



# Inclusive Practices & SEN

The newsletter of the Inclusive Practices and SEN Special Interest Group

## Issue 4 (2019)

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## Message from the co-ordinator

Welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of our newsletter. A lot has happened since edition 3, last year. We had a busy end to 2018, running events with the P.A.R.K. school in Brno (see the report on page 6) and the IATEFL Pronunciation SIG in London, as well as webinars from Božica Šarić-Cvjetković, Giovanni Licata and Fabio Filosofi. You can find more information about these on our website. We started 2019 by preparing for the IATEFL conference in Liverpool. Our Pre-Conference Event consisted of three innovative workshops based on music, drama and storytelling, which then were woven together into a performance by all the participants. This experiential learning was valuable in helping us to understand the role that creative arts can play in making our classrooms more inclusive. One of our workshop leaders, Matthew Evens, gave us an interview about his view of education, which you can find on page 25 of this edition.

During the conference, speakers in our SIG showcase day covered such diverse topics as LGBTQ issues, racial equity, working with displaced learners and applying inclusive practices to trainee teachers. I believe this shows how broad our remit is, and how committed we are to facilitating the implementation of inclusive practices within the language classroom, as well as in the wider EFL community.

After the conference, all the members of the acting committee stepped down to allow for the democratic process of electing a committee for the first time. Varinder Unlu, Carina Rutinger, Phil Dexter and Sharon Nosely did not stand again for a role, and we thank them for their contributions in the early days of the SIG, wishing them well in their future work.

We welcome Anna Pires as our new Newsletter Editor and Gianni Licata as a very welcome extra pair of hands on the committee. Rom Neves continues as Secretary, and Anette Igel as Events Co-ordinator, while Jana Jilkova has taken over as Treasurer and Rachael Harris is going to focus on Social Media. We are looking for a new Website Manager, so if you have ICT skills you would like to offer, please get in touch! I have the honour of trying to fill Varinder's shoes as Co-ordinator of the SIG, and I am looking forward to exciting times ahead. We have a number of new projects and collaborative events on the horizon. Do get in touch and let us know how you would like to be more involved in the activities of the SIG as we move forward.



Anne Margaret

## Message from the editorial team

The name of our SIG, 'Inclusive Practices and SEN', reflects our conviction that the language classroom should be a place where – first and foremost – every student feels they belong, whatever their individual personal characteristics, learner profile, linguistic repertoire, or previous educational experiences.

This conviction is apparent, we believe, in this latest edition of our newsletter which has a special focus on the use of multisensory activities as a way of reaching all our learners, and encouraging participation and co-operation in the group. This idea of harnessing students' creativity in teaching and learning has been a familiar strand in various events we have organised, including our 2019 IATEFL Pre-conference event in Liverpool. Articles concerning well-being as well as those devoted to creative arts (poetry, music, etc) reflect our mission to create a learning environment in which each and every student feels comfortable, and motivated to fulfil their potential.

We are glad to be able to include not only articles such as Sophie Farag's account of a teacher's experience of students with SEND, but also an article from a teacher diagnosed with ADHD, and we would welcome more articles from teachers concerning their personal experiences in the classroom and the staffroom, as well as their students'.

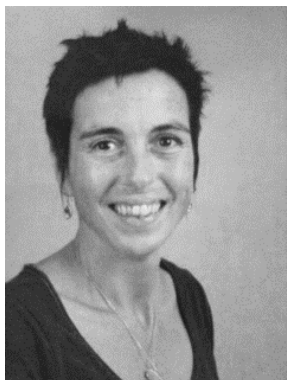
This edition's popular 'tips and resources' section focuses on multisensory approaches to teaching, as well as suggestions for further reading. A new feature in this edition, is a cut-out-and-display section to enable you to easily share some ideas with your colleagues.

Finally, a word concerning the changes in the IATEFL IP&SEN SIG committee. As Anne Margaret noted, elections held shortly before publication of this edition have brought about some changes, and we would also like to take this opportunity to thank some of the original committee members who, despite their engagement with our cause, will be moving on to promote Inclusion in other ways: Carina Rutinger, Sharon Nosely, Phil Dexter, and especially our joint founder and first co-ordinator, Varinder Unlu.

The editorial team.

## Meet the team!

*In this edition we meet Rom Neves and Rachael Harris, who have been in the committee since the early days of the SIG.*



### **1. Who are you and where are you based?**

I'm the SIG's Social Media Co-ordinator. I live in France and work just over the border in Geneva, Switzerland.

### **2. What do you do for a living?**

I teach English as a modern foreign language to upper primary and middle school pupils in a secondary school in Geneva.

### **3. Why did you become involved in IP&SEN SIG?**

I have been following developments since signing a petition for the creation of this SIG at the IATEFL conference a few years ago and I was very excited to be asked to join the acting committee after presenting a forum on SpLD with Anne Margaret Smith at the IATEFL conference 2016 in Birmingham.

### **4. What do you see as the role of the SIG?**

For me, the main role of the SIG is to diffuse information and resources to enable teachers to use inclusive practices in their classrooms and therefore provide the best possible language teaching for all students.

### **5. What do you hope to bring to the SIG?**

I hope to bring my enthusiasm for teaching and learning as well as a healthy relationship with social media to spread the word. I enjoy meeting and connecting with new people and hope to bring loads of new members to the SIG!

### **6. Do you have any other "hats" you'd like to tell us about?**

As Anne Margaret mentioned in a previous edition, I have a nice warm hat for running in cold weather and I'm involved in the organisation of our village race. I'm also Young Learner and Teens SIG coordinator for ETAS – the Swiss association of English teachers, and their Geneva regional coordinator, and I give various workshops at conferences in Switzerland and abroad.

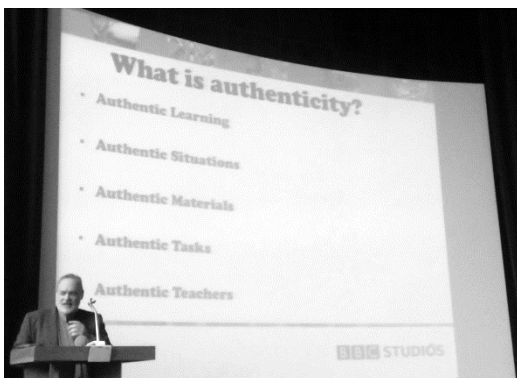
## **P.A.R.K conference: an event worth taking part in.** **By Agnieszka Dzieciol-Pędich PhD**

The 23rd P.A.R.K Conference was held on 10 November in Brno in the Czech Republic. For the first time the co-organizer of event was the IATEFL *Inclusive Practices & SEN* Special Interest Group, whose aim is to facilitate the dissemination and exchange of information, resources, and experiences related to developing inclusive practices in the ELT classroom.

The theme of the conference was *Reaching Out and Unlocking Creativity* and the *Inclusive Practices & SEN* Special Interest Group had a strand of four workshops on musical activities, multiple intelligences, poetry, and story books, as well as the closing plenary under the same title.

The remaining sessions were divided into the following strands: *Inspiring your learners; Games and Technology; Development, Feedback and Testing; Language: Vocabulary, Grammar and Skills*. The seminars and workshops were presented by highly-experienced and internationally-recognised teacher trainers, including keynotes by Daniela Clarke, Mark Andrews and Sabina Pazderová. The seminars and workshops were arranged in three rounds of 12 simultaneous sessions - many of which were presented twice.

The conference started with a plenary titled '*How do we bring authenticity to a world full of screenagers?*' by Phil Warwick. Opening his plenary, Phil observed that contemporary teenagers, who spend more and more time in the virtual world, cannot be challenged with 20<sup>th</sup> century approaches to English language teaching. He then moved on to discuss how to define and bring to life authenticity to make language lessons more relevant to teenage digital residents.

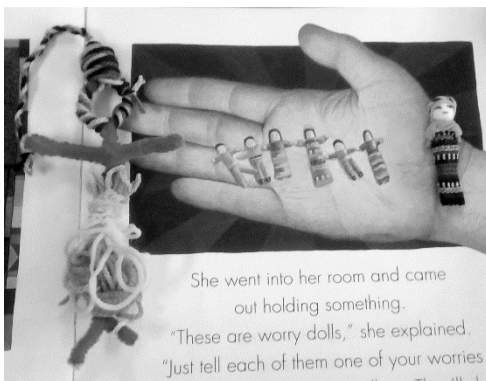


### Phil Warrick's plenary

During his plenary Phil also pointed to the changing role of language educators by contemplating whether a contemporary teacher should be "a sage on the stage or a guide on the side".

Anne Margaret Smith's workshop '*Using musical activities to reach out*' was one of the 12 early morning sessions. Anne Margaret showed participants how musical activities which use rhythm, rhyme and melody can develop listening, pronunciation and memory strategies in students with specific learning differences (SpLDs).

In her workshop '*Storybooks as a gateway to inclusive education*', Lucie Podroužková first showed the participants how they could use their breath to relax: teachers were asked to read a poem *Twistable, Turnable Man* by Shel Silverstein in one breath and a few moments later the room was roaring with laughter. Lucie then presented how to use story books to talk with language learners about such difficult emotions as, for instance, worries.

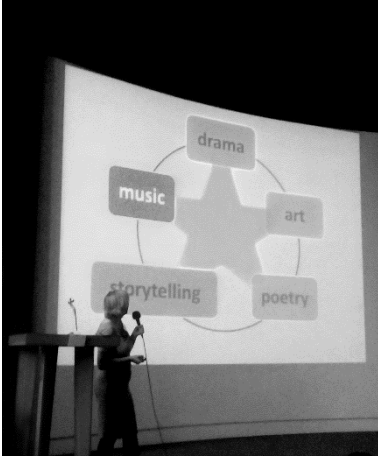


On the left is a worry doll made by the author of the article and on the right the original worry doll brought by Lucie Podroužková

Apart from poetry, story books and laughter, the workshop also contained intercultural elements. Lucie brought with her a worry doll from Guatemala and asked the teachers to make their own worry dolls – confidantes to their professional and personal vexations. While making worry dolls teachers listened to a positive song (e.g. *Don't worry, be Happy*) and discussed the benefits of arts and crafts in an inclusive language classroom.

In the afternoon teachers could listen, among others, to Alexis Roditis who defined during his workshop what gamification is and how to use it to make young teenagers more involved in language learning. He also demonstrated software and platforms which facilitate the implementation of gamification in language classrooms.

The closing plenary '*Reaching out, unlocking creativity*' was delivered by Anne Margaret Smith. At the beginning of her talk, Anne Margaret stressed learners with SpLDs may find the linear nature of an English course difficult to cope with. She further observed that learners with SpLDs have a more dominant right brain hemisphere, which is responsible for imagination, and added that language teachers could unlock the potential of students with specific learning differences who are harder to reach by tapping into their natural creativity. She reminded teachers how important self-awareness and good self-esteem are in learners with SpLDs for effective language learning.



**Anne Margaret Smith's plenary**  
During the closing session, Anne Margaret encouraged teachers to use multisensory activities, such as those making use of music, drama, art, poetry, and storytelling, to create a truly inclusive classroom. At the end of her plenary she reminded us that when learners enjoy learning, and experience success, they feel more motivated.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> P.A.R.K Conference was an undisputed success. More than 400 primary and secondary school teachers attended this one-day event to refresh and extend their professional knowledge in a practical way. The co-operation with *Inclusive Practices & SEN* Special Interest Group demystified working with SpLDs learners and helped teachers deepen their understanding of inclusive classrooms.

During coffee breaks conference participants could buy a variety of both fiction and non-fiction English books, textbooks, and methodology books (both new and used), win one of the great raffle prizes, or talk to conference partners. In the late afternoon the participants had a chance to meet the speakers at the after-conference party.

Let's hope that the 27<sup>th</sup> P.A.R.K Conference will be equally popular and successful as this year's event.



**Agnieszka Dzieciol-Pedich PhD**, works as a teacher of English in the Foreign Languages Teaching Unit at the University of Białystok. Her research interests include the development of the Communicative Approach and its implementation in different cultures around the world, intercultural competence, teaching English for Specific Purposes, professional development, and special educational needs. In her free time she is a voracious reader of science-fiction and fantasy literature.



## **Reflections on teaching a student on the autism spectrum**

### **By Sophie Farag**

I teach at the American University in Cairo (AUC) which prides itself on its ability to accommodate students with special needs. This is still not very widespread in Egypt, so the university attracts students who might otherwise not be able to go to university in this country, and if they did, they would face many challenges. I have taught students with different special needs over the last few years, including dyslexia, speech impediment, hearing loss, and visual impairment, but this semester was the first time the university accepted a student on the autism spectrum.

Aly (not his real name) was accepted at the university without the need for a special committee, which means he got the required SAT and language placement scores for acceptance at AUC. Sometimes, students with special needs go through a committee if their entrance scores fall a little short of the required acceptance scores, but Aly did not need this. His English placement scores placed him in the upper intermediate class of the Intensive English Program (IEP), and three teachers were selected to teach this class, one of them being me.

Aly is very good in mathematics, as evidenced by his SAT scores, and he came to AUC with the hope of majoring in this field. However, he first had to pass the IEP in order to take his content courses. Students in the IEP attend five classes of English four days a week. The program focuses on teaching reading, academic writing, reflection, listening, research and presentation skills, and digital literacy.

In the meeting we had before the semester began, the teachers of Aly's class were given some background information about his case. He was diagnosed as having traits of autism, and he did not speak. In school, his mother was always present to support him, and although he had a twin brother who was in the same class, his mother had attended classes with him throughout his school years. During his last few months at school, his mother had been able to leave the class and wait for him outside, but he always had to be able to see her through the window.

Although his twin brother was attending a different university, his mother would continue to be his attendant at AUC and would be in class with him, and it was hoped that after a few weeks she would be able to leave the class as she had done in school. The class size would need to remain small to give the teachers a better chance to accommodate Aly. He would be given double time on assignments and exams, and he would be exempted from all speaking tasks as he was non-verbal.

It took Aly a few weeks to settle in class, which had 13 other students. At first, he often got upset during class and displayed frustration through physical gestures, and his mother had to take him outside for a walk until he calmed down. It became clear that he depended greatly on his mother for emotional support. He constantly looked at her and reached out to touch her hand as a way of reassurance. She interacted with him throughout the lessons and gave him encouragement and guidance about what to do, such as to get out his book, to write down the answer, etc.

Aly's motor skills were weak, and it took him a very long time to write down a word; his writing was very large and could be difficult to read. He preferred short answer or multiple choice questions, and he had difficulty developing his ideas in writing. I suggested to his mother that Aly receive training in using computers, as typing will be an essential skill at university. I thought it may be quicker for him to type, once he had got used to it, than it would be for him to write. I met with Aly a few times after classes to give him one-on-one training in using a computer, and it became apparent that he much preferred to write with paper and pencil. He resisted using a computer and was very slow in finding the letters on the keyboard. Opening a browser and typing in a password also appeared to be a very difficult task. His mother did try hard to give Aly practice in typing, and she insisted that he type his homework assignments although he found it time consuming.

Since Aly didn't speak, it was challenging for us as teachers to know what he was feeling and thinking. We tried giving him cards to hold up to indicate "Yes" or "No", and messages like "I need a break", or "Could you repeat that?". However, Aly would not use them, and he would sometimes write his response on a piece of paper. In class discussions, he would participate by writing the answer to a question, and the teacher would read out his answer to the class. We often discussed his behavior and reactions with his mother in an attempt to better understand his needs, but she often didn't seem to know what triggered certain reactions either.

I taught the listening and speaking class, in which all speaking tasks were assigned as written tasks for Aly. He rarely made eye contact with anyone else, but he did seem to enjoy working next to his classmates. When given the choice to work alone or with others, he often chose to work with a group. The students adapted remarkably well to having Aly in class, accepted his behavior, and were always very willing to include him by giving him a role in group activities and incorporating his work into the final product. This was sometimes a little awkward as they couldn't always read his handwriting, and they couldn't discuss content with him, but overall I think he felt included.

At the end of the semester, Aly's exam results were very good. He was placed in the next program, Academic English for the Liberal Arts, skipping the advanced level of the IEP. This is a great accomplishment, and we are all delighted with his progress. Next semester, in addition to his English course, he will be able to take two content courses, and I'm sure he looks forward to taking mathematics as one of his subjects. He still needs to work on his writing and computer skills, and each new semester will bring its own challenges.

His mother has made it her life purpose to support her son, and without her he would not have gotten this far. It remains to be seen whether he will ever settle in class without the presence of his mother, whether she will be able to support him once he starts taking more advanced courses, and whether he will be able to cope with the stresses of university life. He will continue to need support from his teachers and classmates, and he will need to continue to work very hard. We must take it step by step, celebrate each small accomplishment, and maintain belief that he can make it. Only then will he have a chance at success.



**Sophie Farag** is a Senior Instructor II in the Department of English Language Instruction (ELI) at the American University in Cairo (AUC). She has experience as a teacher, mentor, and academic administrator. Her interests include inclusive practices and using technology in the classroom.



## Contribute to the IATEFL Wider Membership Scheme

The Wider Membership Scheme (WMS) helps the international ELT community reach out to teachers in parts of the world who need additional financial support by subsidising their membership of IATEFL and, in so doing, opening up a world of professional development, support and networking opportunities they would not otherwise have.

**To donate to this scheme visit: [members.iatefl.org/donate](https://members.iatefl.org/donate)**

# 2019 – 2020 ‘mini-campaigns’



This year we intend to explore some of the key issues within inclusive teaching practices, through a series of ‘mini-campaigns’ that will run for 2 months each.

During these campaigns we will run **several online events** to open up the discussion with all our members, and beyond the SIG, too.

Look out for dates of the events on our website and social media platforms.

## **September – October 2019: The welcoming language classroom**

Most teachers would agree that things go better when their group ‘gels’ quickly and have good working relationships. As teachers, we are responsible for nurturing this inclusive, collaborative culture, but group dynamics change over time, with the start of a new term or school year, and especially with the arrival of new students. It is important that both new arrivals and continuing students feel a sense of belonging in the classroom as soon as possible, so that they can concentrate on learning.

In this ‘mini-campaign’ running throughout September and October 2019, we want to explore these issues, to find out how you manage the start of a new course, or the arrival of new students.

- What tips and activities could you share with us, that help to make your classroom more cohesive and collaborative?
- How do you tackle issues around exclusion (or even bullying) when a new student does not seem to ‘fit’ with the rest of the group?
- How does your school support you with this?

## **November – December 2019: It’s not just Christmas!**

At this time of year, in many parts of the world, Christmas seems to be taking over, but do our students even celebrate it? Every culture and nationality has its own festivals and celebrations, and by bringing them into our classrooms we embrace the customs and identities of a wider section of our school community. In this way, we create a more inclusive space by enabling everyone to learn more about each other.

Some teachers may feel uncomfortable ‘teaching’ about events outside their own traditions, beliefs and experiences, and we will be taking time during this campaign to address these worries by looking at resources and ways of sharing a range of holiday/festival experiences in the classroom.

## **January – February 2020: Joined up inclusion: from classroom to staffroom**

We often focus on the student experience in our own classrooms – after all, as teachers that is our main priority and responsibility. However, it doesn’t matter how inclusive our classrooms are, if the rest of our school or college does not reflect that ethos. Implementing inclusive practices is a process that cannot be sustained from the bottom up. There must be leadership from management to ensure that all members of the school community enjoy the same levels of respect, and experience that sense of belonging to which we all aspire. During these months we will be exploring issues such as:

- How do we get all our colleagues on board?
- How do we persuade management to support our inclusive initiatives?

## **March – April 2020:**

## **To be discussed**

## 5 case studies

By Yvert de Souza

At the EnglishUK Academic Conference in January 2019, during the workshop on 'Supporting students with learning differences', participants were put into groups and asked to discuss 5 different case studies. Take a look at these case studies and think about what you might do in these situations:

### **Case Study One:**

You have a student with Asperger's Syndrome who does not like change. He has his classes in the same room and always sits in the same place. Next month he is taking an exam and he will need to do it in another room. What could you do to help?

### **Case Study Two:**

You have a student who is severely visually impaired. The student has a scribe to help her during the lesson but she is often not able to do the homework as she does not have anyone to help her. How can you make homework exercises/activities more accessible?

### **Case Study Three:**

You have a student with quite a severe stammer. The student is preparing for a Trinity GESE speaking exam. You know the stress of the exam is very likely to make the stammer worse. What could you do to help the student?

### **Case Study Four:**

You have a student with a hearing impairment. She can lip-read but because she is lipreading in her second language, she sometimes misunderstands or gets lost. What could you do to help?

### **Case Study Five:**

You have a student who always arrives early to class and always sits in the same place. However, in the last lesson she arrived late and someone was sitting in her seat. She got very angry and after a couple of minutes you managed to calm her down and get her to sit somewhere else. For the rest of the lesson the student did not copy anything you had written on the board, which is very uncharacteristic of her, and she struggled with all the activities in that lesson. What might be the cause of her behaviour and what would you do to confirm whether you are right?

**Now read the commentaries, to see what the participants in the session had to say.**

**Two groups discussed each of the case studies and the key points that were raised have been summarised below:**

**Commentary for Case Study One:**

Both groups concurred that making the student as comfortable as possible was their main goal. To do this, they felt it was important to communicate with the student what was going to happen. The student needs to know when and where the exam will take place and if possible, where they are going to sit in that room when they take the exam.

The groups also agreed that, if possible, it would be a good idea to take the student to the room where they will be sitting the exam. Ideally, the first time could be done with the whole class so that the student does not feel he/she is being treated differently.

Although it is a good idea not to make students feel they are being treated differently, one group still felt that the teacher should speak to the student again to see if he/she would like to return to the room so that they can start getting used to the room.

**Commentary for Case Study Two:**

The first group considered how homework tasks could be recorded and how the learner could audio-record their answers rather than write them. They felt that although it would be impossible to avoid reading tasks completely, they would try to have a variety of different activities incorporating video and audio resources. They discussed how Youtube, TED talks and many other freely accessible video clips could be used. Although many of these are quite factual, extracts from audio books could also be used so that there is a mix of factual and fictional listening comprehensions. As for the students making audio recordings of their answers, two suggestions were discussed – using the voice recorder facility on mobile phones and/or using free online sites such as 'Audioboo'. Students could make their recordings and send them to the teacher for correction or even to another student for peer correction.

A member of the second group had been in this situation before and he explained what he did. In fact, he did not need to do a great deal as the student had quite a lot of software which enabled them to hear and type texts. The software for writing their homework was similar to the commercially available 'Dragon Naturally Speaking' but was a more advanced version designed specifically for visually impaired users. The software for reading audio texts was slightly less sophisticated and only allowed Word documents to be read aloud. However, the groups came up with ways to tackle this such as using online conversion websites to convert PDFs to Word documents.

**Commentary for Case Study Three:**

One group's discussion was based around some of the activities they saw in the film *The King's Speech*. They discussed using breathing activities and singing as a way to help the student. They also said if they had an additional learning support department, they would seek advice from them to see what other exercises the student could do.

The other group approached this differently. Their focus was more on how they could make the student comfortable and how the examining board could help with this. Ideas that came up included: asking the examiner to say hello, introduce themselves and have a brief chat with all the students before the exam\*; requesting extra time, which is something most boards will do if given sufficient notice and accompanied with the correct documentation.

\*This practice is already encouraged by boards such as Trinity College London.

**Commentary for Case Study Four:**

The two groups came up with very similar ideas. They raised some very important points such as making it as easy as possible for the student to be able to see the teacher clearly and without any distractions. Ways to do this included not talking and demonstrating at the same time and ensuring you position yourself in a clearly lit part of the room but in a place where there is not a window directly behind you as this can be distracting. Although these suggestions may help minimise the number of times the student struggles to follow the lesson, they will not stop the need for help completely. Groups then went on to discuss ways in which the student could get help when needed.

One idea to help the student attract your attention was to use the traffic light system. This can be done with either cards or plastic cups. If students are OK and not having any problems they put the card with the green side facing up or have the green cup showing on the table. If they need some help, they have the red card or cup showing. This is better than having students putting their hands up when they have a problem as they can indicate they need help while still continuing with their work. This idea is great for all classes. You do not need to have a student with a hearing impairment to use this or the next suggestion, which groups also put forward.

If the student feels they are the only person who has not understood, they might not want to use the red card/cup. However, giving all students the option to write down any questions or queries they might have on a post-it, which they can give to the teacher later in the lesson, might help in some situations. Of course, it will not work if what they do not understand stops them from moving on but it can help when it does not.

Also, if the point which they did not understand becomes clear as the lesson progresses, they no longer need to give their post-it note to the teacher. Other ideas included having instructions written on the board and on worksheets. This is simply good practice which would again benefit every student.

**Commentary for Case Study Five:**

This was the most difficult of the case studies and there was some uncertainty as to why the student was behaving in this way. Asperger's Syndrome was the first idea that came to many people's minds; however, there were other suggestions such as a possible visual or hearing impairment necessitating the need to sit in a specific part of the room. In fact, a couple of people in the room had encountered similar situations to this including the presenter, who had a trainee teacher with Irlen's Syndrome who needed to sit in a certain place in order to see the board. As for confirming if you are right, the two groups agreed it would be best to ask the student if there was a reason why they wanted to sit in that particular place. The fact that the student chose not to disclose any difficulties they might have, could simply mean that they do not want to tell their teacher. However, the teacher should still ask them and do their best to ensure the student sits in a place where they are comfortable even if they have not disclosed anything.

The key messages that came up during the plenary were:

- make the most of the specialists and websites available for tips and advice; however, do not forget to ask the individual student what works best for them.
- take into consideration the other students in the class and try to create a learning environment which benefits all your students.
- remember: supporting your learners is probably not going to require you to put in a huge amount of extra effort, as much of what you probably already do is good practice.



**Yvert de Souza** is an experienced teacher trainer and materials writer, who has been involved in education for over 25 years. He has taught in a variety of sectors including the private sector, FE and HE both in the UK and abroad.



## **Accommodating students with ADHD**

### **by a Teacher with ADHD: Marc Jones**

The number of people worldwide living with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is estimated to be approximately 7.2% (Thomas et al, 2015) and the number of adults living with the condition approximately 3.4% (Fayyad et al, 2018). This means that in our classrooms, we definitely have students with ADHD. The problem for teachers is that such students may not disclose their condition, or may not even know about or understand their condition. For many outside the community, knowledge of ADHD may be more limited.

Foreign language learning anxiety can be an issue in the EFL classroom for neurotypical people and has been well-documented (Scovel, 1978; Horwitz & Horwitz, 1986; Horwitz, E.K. 2001), yet most of the research about learning for students with ADHD has been focussed on general education rather than the EFL classroom (Gureasko-Moore, et al. 2006). It is my opinion that general education research is useful but insufficient due to the unique challenges posed by learning a foreign language for those students with ADHD.

In this article, I intend to provide some understanding of people living with ADHD and discuss classroom interventions that may be useful. However, prior to these interventions, it must be noted that the ADHD community itself is diverse and what may work for one person may not work for another.

The label 'Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder' leads many to misunderstand the role that attention plays in this condition. For some people living with ADHD, teachers or colleagues may assume there is a lack of attention; however, it is more appropriate to describe this as a lack of prolonged attention or attention directed in the wrong place in a given situation. This may look like laziness or disengagement in the classroom, but it is actually a lack of self-regulation. In addition, some students may disengage from a task due to a state of hyper-focus, which may result in them working intently on a task that is only of interest to them. Other students may be challenged to maintain attention, due to the presence of other stimuli, such as projectors left on when not in use, or even brightly coloured nail varnish.

This can also be compounded by attention-intensive activities in the classroom such as listening and reading, where language needs to be processed in the working memory (Baddeley, 1992).

One way to reduce these diversions can be as simple as a quick, discreet word of encouragement to keep learners on-task if they are off-task. Additionally, halfway through any particularly long task, checking on the state of the task and asking how long learners need to complete the task, may be useful not only for learners with ADHD but also other learners in the classroom.

Another useful tip is that for those activities that require a lot of language processing, it is useful to break them down. If you have a five-minute listening text, this could be broken down into, for example, five one-minute sections. Likewise, short breaks could be given after reading short paragraphs. A break allows time to process the information and makes things easier to remember and write down or talk about as a post-task activity. This strategy may be tweaked as learners become more proficient in their listening or reading.

People with ADHD do try to please others. One theory is that we have so many experiences of disappointing others that we try to avoid this negative experience by overcompensating. We tend to try to avoid overstimulation and to avoid misdirected attention, but it is difficult and can lead to fatigue due to the high cognitive load. This can lead to emotional dysfunction, or a tendency to overreact, particularly to negativity. It can also lead to impulsivity, leading to a lack of self-control which may result in particularly tactless ways of communicating, due to our need for an immediate reaction.

You cannot alleviate such behaviour and natural reactions constantly, but it might be useful to change to a less cognitively challenging activity or an activity less likely to cause overstimulation to reduce the chances of learners feeling overstimulated. A personal favourite of mine is to reflect on task achievement and whether a different approach might be more useful in further attempts at similar tasks. It is also good to remember that an over-reaction to negativity may not be about you or anything that happened in the class. It may be the case that your student is still focussed on something entirely unrelated to the lesson, which is the main negative stimulus. Sometimes a short break is all that is needed.

Not only do we try to please others, but we also try to fulfil our own needs by finding interesting, novel rewards. Unfortunately, we are de-motivated by difficulties that may not be easily overcome which can result in us blowing hot and cold over a range of task or indeed interests and hobbies. This may reduce our ability to accept the learning curve and move to an advanced level. This is particularly true of languages, which means that success in proficiently using grammar and vocabulary, which is easy to perceive at lower

proficiency levels, is no longer keeping those of us with ADHD engaged in the language at the intermediate plateau.

This is where language needs to be less of a goal in itself and more of a medium for doing other activities that are intrinsically interesting or motivating. Some people with ADHD hate reading books while others love it; some of us have problems processing spoken language at long stretches (even in our first language) and for others it is no problem. You may need to spend some time discussing ways in which your students can use English for their own means. In my own language learning I have read music magazines in German as a teenager, and lately have read Japanese articles about running and photography. It depends on the individual, but they will need something that is rewarding which may change after a matter of weeks or months.

'Time blindness' is a huge problem for people with ADHD and estimating how long a task will take or how long we have spent on a task can be very difficult. Given that education can involve a lot of deadlines, it is likely that procrastination will occur. People with ADHD tend to move towards chronic procrastination, even if we love a course, the mundane or unenjoyable parts of it are likely to be put off until the last possible moment, or for some of us, beyond deadlines.

To encourage time management, pre-deadlines are a useful way of getting all students to work steadily. If possible, break down tasks and provide sub-deadlines for students with ADHD. This can also lead to feeling rewarded by crossing off those sub-deadlines from a to-do list.

We also lose and forget things quite often. I had lost property offices in my most frequently dialled telephone numbers before I was prescribed medication. The sudden need to do a forgotten task or find a lost item can overwhelm any other appointment or plan. As a consequence, this preoccupation may lead to a slight panic state and 'blinds' any conception of real time.

One practical action that has worked for me was a recommendation in Barkley (2010) to carry a small notebook everywhere and keep it about your person. Encourage your students to write down everything they need to remember and to consult it frequently, most likely at least hourly. Losing the notebook can be a big worry as well, so taking photos of it can ensure that the notebook is backed up in the cloud as well.

## Conclusion

While the number of people living with ADHD means that it is inevitable that teachers encounter learners with the condition, it is far from inevitable that this need cause problems in the classroom. Simple, discreet interventions, which may also benefit neurotypical learners by easing cognitive load, can allow learners living with ADHD to gain more positive experiences while learning a language.



**Marc Jones** is a teacher at Tokyo Kasei University in the Intensive English Programme. He was diagnosed with ADHD at 38 years old and has given assistance to a university department to provide assistance to a learner with the condition. His academic interests are L2 listening, task-based language teaching and corpus linguistics. He blogs at [getgreatenglish.com/ftsd](http://getgreatenglish.com/ftsd). [marc@getgreatenglish.com](mailto:marc@getgreatenglish.com)

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## **Mindful classroom management**

**By Rachael Roberts.**

A classic definition of mindfulness, by the mindfulness expert, Jon Kabat-Zinn is:

*"paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally."*

This could also be an excellent definition of what makes a successful teacher (who may well be judging what the student knows and has yet to learn, but not the student themselves.)

A good teacher seems to have an almost extra-sensory perception of what is happening for each student in the class. They can sense not just when a student is confused or off-task, but even the moment *before* they are about to go off-task. This ability is sometimes referred to as 'with-it-ness', a term coined by the educationalist, Jacob Kounin (1977). Through observing many different classes, Kounin came to the conclusion that the most effective teachers were able to pick up on quite subtle changes in their students' emotions and behaviour and respond quickly and effectively.

More recently, Robert Marzano (2003) wrote a summary of more than 100 experiments designed to find out which classroom management techniques caused the biggest decrease in disruptions. He looked at explaining and negotiating rules, relationships between teachers and students, rewards and punishments and what he called 'mental set'. This last was a combination of awareness, or with-it-ness, and a conscious control over how the teacher responded to a disruption. He found that, by quite some margin, mental set had the biggest positive effect, reducing the number of disruptions by 40%.

What Kounin refers to as 'with-it-ness' and Marzano as 'mental set' could equally well be called mindful awareness, meaning that a more mindful teacher can expect a considerably less disruptive classroom, and by extension, his or her students can expect to do better overall.

The opposite of mindfulness is a kind of sleepwalking where we're not really awake to what is happening, because we're pre-occupied with other concerns. Sometimes we set ourselves up for classroom management problems by sleepwalking our way through the planning process. (This is understandable when many of us are planning at 9pm the night before!). But it is important, I think, to be mindful about certain key aspects of planning:

### **1. How are you going to group the students?**

Are there students that you think would work better (not) in particular groups? Think about how to re-arrange them quickly and easily.

### **2. What are you going to do to grab the students' attention right from the start?**

### **3. What will you do about early finishers?**

Will you stop everyone once the first few have finished, or do you have some extra activities up your sleeve? (These can be simple variations on the task, rather than having to plan lots of extra things to do)

### **4. If you have any complicated, multi-step activities, think about how you are going to set them up in advance.**

Once you are teaching the lesson, you also need to stay 'awake'. Good teachers (or at least teachers that don't have chaotic stressful classes) are, as Kounin found, fully conscious and aware of what is going on in all corners of the classroom. As soon as you sense that some students are starting to lose concentration (perhaps the noise level is starting to rise), you need to change something. You might, for example, move on to the next activity if appropriate, or change partners, or get students to compare their answers.

You also need to be awake to what is going on inside you. Mindfulness traditions sometimes talk about the 'monkey mind'. This is the part of our mind which chatters away non-stop. Try to notice and catch yourself when you start thinking about what to cook for dinner, or what the head teacher said to you before the lesson, or how worried you are that the students aren't learning anything/are finding it boring etc. You don't need to try and get the monkey to shut up (it won't), but just notice it and detach from it so that you can focus on what is happening in your class right now.

This is particularly important when a student does or says something that upsets you, and you start to feel angry or panicked. Our first instinct is probably to go with the emotion, and start shouting, or throw the student out of class. But if a student makes us angry, it has to be because what they are saying or doing is hooking into something deep down inside ourselves. For example, that we aren't good enough.

Some incidents of misbehaviour will just make us roll our eyes, or even laugh (inwardly), while others will really upset us. And even quite serious misbehaviour won't necessarily make us angry, though we might well respond with a punishment. But when our emotions are triggered, that's a

clear sign that this is setting off something negative that we believe about ourselves. Once you've recognised that, it's easier to let the emotion go, and deal with the situation rationally and mindfully. You don't have a choice about what emotions you feel, they just happen, like sneezing or blushing, but you do have a choice about what you do or say when you feel an emotion.

Reams have been written about classroom management, and good tips are always useful, but the very best overall advice we can all take, I think, is to 'wake up' and be more mindful in the classroom.



*Since 1989 **Rachael Roberts** has worked in Portugal, Brazil and the UK as a teacher, teacher trainer and materials writer. She is also a qualified personal development coach. In her free time she enjoys language learning, meditation and mindfulness and walking her small fluffy dog, Teddy.*

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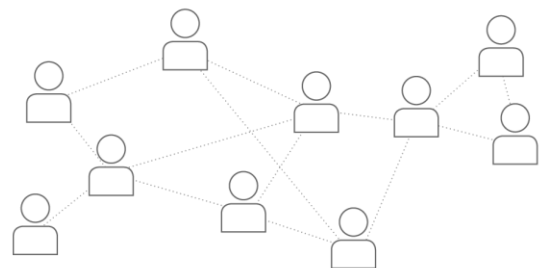
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## **An interview with Matthew Evens**

**By Anne Margaret Smith**

**Apart from being Head of Music in a secondary school, you've worked in quite a lot of different settings. Tell us a bit about what you do in those different contexts.**

Since leaving mainstream education, I've worked in Pupil Referral Units, schools for autistic students and schools for Deaf students, mainly teaching Maths and English. I work with some students 1:1 but mostly I've been teaching students in smaller classes than you find in mainstream.

Choirs just appeared in front of me, especially in Special Needs schools, as the desire to sing is huge and if you pick the right songs the work is done for you. But I also use music very much as a tool in the classroom, to help memory, and for fun. One day, when asked to teach Health and Safety, I decided to write a song with a class of students with concentration, speech and writing problems. When one student offered "Health and Safety, it's a piece of cake" the chorus was nearly written as we finished it with "If you follow the rules, you won't make mistakes". After that the verses wrote themselves.

**How and why did you get involved in this area of education? What do you like about it, and what are the challenges?**

When my school was taken over by an Academy\* I decided to take a break from mainstream, work as a supply teacher and see where the adventure took me.

I've liked everything about the schools I worked in. I like the fact that character-based learning, rather than data, is the most important thing. I like the way that in these schools the staff in support and pastoral roles are equally respected as the class teachers, and this really came to the fore in looking after students with challenging situations or backgrounds. Most importantly though, I like the thirst for education from the students. They wouldn't tell you they want to learn, but you can see that when you push them the hardest, they are the most proud of themselves.

The main challenges the students face are physical and mental barriers, making retention of information hard. For teachers the main challenge is getting the class to work as a team, despite the huge range of barriers to learning within the group.

\*In the UK, some schools have opted out of local council control, and get money directly from the government. These 'Academies' are often sponsored by business or faith groups.



**There are a lot of overlaps between music and language. Can you explain what the elements of music are and how they connect to language?**

Yes there are. In no particular order: the **rhythm** (patterns of notes) of the words we use in language help express the statement we are making; the **tempo** (speed) at which we speak can help or hinder our understanding. The **timbre** (sound) of our voice can express different meanings using the same words! The **dynamics** (loud/quiet) we use in our voice can offer a sense of urgency or calm. I could go on, but just imagine one short sentence and all the different situations you may say it in. The possibilities are endless, and it is so important when learning a new language to understand the emphasis you make and where you make it.

**What do you think are the main benefits of using music in the classroom? Do you have any advice about how we can use music to teach language?**

I think the main benefit is the non-confrontational situations music can bring about. For example, if you use a piece of music as a timer for an activity, the student learns to manage their own time without pressure from the teacher. Equally, if you use a piece of music to focus students on a task, they will usually settle well and interact with the task and not with each other. When you start to use music skills in the classroom then things can really take off. If students need to learn some boring facts, turn them into a silly song and the muscle memory from singing it will help the students remember the facts. This works similarly with pronouncing words or phrases, if students are struggling, sing the word or phrase instead and the students will begin to achieve.

**You are also a language learner. Do you ever draw on your musical skills to help you learn?**

Yes I do! I use the same skills I would use with my students. I am constantly using musical ideas to help me pronounce phrases and remember irregular verbs. This isn't a conscious thought, it just happens. If you can sing "Frere Jacques" properly, then you are speaking fluent French, even if you haven't a clue what you are saying. So it definitely helps with pronunciation and phrasing.

## **What does the term “inclusive education” mean for you?**

That’s a tricky question! I believe it’s about trying to create frameworks for students to succeed – finding ways for them all to move on, with activities that are simple enough for them all to do but interesting enough to keep them all interested.

## **Do you have any practical tips for teachers, teacher trainers and other educators who would like to work more inclusively?**

I think we need to take a holistic approach to resources in classroom – and students are one of the most important resources we have. When we know about the lives of our individual students outside of class, we can draw on individuals’ experiences and make that part of the activity, highlighting skills that they have outside of class. That’s really motivating for that student and for the others in the class. It allows individuals to learn from each other, and understand that the differences they have bring a different perspective to the classroom environment.

**Matthew Evens** is a freelance Musical Facilitator based in Bradford, UK. He’s a qualified music teacher and was Head of Music at a Performing Arts School in Leeds for 4 years. Since then he’s had 10 years’ experience of working with students who have a range of sensory, emotional, behavioural and cognitive challenges to overcome. Matthew has 30 years experience of performing and writing music in many different genres and has performed at Glastonbury, Womad and the Isle of Wight festivals. He is the co-author of ‘Language Learning and Musical Activities’. [info@matthwevensmusic.com](mailto:info@matthwevensmusic.com)



## Terminology & top tips: multisensory teaching

By Anne Margaret Smith

*This regular section provides a brief explanation of some of the terminology used in the field of Inclusive Practices and Special Educational Needs. If you have a term you would like us to look into then please contact us at [ipsensig@iatefl.org](mailto:ipsensig@iatefl.org).*

### **Multisensory Teaching**

There is an increasing awareness amongst teachers that an important component of inclusive language teaching is to offer a wide range of opportunities to students, and choices to work in the way that suits them best. Multisensory activities are key to this.

### **Terminology**

#### **Multisensory activities – is that the same as ‘learning styles’?**

There is an important distinction to draw between the now-discredited theory of ‘Learning Styles’, and the use of *simultaneously* multisensory activities in the classroom. ‘Learning Styles’ was a theory which posited that we all have a preferred channel for instruction and learning: auditory, visual or kinaesthetic. This, it was claimed, could be determined by administering a checklist to students to see which group they belonged to. Activities which were EITHER auditory OR visual OR kinaesthetic in nature could then be offered to each student in accordance with his/her preferences. However, the research evidence does not support the efficacy of this approach, and instead suggests that we all benefit from using a range of channels to take in information, with an emphasis on different channels in different situations. Some learners may well prefer to listen than to read, but actually, listening AND reading at the same time has been shown to be the most effective way of taking in information, especially for dyslexic learners. (For details, please see: Kořak-Babuder, M., Kormos, J., Ratajczak, M., & Piřorn, K. (2018). *The effect of read-aloud assistance on the text comprehension of dyslexic and non-dyslexic English language learners. Language Testing*, 0265532218756946. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532218756946>)

Finding ways to incorporate multisensory activities into the classroom, both for demonstrating and practising new language points, has a beneficial effect on all learners. These are activities that allow learners to *simultaneously* see, hear and do something physical or tactile (this could be moving cards or counters around on the desk or actually moving themselves around in the room). When we use multisensory activities, we are offering every member of the group the chance to access the new material whichever way they feel most comfortable. At the same time, we are giving them the chance to develop additional learning skills, so that they become more rounded learners

with access to more different strategies.

Apart from anything else, multisensory activities result in more engaging lessons, which is good for the learners AND the teacher!

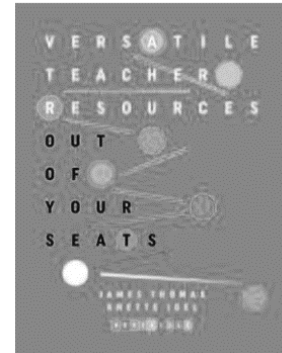
### **Top Tips**

- Make use of picture dictionaries, and on-line dictionaries (rather than print-only dictionaries), to enrich the experience of finding and using new vocabulary. Ask students to mime, gesture or act out new words that they have found.
- Offer students the chance to read *and listen* to a text they need to study, and make *actions* for particular words as they come across them. Many books have online companions or CDs available, or you could read it for the students (better *not* to ask students to read out loud, unless they read in groups, and have a chance to prepare the text first!) For example, you could divide the group into different characters, who have to stand up, or raise their hands, when their character appears, or allocate each group a particular word to look out for, and ask them to mime it (or raise their hand, clap, stamp etc) when that word appears.
- After reading, ask students to choose how they would like to respond to any follow-up tasks: writing, drawing, acting out the answers, etc.
- Try making use of concrete resources like Cuisenaire Rods\* to demonstrate and practice new constructions. Students can see and feel the tokens, move them about, and say the new construction out loud, to hear it in their own voices.  
\* Cuisenaire Rods are sets of wooden (or plastic) rods in various lengths and colours, that can be used to represent different parts of speech, or ideas in a sentence or a text. If these are not available, try using different types of pasta or a collection of various buttons, stones or even pieces of coloured paper to do the same job.
- Encourage participation in speaking activities by using realia (pictures, photos, real-life artifacts) to support your own contribution, and perhaps build up a mind-map as you talk, or arrange objects to depict a scene. Provide the students with materials (paper and pens, modelling clay, buttons) to do the same as they talk.
- When setting up a discussion activity, provide relevant pictures (e.g. of the main topics to be covered) for students to refer to as they talk. Some students like to have something concrete to hold, move around and arrange according to how they see the relationship, so pictures on small cards are ideal for this.

## Book review

By Anne Margaret Smith

**Anette Igel & James Thomas** (2018) *'Out of your seats'* Versatile; Brno, CZ 159 pages



This collection of activities and lesson plans is a valuable go-to resource for teachers who recognize the importance of getting students up and moving about, and/or want to extend the range of activities they already employ in their classrooms. The benefits of physical movement are persuasively explained in the introduction, along with encouragement for teachers who may be reticent to introduce this type of activity into their teaching repertoire, and tips for getting reluctant students on-board, too. There are also reminders about ensuring the safety of students while doing these physical activities, and detailed information about online resources that complement the activities. For example, there are ideas about using Pinterest, and SKELL (an online concordance tool based on a billion-word corpus).

The book is divided into three main sections: Activities, Lessons and Additional Resources, which are considered in more detail here.

There are 24 **activities** outlined in *'Out of your seats'*. For each, step-by-step instructions are preceded by a summary of what the activity involves, the suggested timing (usually between 5 and 20 minutes) and the materials needed. In many cases, any cards or prompts needed to run the activity are provided in the back of the book, ready to be photocopied, or from the website, to be printed out. Some of the activities are more physical versions of old favourites (e.g. "*Pelmanism on the move / Whole class Pelmanism*"). Others reflect the authors' experiences in the fields of drama, well-being and music. Some of these activities have been extended to provide more extensive practice of a language structure, and are described as lessons, in the next section.

Of the 20 **lessons** outlined in the book, half are linked directly to activities, employing the same core instructions, but with additional elements such as warm-up and pre-teaching stages, on-line activities, extended improvisation and opportunities for the learners to read, write and reflect on what they have learnt through the lesson. Each step-by-step lesson plan is preceded by the aims, an indication of what language content and skills will be explored, a suggestion of the age group and proficiency level it is intended for, the estimated time needed and the material required to run the lesson. Again, many of the resources needed are provided in the book or on the website.

In the final section of this book there are **additional resources** in the form

of photocopiable pages providing prompt cards for some of the activities and lessons. Teachers can also go to the website where there are text documents of some of the materials, which can be customized for the target group, before printing. The website also has links to related sites and additional resources that may be useful. The resources are clearly labelled so that teachers can easily find what they need.

Overall, this collection of genuinely multisensory activities may provide some useful additions to the tool-kit of any teacher looking to adopt more inclusive practices. Although the authors state that the book is 'not aimed specifically at inclusive teaching', it does cater for a wide range of learners, and allows for the development of learner autonomy. By getting students moving about, they engage more readily with the material, internalize and assimilate the language used. Above all, fun will be had!



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