will be a number of exercises they will have to complete. At the end, a list of books and websites will be suggested for getting additional or more comprehensive information on the issue.

To the participants:

Do you have learners with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in your classroom?

(Participants share relevant personal experience and then go through a list of learning outcomes as a result of the seminar.)

Learning outcomes

By the end of the first part of the seminar you will have:

- reflected on your attitude to learners diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- identified the main characteristics of a learner with ADHD and how they impact on classroom learning
- raised your awareness of the social, emotional, behavioural and learning needs of learners with ADHD in your classroom
- considered three frameworks for understanding the behaviour of a learner diagnosed with ADHD
- considered how the English curriculum can help learners with ADHD develop the required social and learning skills
- gained some teaching strategies for supporting the learner with ADHD in the classroom and around the school.

Exercise: Facts and myths about ADHD

Look at the following statements and decide whether each one is *True* or *False*. (The answers are provided in brackets after each statement.)

1. ADHD is not a fact, just a belief or interpretation around behaviour. These children are just being naughty.

(**False.** Recent neuroscientific developments with brain scanning and imaging show that children with ADHD have differences in key areas of their brains.)

2. Learners with ADHD always need medication.

(**False.** Some learners will need medication to help them to manage their behaviour at home and in school but some learners will not need medication. Even the learners who need medication will also need help from teachers and family to manage their behaviour and learning. Combination is usually important.

The correct answer is 'False'.)

3. ADHD is caused by poor parenting.

(**False.** We should be careful not to judge the parents or carers of learners with ADHD. There are many factors which can impact on a child's behaviour and many parents or carers of children with ADHD will have worked very hard to manage their child in a structured, consistent way. Teachers and parents or carers must work together to set up systems which will help the child. Research shows that heredity/genetic factors play a major role.

For more information about possible causes of ADHD take a look at the Resource - What causes ADHD?)

4. More boys than girls have ADHD.

(**True.** Yes, it is estimated worldwide that the ratio is 4 : 1 boys to girls.)

5. Loss, trauma, neglect or violence in early years can cause some children to behave as if they have ADHD.

(**True.** Yes, some children will have learned protective behaviours which were necessary in an unpredictable environment. For example, they might have learned to be on high-alert for danger and this can lead to behaviours similar to those of a learner with ADHD.)

6. All learners can show some symptoms of ADHD.

(**True.** Yes, all children at some time show some behaviours of a child with ADHD. This should not be confused with a professional diagnosis of ADHD. In order to get a diagnosis of ADHD, these behaviours must occur regularly, from an early age and across at least two contexts. Teachers must be careful not to make hasty conclusions about a learner who is showing some of these behaviours. Teachers must consider all factors which impact behaviour, for example, is the learner tired, bored, worried, or maybe not understanding?)

7. ADHD impacts greatly on learning.

(**True.** Yes, learners with ADHD will have problems with concentration, focus, sitting still, listening, recalling and following instructions and working memory. All of these problems can impact on their ability to learn in the classroom.)

8. Learners with ADHD are more likely to be excluded from school.

(**True.** Yes, 25% of learners with ADHD are likely to be excluded from mainstream school as a result of their behaviour.)

9. There is very little the classroom teacher can do, only psychologists can help.

(**False.** There are basic classroom strategies which a teacher can learn which will benefit all students, particularly those with ADHD.)

Resource: What causes ADHD?

Scientists are not sure what causes ADHD, although many studies suggest that genes play a large role. Like many other learning difficulties, ADHD probably results from a combination of factors. In addition to genetics, researchers are looking at possible environmental factors, and are studying how brain injuries, nutrition, and the social environment might contribute to ADHD.

- **Genes**

We inherit our genes from our parents and they are the 'blueprints' for who we are. Results from several international studies of twins show that ADHD often runs in families. Researchers

are looking at several genes that may make people more likely to develop the disorder. If we knew the genes involved, we might one day be able to prevent the disorder before symptoms develop. Learning about specific genes could also lead to better treatments.

Children with ADHD who carry a particular version of a certain gene have thinner brain tissue in the areas of the brain associated with attention. This NIMH (National Institute of Mental Health in USA) research showed that the difference was not permanent, however, and as children with this gene grew up, the brain developed to a normal level of thickness. Their ADHD symptoms also improved.

- **Environmental factors**

Studies suggest a potential link between cigarette smoking and alcohol use during pregnancy and ADHD in children. In addition, preschoolers who are exposed to high levels of lead, which can sometimes be found in plumbing fixtures or paint in old buildings, may have a higher risk of developing ADHD.

- **Brain injuries**

Children who have suffered a brain injury may show some behaviors similar to those of ADHD. However, only a small percentage of children with ADHD have suffered a traumatic brain injury.

- **Sugar**

The idea that refined sugar causes ADHD or makes symptoms worse is popular, but several research studies suggest this is not true. In one study, researchers gave children foods containing either sugar or a sugar substitute every other day. The children who received sugar showed no different behaviour or learning capabilities than those who received the sugar substitute. In another study, children who were considered sugar-sensitive by their mothers were given the sugar substitute aspartame, also known as Nutrasweet. Although all the children got aspartame, half their mothers were told their children were given sugar, and the other half were told their children were given aspartame. The mothers who thought their children had received sugar rated them as more hyperactive than the other children and were more critical of their behavior, compared to mothers who thought their children received aspartame.

- **Food additives**

Recent British research indicates a possible link between consumption of certain food additives like artificial colours or preservatives, and an increase in activity. Research is continuing to confirm the findings and to learn more about how food additives may affect hyperactivity.

Questions to the participants:

- *Do you know of any ADHD research in your country?*
- *Where could you search for more information?*

ADHD - Definition and behaviours

Resource: Definition of ADHD

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. It originates from the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, 1994. It lists 3 types of ADHD:

- Predominantly Inattentive Type (PIT)
- Hyperactive Impulsive Type (HIT)
- Combined type (CT)

The key features of ADHD are **inattention**, **hyperactivity** and **impulsivity**.

Inattention - PIT

- often fails to give close attention to detail or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, or other activities
- often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities
- easily distracted from tasks and play activities
- often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- often does not follow instructions through and fails to finish schoolwork, jobs or duties (not owing to oppositional behaviour or failure to understand instructions)
- often has difficulty in organizing tasks and activities
- often avoids, dislikes or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort, for example, homework

- often loses things necessary for a task or activity, for example, pens or books
- often forgetful in daily activities.

Hyperactivity - HIT

- often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
- leaves seat in classroom or other situations where remaining in seat is expected
- often runs about or climbs in situations where it is inappropriate or continually feels restless
- often 'on the go' or acts as if driven by a motor
- often talks excessively.

Impulsivity - CT

- often blurts out answers before questions have been completed
- often has difficulty waiting for a turn
- often interrupts or intrudes on others, for example, butts into conversations.

An ADHD diagnosis is made if child shows **six or more symptoms from** the Inattention (**PIT**) list or **six or more from** the combined Impulsivity (**CT**) and Hyperactivity (**HIT**) lists. There also needs to be some evidence that the symptoms were present before the age of seven and across two or more settings, for example, school and home.

Exercise: ADHD Behaviours

Question 1:

Read what three teachers are saying about their learners. Choose which type of ADHD each learner might be showing. Select one:

- Predominantly Inattentive Type (PIT)
- Hyperactive Impulsive Type (HIT)
- Combined Type (CT).

To the participants: You can check the behaviours on the Resource “Definition of ADHD”.

Teacher 1 talking about Ahmed

"The trouble with Ahmed is that he just doesn't care about his work or the teacher, he makes careless mistakes and he's always losing things. He's easily distracted and always turning around. He never focuses on his own work. He's really lazy – he never finishes anything. I just think he can't be bothered to listen to instructions."

The correct answer is: PIT

Teacher 2 talking about Asha

"No-one wants Asha in their group because she always takes over and won't listen to other people's opinions. She talks non-stop and upsets other children by saying things they don't like. She runs around the room, grabbing other children's stuff and sometimes leaves the classroom without permission. She gets very upset when I try to discipline her and blames other children. She never finishes her work and she's always getting involved in other people's business."

The correct answer is: CT

Teacher 3 talking about Jane

"I get a headache when Jane's in my class. She's like a spinning top, never sits still, always playing with something with her hands, kicking her feet on the chair, talking all the time. She really scares me sometimes when she climbs up on the desks and won't come down. She annoys other children because she never lets them speak, always interrupting and taking over their games."

The correct answer is: HIT

Question 2.

Read again to what each teacher says and read the descriptions. This time try to identify the ADHD behaviours of each student. Use the list of behaviours below. Select one or more for each respective student:

1. often fails to give close attention to detail or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, or other activities (Correct)
2. often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities (Correct)
3. easily distracted from tasks and play activities (Correct)

4. often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly (Correct)
5. often does not follow instructions through and fails to finish schoolwork, jobs or duties (not owing to oppositional behaviour or failure to understand instructions) (Correct)
6. often has difficulty in organizing tasks and activities
7. often avoids, dislikes or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort, for example, homework (Correct)
8. often loses things necessary for a task or activity, for example, pens or books (Correct)
9. often forgetful in daily activities.
10. often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat.
11. leaves seat in classroom or other situations where remaining in seat is expected
12. often runs about or climbs in situations where it is inappropriate or continually feels restless
13. often 'on the go' or acts as if driven by a motor
14. often talks excessively
15. often blurts out answers before questions have been completed
16. often has difficulty waiting for a turn
17. often interrupts or intrudes on others, for example, butts into conversations.

Teacher 1 talking about Ahmed

Feedback

Ahmed is showing many signs of the PIT. He is easily distracted and finds it difficult to pay attention. He does not finish his work because he finds it so difficult to focus. He finds it difficult to keep instructions in his head because he is so preoccupied. The teacher thinks he is lazy, but he is probably making huge efforts to concentrate and cannot.

Teacher 2 talking about Asha

Feedback

Asha is showing signs of being impulsive, inattentive and hyperactive, the CT of ADHD. She cannot work with other children, taking over their games, talking non-stop and not listening to other people. She cannot sit still, running around the room and even runs out of the room

sometimes. She cannot follow the classroom rules. She does not get her work finished as she cannot sit still and focus on her own tasks.

Teacher 3 talking about Jane

Feedback

Yes, Jane is showing signs of being the Hyperactive Impulsive Type (HIT). She cannot sit still, is always restless and 'on the go'. She takes risks on an impulse, doing potentially dangerous things in the classroom. She also impulsively interrupts other children and cannot wait her turn.

Overall feedback

We need to be careful not to label learners. Many learners show these behaviours when they are tired, anxious or over-excited. Learners often have problems focusing in loud, chaotic classrooms. As teachers we need to make sure we have calm classrooms, with clear rules and expectations, with differentiated, age-appropriate tasks before we start to assess a learner's behaviour. Schools and teachers are sometimes too quick to think a learner has ADHD, when they actually need to implement better classroom management and planning.

Key:

Question 1

Ahmed – PIT, Asha – CT, Jane – HIT

Question 2

Ahmed - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8

Asha - 2, 3, 5, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17

Jane - 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17

Resource: A scientist's view

Professor Russell Barkley is one of the main experts in the area of brain science and ADHD. He proposes that learners with ADHD have deficits in their **executive functioning** and **working memory**. **Executive functioning** is a term psychologists use to describe the many

tasks our brains perform that are necessary to think, act, and solve problems. Executive functioning includes tasks that help us learn new information, remember and retrieve information we've learned in the past, and use this information to solve problems of everyday life.

Working memory refers to our capacity to hold information in our mind that will be used to guide our actions either now or later. It is essential for remembering to do things in the near future. Learners with poor working memory lose track of the goal in their activities and often seem very disorganized, arriving late or forgetting what to do next. They are not able to measure or sense time realistically in daily activities.

Learners with ADHD often have the following difficulties:

- They are not good at problem-solving.
- The development of their 'internal voice' is delayed. This is the private voice we use for talking to ourselves. We use this voice to think about things, reflect on activities and decide on our own actions. We need this voice to help us to understand and follow rules and to keep ourselves 'on-track' to our goals.
- Combined with working memory difficulties, this causes problem with reading comprehension as learners are not able to stop, think about the meaning of the text and their reaction to it.
- They have difficulties with emotions and motivation. Some learners with ADHD express emotions in the moment and dramatically. The feelings are not necessarily inappropriate to the situation but the learner shows them more readily than others in the same situations. For example, if they find an activity boring, their reaction will be loud and extreme.
- They find it difficult to motivate themselves towards their goals. They often appear to be daydreaming instead of getting on with the task. The lack of an internal voice and an ability to regulate emotions, lead to difficulties in working towards a goal and keeping motivated.

Exercise: A scientist's view

Question 1

After you have read the resource *A scientist's view*, read the [list of problems](#) the teacher might see in the classroom.

- Seems to listen to instructions but does not follow them.
- Cannot complete a reading maze with several options at each stage.
- Does not understand reading comprehension.
- Cannot recall facts learned recently.
- Shouting out loudly that the lesson is really boring and rubbish.

Match each of the problems with one of the suggested **causes**.

- ✓ difficulty regulating emotion
- ✓ working memory difficulty, cannot hold the information in their memory
- ✓ internal voice difficulty, self-talk gets in the way of understanding the text
- ✓ problem-solving difficulties
- ✓ working memory

Key:

Seems to listen to instructions but does not follow them.

working memory difficulty, cannot hold the information in their memory

Cannot complete a reading maze with several options at each stage.

problem-solving difficulties

Does not understand reading comprehension.

internal voice difficulty, self talk gets in the way of understanding the text

Cannot recall facts learned recently.

working memory

Shouting out loudly that the lesson is really boring and rubbish.

difficulty regulating emotion

Question 2

Read what Chu Hua says and decide which problem she is describing. Select one or more.

"I hate English lessons, the teacher always gives us long things to read and I can't understand it. I try to concentrate but just feel like giving up after the first few lines. I just put my head on the desk and sigh because I am fed up. The teacher just shouts at me and says I am lazy."

(the correct ones are highlighted)

1. problem with internal voice
2. self-regulation of emotion
3. motivation towards a goal
4. difficulty with sense of time.

Question 3

Read what Omar says and decide which problem he is describing. Select one or more.

"I hate playing games in English. It is supposed to be fun, but I never know when it is my turn and I wait for ages, then I join in and everyone gets angry because it is not my go. Then I shout at them and sometimes run out of the room."

(the correct ones are highlighted)

1. problem with internal voice
2. self-regulation of emotion
3. motivation towards a goal
4. difficulty with sense of time.

Overall feedback

We can see that a learner with ADHD might have specific difficulties which affect learning. The most significant difficulties are with working memory, self-regulation through an internal voice and therefore self-motivation. They will need help with this in class.

Exercise: A psychotherapist's view

Read about the psychotherapist's view of how experiences in a child's early years can affect behaviour. As you read, select the correct word from the list below to fill in the blanks.

- dangerous
- safe
- remember
- lookout
- environment
- distracted
- focus
- 'hypervigilance'
- protect
- early years

"Sometimes a child's behaviour can tell us something about their **early years**' experience. When a child has lived in an environment which is **dangerous**, violent or unpredictable, that child will sometimes learn behaviours which **protect** him or her from harm. For example, if a child lives in a violent home, that child might have to be always on the **lookout** for possible signs of violence and might have learned to pay attention to every mood and action of the adults in the home. This type of child will not be able to **focus** on one task or activity for any length of time as they are always on 'high-alert', looking around for danger and checking the **environment** and people in it. We call this behaviour '**hypervigilance**'. This child does not feel **safe**. Their brains are stuck in the 'fight or flight' mode which makes rational thinking very difficult. Their behaviour can look like that of a child with ADHD. For example, they cannot focus on their own work and are always looking around. They are easily **distracted** by other children or noises. They seem very anxious and unable to understand or **remember** instructions. Sometimes, they find it impossible to sit still and often run out of the room."

ADHD - Meaning of behaviour

We have seen that the behaviour and learning difficulties of a learner with ADHD can show us something about their underlying needs. The learner cannot always tell us what they need but we should try to understand the real meaning of their behaviour.

Think about the possible meaning that some behaviours are communicating to us. For example, being late might not mean that a learner is lazy but that he or she has trouble measuring and managing time.

Go to the exercise below to think about what other particular behaviours might mean.

Exercise: Meaning of behaviour

Question 1

Look at the list of ADHD behaviours (1-4). Match each one with a possible meaning of the behaviour (A-D).

- 1 Learner always wants the teacher at their side.
- 2 Learner never seems to remember or follow instructions correctly.
- 3 Learner is always turning around, watching everyone and can't focus on their own work.
- 4 Learner runs around the room, climbing on chairs and window sills.

Possible meaning of behaviour

- A The learner thinks the teacher will forget about them when not interacting.
- B The learner is having problems with short-term working memory.
- C The learner cannot sit still for long periods.
- D The learner is not sure of the rules of the classroom.

Key: 1 - A 2 - B 3 - D 4 - C

Feedback

1 - A

Some learners cannot believe that the teacher remembers them when the teacher is not interacting with them. This type of learner will continually try to get the teacher's attention and keep it. They will need reassurance that the teacher has not forgotten them.

2 - B

In order to remember instructions a learner needs to keep them in their working memory. Learners with ADHD have problems with this area of memory. They will need strategies to help them to remember instructions. Learner is always turning around, watching everyone and can't focus on their own work.

3 - D

Some learners with ADHD have problems with classroom rules and boundaries. They need strong boundaries in order to feel safe but they will continually challenge these boundaries. They will need to be reminded of the rules and the reasons for them.

4 - C

The learner cannot sit still for long periods. Learners with ADHD find it very difficult to sit still for long periods of time. They become very restless and need to move. The teacher needs to plan ways to let them move in the lessons and to reward them for focusing for longer times.

Question 2

Look at the list of ADHD behaviours (1-4). Match each one with a possible meaning of the behaviour (A-D).

- 1 Learner feels persecuted by teachers and says everyone hates them.
- 2 Learner is always interfering with other learners' work and upsetting them.
- 3 Learner gives up when there is a lot to read or write.
- 4 Learner is always late.

Possible meaning of behaviour:

- A The learner believes they are only judged by their behaviour, not their strengths.
- B The learner needs the tasks to be in smaller chunks.
- C The learner wants to develop relationships with other learners.
- D The learner is having problems with measuring time.

Feedback

1- A

Learners with ADHD often do not understand that the teacher can like them as a person but not like their behaviour. The teacher needs to make sure they find ways to show the learner that they are still likeable as a person.

2 - C

Learners with ADHD need help in developing relationships with other learners. They want to be friend but often choose inappropriate ways to get the attention of other learners. They need help from the teacher to learn to work with other learners.

3 - B

Learners with ADHD find it difficult to concentrate for longer periods of time. They will often feel demotivated and lose confidence with longer tasks. Tasks need to be broken down into manageable chunks.

4 - D

Learners with ADHD find it difficult to be on time and to be organized. They tend to live in the 'here and now' and have little concept of time. They will need help with learning how to measure time and keep to a plan.

Overall feedback

Learners with ADHD seem difficult to manage and teach in the classroom. They find it difficult to sit still, cannot focus for longer periods of time and seem to be constantly seeking the teacher's attention. We need to realize that they are having difficulties with certain key learning

skills and work on supporting them in their learning. We also need to remain positive in our approach and they easily lose confidence and self-esteem.

ADHD - Problems and needs

In order to help learners with ADHD we need to be able to recognise the communication of their behaviour and understand what they need from the teacher and the classroom.

Complete the exercise below to consider the specific needs of learners with ADHD.

Exercise: Needs of learners with ADHD

Not every learner has the same needs. Read how learners with ADHD describe the problems they each have with learning. As you read tick the needs of each learner. (the correct needs are highlighted in yellow)

Ahmed:

"I try really hard in English but the teacher doesn't like me. She thinks I'm being bad but I can't remember what she tells us to do. When I ask other people, she shouts at me and that upsets me. We have to sit still all the time and I can't do that. She says I am lazy but I just feel stupid in her classes. It takes me a long time to understand and to start my work and then the lesson is finished."

Ahmed needs:

- 1.To feel safe and secure.
- 2.A belief that the teacher likes him or her as a person even when their behaviour is annoying.
- 3.A clear structure and consistent rules.
- 4.Support in remembering what to do and how to learn.
- 5.Help with managing their inappropriate behaviour, their restlessness.
- 6.Support with developing relationships with other learners.
- 7.Help with short term memory.

8.Help with understanding and managing time.

Feedback: Ahmed obviously does not feel secure in this class (1). He thinks the teacher does not like him (2) and he has problems remembering what he has been told to do (7). He can't sit still and is always talking to other learners when he should be working (4). It takes him a long time to start his work and to understand what to do (8).

Asha:

"I really hate my English class. I want to be friends with everyone but they don't like me. No-one listens to me and won't let me join in their games. I try to concentrate on my work but my brain won't let me. I feel like a hundred things are going on in my head at the same time. I never finish my work in time because the teacher is always moving on too quickly and I am left behind. I don't know when I am allowed to talk and when I should be quiet."

Asha needs:

1.To feel safe and secure.

2.A belief that the teacher likes him or her as a person even when their behaviour is annoying.

3.A clear structure and consistent rules.

4.Support in remembering what to do and how to learn.

5.Help with managing their inappropriate behaviour, their restlessness.

6.Support with developing relationships with other learners.

7.Help with short term memory.

8.Help with understanding and managing time.

Feedback: Asha also seems very insecure in this class (1). She is having problems with her peers (6) and cannot focus or get her work finished in time (4). She has trouble remembering, her brain won't let her (7). She is having problems with the rules of the class and does not know when she is allowed to talk or should be quiet (3).

Jane:

"I only like physical education classes, because I can run around. I can't sit still, my body won't let me. I sometimes try sitting on my hands in English so that I won't get in trouble. I

don't know when I am allowed to speak. Sometimes I sit for hours with my hand up and the teacher takes no notice of me. Sometimes we are allowed to run around and sometimes we are not, the teacher should make up his mind about the rules."

Jane needs:

1.To feel safe and secure.

2.A belief that the teacher likes him or her as a person even when their behaviour is annoying.

3.A clear structure and consistent rules.

4.Support in remembering what to do and how to learn.

5.Help with managing their inappropriate behaviour, their restlessness.

6.Support with developing relationships with other learners.

7.Help with short term memory.

8.Help with understanding and managing time.

Feedback: Like the other children, Jane does not feel happy and secure in this class (1). She doesn't know when she is allowed to speak or run around. She thinks the teacher changes the rules (3). She can't sit still and only likes physical education classes (5) She thinks she waits for hours with her hand up without being noticed (8).

Overall feedback

These learners need safety and consistency. It is very important to try to understand the reasons for their behaviours, to recognise the underlying needs and respond in the best way. The teacher could explain that they can forget everything that is happening outside of the classroom as this is filling up their brain and stopping them learning.

Exercise: ADHD - Socialisation

Watch a video of four children talking about a classmate called Peter, who has ADHD. (The video is accessible from the BC course only.) Complete the text below by choosing the correct word from the list.

distracts
improbable
annoying
showing off
noises
turns
angry
unusual

Socialisation can be a problem for learners with ADHD. They can find it difficult to integrate into groups because they are poor at taking **turns**, listening to other people and saying the right thing. They often have low self-esteem and lack confidence. This is shown in their behaviour by **showing off** in front of their peers, acting in a silly way and distracting other learners from their work. Their behaviour often seems **unusual** to other learners, who sometimes encourage them to be the 'class clown' because it is funny and **distracts** the teacher. Other learners find this irritating and **annoying**. This can lead to isolation and a lack of friends. Also learners with ADHD often lie about situations. Other learners get **angry** about this. Learners with ADHD sometimes construct a highly **improbable** version of events. They might genuinely believe their own version and will not accept the truth. Other learners can get very upset by this and teachers find it difficult to understand. Parents often worry more about their child's socialisation than their academic problems. Learners can have low self-esteem and lack confidence in social situations. This is often indicated by showing off and being silly, calling out and making funny **noises**.

Overall feedback

Other learners are affected by the behaviour of learners with ADHD. However, the teacher can encourage the class to be supportive and to have empathy with each other. For example, the teacher can have a rule 'we are kind to each other in this class' and this will encourage learners to work together. The teacher can also include games and activities which help all the class to listen better, wait their turn and have empathy and understanding of another person. Learners will follow the teacher's example of how to deal with the behaviour of the learner with ADHD. The teacher must show them appropriate responses.

Teaching strategies

As a working or perspective classroom teacher, you are probably most interested in strategies for helping learners with ADHD. It does not matter which theory you apply to ADHD – the classroom strategies are the same. The important thing is that the teaching strategies need to meet the needs of the learners.

Do the teaching strategies exercise below to match the teaching strategies to the needs of learners with ADHD.

Exercise: Teaching strategies

Read the list of needs of learners with ADHD. Look at the eight groups of teaching strategies below.

Match one of the needs from the list to each group of teaching strategies.

The learner needs:

- ✓ support in remembering what to do and how to learn
- ✓ a clear structure and consistent rules
- ✓ to feel safe and secure
- ✓ to believe that the teacher likes them even when their behaviour is annoying
- ✓ help with managing inappropriate behaviour and restlessness
- ✓ help with developing relationships with other learners
- ✓ help with short term memory
- ✓ help with understanding and managing time.

Strategies group 1

Have a few clear classroom rules and remind learners of them either verbally or through the use of posters.

Have a class contract which the learners were involved in creating.

Use routines and techniques for starting and stopping work and getting silence. For example: “OK, let’s see the first ten students to face me.”

“I will clap 3 times and everyone needs to be facing me by the end.”

“When you see me put my hand up, put your hand up and stop talking.”

Have a clear reward system and involve the learners in designing it.

Set clear time limits for work and give warnings when time is nearly over e.g 1 minute to go, teacher counts down to finish of activity 5,4,3,2,1.

(The correct answer is: a clear structure and consistent rules.)

Strategies group 2

Use individual laminated whiteboards so that learners can show their answers rather than having to choose when to speak.

Allow the learner to work with headphones on or to imagine putting headphones on to cut out distractions and to be able to focus on own work.

Let the learner doodle or stand up and stretch when needed.

(The learner needs support with remembering what to do and how to learn.)

Strategies group 3

Notice and praise when the learner is on-task and behaving appropriately (not just focussing on negative behaviour), for example, use a 'Catch me being good card.' or have an agreed signal such as a 'thumbs up'.

Focus on the learner's strengths, for example, let them draw pictures you need on the board.

Send home good reports.

(The learner needs to believe that the teacher likes them even when their behaviour is annoying.)

Strategies group 4

If you cannot come back to the learner when you said you would, acknowledge the anxiety the learner might be having "Maybe you thought I had forgotten you, but I had not."

Have a worry box, where learners can write down privately any worries they want the teacher to know.

(The learner needs to feel safe and secure.)

In this part of the seminar the participants have covered the following learning points:

- ❖ Learners with ADHD are not just being 'naughty'.
- ❖ There are 3 main types of ADHD according to the DSM-IV diagnostic model.
- ❖ ADHD inhibits classroom learning because the learner finds it difficult to focus and retain information.
- ❖ Learners with ADHD need help with social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- ❖ The English curriculum offers opportunities to work on skills such as empathy, listening and memory.
- ❖ There are differing views on the causes of ADHD and the need for medication.
- ❖ Learners with ADHD need the teacher to have a structure, clear plan and to be consistent.
- ❖ Teachers need to work with parents/carers and other professionals.

Further reading

Books

Barkley, R.(2000) **Taking Charge of ADHD: The Complete Authoritative Guide for Parents**
Guildford Press

Brown, T. (2006) **Attention Deficit Disorder - The Unfocused Mind in Children and Adults** Yale
University Press

Delaney, M. (2010) **What Can I do About the Kid Who...? A Teachers' Quick Guide to Dealing with Disruptive Pupils (and their parents)** Worth

Green, C. (1997) **Understanding ADHD - A Parent's Guide to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Children** Vermillion

Hughes, L.A. (2007) **Understanding and Supporting Children with ADHD** SAGE

O'Regan, F. (2002) **How to Teach and Manage Children with ADHD: LDA**

Websites

<http://www.addiss.co.uk/> National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service

<http://www.russellbarkley.org/> Russell Barkley PhD

<http://www.nasen.org.uk/> National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN)