

**(Continuation)**

## **Teaching strategies**

This is a continuation of a lecture module designed for students who are training to become teachers and are interested in strategies for helping learners with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The first 4 strategies were targeted in a previous document. Four more strategies are suggested here, with the respective exercise to raise students' awareness.

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.

**(continued)**

**Strategies group 5**

Use timers for learners to see the time they need to focus, for example an egg-timer or watch with large face.

Let the learner know how long they have before you come back to them "OK, try the first 3 questions and then I will come back to you."

(The correct answer is: The learner needs help with understanding and managing time.)

### **Strategies group 6**

Encourage study buddies, learners who can work together and help each other.

Encourage everyone to notice each other's strengths.

Ask the learner to teach the class about something he knows.

Use smaller groups for group work where learners have to co-operate.

(The correct answer is: The learner needs help with developing relationships with other learners.)

### **Strategies group 7**

Sit the learner near the teacher and away from distractions such as windows, heaters.

Have computers available for extra activities.

Allow the learner to go to a designated area if classroom getting too stressful so that they can cool down.

Have a signal for the learner to use when they need to escape, for example, a card which can be put on the desk.

Use more kinaesthetic activities.

(The correct answer is: The learner needs help with managing inappropriate behaviour and restlessness.)

### **Strategies group 8**

Use visual memory aids , for example, a visual timetable.

Use positive language and say what you want to happen, For example "Look at the board" rather than "Don't turn around."

(The correct answer is: The learner needs help with short term memory.)

## **Overall feedback**

Schools often set behaviour targets for learners with ADHD. If we only use this behaviourist approach, we are addressing the symptom not the cause of the problem. The behaviour of these learners is showing us their needs. We need to address the needs behind the behaviour if we want to help learners with ADHD to succeed with learning. The English classroom provides many opportunities to practise and develop the skills which learners with ADHD find difficult, for example, listening, waiting, working together.

### **Classroom activities**

In the English classroom you can choose to do activities which help the learners to develop better skills for learning. In this section you will see two classroom activities which are useful for learners with ADHD and which can help all learners to improve their skills.

- a) Go to the *How long is a minute?* exercise and watch the video of a teacher playing a game to measure time.

Watch the video of the children doing an activity called 'How long is a minute?' and think about the purpose of the activity.

What is the main aim of this activity?

Select one:

- to practise counting to 60
- to have fun
- to learn how to measure time accurately
- to calm learners down in class.

(The correct answer is 'to learn how to measure time accurately'.)

Feedback: Learners with ADHD have problems with waiting in class. They call out, they interrupt others, they cannot sit still for long. This shows that they cannot measure time in their head. They think they have been waiting for a long time with their hand up to answer a question, but they probably have only been waiting a few seconds. This activity helps them to understand that they need to measure time more slowly. Learners with ADHD will often sit down in this activity after 20-30 seconds and are amazed at how long a minute actually is. They can learn from other learners in this activity and will need to practise it several times. Other

useful games to develop social and learning skills can be found in Mosley, J. (1996) Quality circle time in the classroom Lda Publishers

b) Go to the *Wait before you answer* exercise to see another example of an activity which helps learners to develop better concentration skills.

In the *Wait before you answer* exercise accessible below you will watch learners playing a game to help with developing skills for learning.

Watch the video of the children doing an activity called '*Wait before you answer*' and think about how a learner with ADHD would find the activity.

Choose the correct answer for the statements.

### **Question 1**

Learners with ADHD would find this activity easy. (False)

Feedback: Yes, learners with ADHD find it very difficult to listen to someone without interrupting.

This activity requires the learner to wait before answering the questions. Learners with ADHD are impulsive and find it difficult to wait.

### **Question 2**

Learners with ADHD should ask the questions first before taking the role of the listener. (True)

Feedback: Yes, learners with ADHD will find this exercise difficult as the listener. They need to build their confidence before they can try it as the listener. It is important, therefore, that they first take the role of the person asking the questions. If they start as the listener and cannot do the activity it will be very demotivating for them.

Learners with ADHD will find it easier to ask questions as they often are very interested in other people. It will build their confidence to ask the questions first. They should then try the role of listener.

### **Question 3**

One aim of this activity is to develop better listening skills. (True)

Feedback: Yes, this exercise practises good listening skills. Often, we do not listen to the end of what a speaker is saying because we are thinking of our answers to their questions. We all do this but learners with ADHD do it more. Listening is a very important skill when learning English so this activity will help all learners.

All learners will benefit from thinking before they answer the questions.

#### **Question 4**

An important aim of this activity for learners with ADHD is to practise waiting and not shouting out answers inappropriately. (True)

Feedback: Yes, in this activity the learner has to wait before they answer the questions. This means they have to practise waiting without interrupting.

This activity helps learners with ADHD to practise waiting before speaking.

#### **Overall feedback**

As we have seen the English classroom offers excellent opportunities to practise learning skills in fun games and activities. For more good language games see:

Rinvoluceri, M. and Davis, P. (1985) Grammar Games CUP

Rinvoluceri, M. and Davis, P. (1995) More Grammar Games.

#### **Additional ideas to make the learner feel 'safe'**

A teacher can make a learner feel more 'safe' in the classroom by:

- acknowledging that the learner has a lot of external distractions and telling the learner that it is okay to forget them while they are in the classroom and do their work.
- letting the learner know that their behaviour in other contexts is not relevant in the classroom by saying 'You don't need to be like that in here'.
- making sure all instructions are clear by giving an example of what is expected and then eliciting an example from the learners.

#### **Other useful classroom management tips include:**

- making sure to maintain eye contact during verbal instructions.
- using the learner's name first when you want them to answer.
- sitting the learner near good peer models and encouraging co-operative learning

## Test yourself

Read the following statements and decide whether they are true or false.

### Question 1

Learners with ADHD will always need medication.

The correct answer is 'False'.

Feedback: Yes, some learners with ADHD will benefit from medication but many learners do not need medication and can learn to manage their own behaviour.

### Question 2

Teachers cannot help learners with ADHD, they need specialist help from psychologists.

The correct answer is 'False'.

Feedback: Yes, teachers can help learners with practical strategies for learning and behaviour management. Teachers see the learners more often than a psychologist and are often the best person to offer support and guidance.

### Question 3

Which of these behaviours are NOT typical of a learner with ADHD?

Select one:

- often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- can take turns in a game
- finds it hard to sit still in their seat.

The correct answer is: can take turns in a game

Feedback: Learners with ADHD find it difficult to wait for their turn. They quickly become impatient and often get frustrated when playing games or waiting to be noticed in class.

### Question 4

Which of these behaviours is a sign that a learner might have difficulties with working memory?

Select one:

- shouting out loudly that the lesson is really boring
- walking around the room restlessly
- seeming to listen to instructions and then not following them

The correct answer is 'seeming to listen to instructions and then not following them'.

Feedback: Working memory affects the ability to recall information only recently given.

Learners who have problems following instructions often have difficulty remembering what they have been told to do. They cannot hold the information long enough in their working memory. This is a common problem for learners with ADHD.

### **Question 5**

A child who has lived in a violent environment can sometimes behave like a child with ADHD because:

Select one:

- he loses his self-confidence
- he learns to be on high alert all the time for danger
- he doesn't see the point in learning.

The correct answer is 'he learns to be on high-alert all the time for danger'.

Feedback: Children who live in a violent environment learn from a young age to expect danger and threats. Their brains develop strategies for keeping safe. One of these strategies might be to remain on constant high alert for danger. This means they often are constantly scanning the classroom, looking around, not able to focus on their task and being very sensitive to any sound or movement. These behaviours can look like ADHD.

### **Question 6**

Learners with ADHD need:

Select one:

- structure and consistency of rules
- lots of flexibility and choice
- special classes.

The correct answer is 'structure and consistency of rules'.

Feedback: Yes, learners with ADHD can be taught in mainstream classes. They benefit from being with good role models for behaviour and learning. They need a teacher who is consistent, has a clear structure and who is clear about the classroom rules.

### **Question 7**

Why is it important to set time limits for work for learners with ADHD?

Select one:

- they need to write faster
- they waste a lot of time
- they have problems measuring time.

The correct answer is 'they have problems measuring time'.

Feedback: Yes, learners with ADHD can look as if they are wasting time in class and often do not finish their work. However, it is important to understand why they do this. They have a major problem with measuring time. They think they have been working for hours and it might only have been a few minutes. Time limits help them to understand the measuring out of time for tasks.

**Decide if the following statements are true, false or whether it depends on the child.**

**Choose the answer from the drop down box.**

### **Question 8**

Other children in the class think learners with ADHD are amusing.

Correct Answer: It depends on the child.

Feedback: Some children in the class will think it is funny when learners with ADHD call out, make funny faces and run around the room. Other children will not find it funny and want the teacher to control the situation.

### **Question 9**

Other children in the class think learners with ADHD are annoying.

Correct Answer: It depends on the child.

Feedback: Some children in the class will think it is very annoying when learners with ADHD disrupt the class and their games. Some children will find it amusing and some children will not care about it.

### **Question 10**

Other children in the class will copy the behaviour and reaction of the teacher to learners with ADHD.

Correct Answer: True

Feedback: The teacher is a role-model for learners. If the teacher shows that they do not think the behaviour is funny and tries to support the learner with ADHD to learn better, the other children in the class will notice this and learn the appropriate responses.

### **Key Words**

Select a word from the list below to match to each definition (1-9).

- executive functioning
- HIT
- PIT
- working memory
- internal voice
- hyperactivity
- DSM-IV
- Impulsivity
- CT

1. A category of ADHD which covers behaviours which are related to difficulties in paying attention appropriately.
2. A category of ADHD which covers behaviours which are related to hyperactivity and impulsivity. For example, the learner cannot sit still in class, cannot wait and acts very impulsively.
3. A category of ADHD which covers behaviours relating to inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity.

4. A term psychologists use to describe the many tasks our brains perform that are necessary to think, act, and solve problems.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Acting without thinking about the consequences.
8. Being over-active, restless and finding it difficult to sit still for any period of time.
9. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, 1994, used to define ADHD and other categories of special needs.

Feedback

1. PIT, 2. HIT, 3. CT, 4. executive functioning, 5. working memory, 6. internal voice, 7. impulsivity, 8. hyperactivity, 9. DSM-IV

## **Case study – Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**

**Read this case study of a learning situation.**

**Your colleague is having problems trying to help a learner in her class, Mark, who is eleven years old.**

**Read what she and her learner think about the situation, and help your colleague identify the problem areas.**

Mirek is eleven years old. He is having problems in his English class.

Mirek's teacher says:

*“Teaching Mirek gives me a headache. He is always walking around the class, picking up pens and other things from other pupils’ desks. He never pays attention and he’s always distracting*

*others in the class with his behaviour. He's like a spinning top which has been wound up and just can't stop. I am always having to tell him to sit down, sit still, stop messing about, focus on his own work. He waits his turn and is always calling out in class. He is not rude to me, but can't start any work on his own, always insisting I stand near him to help him. Other pupils in the class find his behaviour annoying. I want to help him but I don't know how."*

Mirek says:

*"I try really hard in English but the lessons are too long and I can't sit still, my body won't let me. I just have to get up and touch stuff, I don't even know how to stop myself. Sometimes we are allowed to walk around and sometimes we are not. That's confusing. Sometimes we have fun in English and shout out answers in a game and sometimes we are not allowed. Sometimes when I shout out I get into trouble. I don't think the teacher likes me because she always walks away from me when I need help. Other kids don't want to work with me."*

### **Can you help the teacher to identify the problem areas?**

Answer the questions below using bullet points and short sentences.

You will be assessed on the number of suitable suggestions that you make which will help your colleague. Make sure to include a practical suggestion for the teacher where possible.

**1. It would seem that Mirek's needs are not being met. What do you think Mirek's needs are? (4 or 5 bullet points)**

- Mirek needs to feel safe.
- He needs to feel the teacher likes him.
- He needs to move.
- He needs to develop relationships with his peers.

**2. What could the teacher do to meet Mirek's need to be safe?**

*(3 or 4 bullet points)*

- Check if Mirek knows what is expected from him.
- Use visuals to help his working memory

- Find time to talk to him personally about whatever worries him.
- If no time, provide some way for him to tell the teacher about his worries.

**3. Classroom management is part of keeping the learner safe. What could she do with her classroom management to help Mirek?**

*(4 or 5 bullet points)*

- Create a set of rules of behavior in class. Involve the students in the process.
- Help him with time management, e.g. use an egg-timer to show
- Not overload him with long or difficult tasks. Allow him to complete tasks in chunks.
- Sit him somewhere near her – for better eye contact + physical proximity + to eliminate other distractors

**4. What could the teacher do to help Mirek understand the rules better?**

*(3 or 4 bullet points)*

- Develop routines
- Use specific gestures/visuals to indicate a routine/rule of behavior.
- Model behavior of abidance by the rules herself

**5. What could the teacher do to help with Mirek's restlessness?**

*(4 or 5 bullet points)*

- Include kinesthetic activities in her lesson
- Avoid activities that take too long to complete.
- Allow him to stretch/move to ease his restlessness.
- Provide some extra activities that he finds involving, e.g. a vocabulary game on a computer, a picture crossword on paper, etc.

**6. What could the teacher do to help Mirek with relationships with his peers?**

*(2 or 3 bullet points)*

- Involve him in small-group activities
- Encourage students to help each other (in their small group and as a whole class)
- Model tolerance and respect for everyone herself
- Invite Mirek to demonstrate one/some of his special talents, e.g. physical dexterity or sketching, or break dancing

**7. What could the teacher do to let Mirek know she likes him?**

*(2 or 3 bullet points)*

- Identify his strengths and help them stand out. Show appreciation out loud.
- Notice and praise Marek's strengths, no matter if they are related to language learning
- Think of a simple way to signal appreciation (to communicate praise) and use it as often as possible, thus showing recognition of Mirek's step-by-step progress.
- Show readiness to communicate with him in person in or out of class.

**15887 characters without spaces = 13 pages**