Including Learners with Additional Needs

Supplementary Module

A manual for teacher trainers

Prepared for:
Ministry of Education, Zambia
The World Bank
USAID

Developed by:
Enabling Education Network, May 2020, revised March 2022

WORLD BANK GROUP

Supplementary Module: Including Learners with Additional Needs

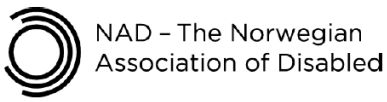
A teacher training resource for teacher trainers

Version 1

The supplementary module was developed with financial support from the Disability-Inclusive Education in Africa Programme, a Trust Fund managed by the World Bank. The Government would like to thank all the stakeholders who contributed to this work through various engagements including workshops. Furthermore, the Government is grateful to the working technical team, the World Bank Education team and EENET who was engaged as a Consultant to complete this work. The Government acknowledges input received from other partners such as Leonard Cheshire and Norwegian Association of Disabled who have undertaken similar assignments in this area.

This module was also made possible through support from the Office of Sustainable Development, Bureau for Africa, U.S. Agency for International Development, under Award No. AID-AFR-IO-17-0001 to the Disability-inclusive Education in Africa Programme. The opinions expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID.

The original inclusive education teacher training manual, comprising an introductory booklet and 11 modules, was supported by a grant from the Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD), and developed by EENET.



Contents

Introduction

This supplementary module contains advice for teachers on how to support learners with additional needs, such as behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, health issues, speech and communication difficulties, special educational needs and/or disabilities, gifted and talented learners, etc, in low and middle-income countries. Some of this advice builds on Leonard Cheshire's 'Learners with Specific Disabilities' booklet for teacher trainers (2017).

These ideas are intended to give teachers a practical starting point in working with learners with additional needs. The ideas are only for reference – teachers should keep this supplementary module and dip into it to get new ideas whenever they identify a learner who may have additional needs. Teachers are not expected to memorise the ideas or use them all. They will also have their own knowledge, skills and methods that may not be within these pages.

The information provided is broadly accurate but will not apply to every learner. Each condition or injury affects individuals differently. Teachers should get to know all their learners, identify their needs, and try the ideas in this supplementary module if they seem relevant.

Teachers cannot replace medical professionals; therapists and auxiliary workers are essential in assessing, treating and working with learners with additional needs. Teachers cannot diagnose health conditions or injuries, and are not expected to solve a learner's difficulties. Teachers can try different strategies, working with parents/care-givers, learners and other teachers. They can also refer learners they have identified for assessment. If learners with additional needs improve their *presence, participation and achievement* in education, their teacher has done a good job.

It helps to remember that having one type of additional need does not automatically affect other capacities. Learners with additional needs can fall behind their peers in education – but this is often because they have been denied effective teaching (i.e., the use of inclusive teaching and learning methods) for many years, not because they cannot learn.

For example, a learner with hearing or visual impairment has just as much intellectual ability as anyone else. But to use that ability, a learner with visual impairment needs another form of access to the information found in books. A learner with hearing impairment may need help to develop language and

express themselves. A learner with memory problems may still be able to do well in writing, drawing, and so on – but they will need tasks given to them in stages to avoid overload.

Teachers will find that many ideas in this supplementary module will benefit all the learners in their class. Many suggestions are things that a learner-centred teacher would try to do anyway. It is just that these strategies are essential to include learners with certain additional needs.

It would also be a good idea to invite adults with different types of additional needs to meet teachers. The head teacher could contact local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or disabled people's organisations (DPOs) to find useful contacts. These visitors could talk about their life experiences and how they managed in school. They could be given some guide questions in advance. For example:

- What did teachers do to motivate you at school?
- What did teachers do to de-motivate you?
- What actions would have helped you to be more included?

Module overview

This supplementary module focuses on giving teachers basic information about different additional needs and is divided into sessions, each focusing on a specific additional need. Each session shares how teachers can tell that a learner may have an additional need, what it may be like living with an additional need, and how learners with additional needs may be excluded from education. Each session concludes with some practical tips and ideas for teachers on how to practically accommodate learners with additional needs. There are sub-sections on: school environment, classroom environment, peers, and teaching tips and ideas.

When using this supplementary module, it is vital that teachers focus on the strengths of each learner and remember that all learners, including learners with additional needs, are individuals with different strengths, challenges, passions and interests. There is no 'one size fits all' solution to helping learners. It is vital that teachers involve the learners with additional needs in decisions, and ask them for their preferences and input. If they are young or find it difficult to communicate, involve parents/care-givers, guardians, family members and friends. Teachers need to invest the time to get to know learners

and understand how they learn best. Using this information in planning and teaching will assist teachers in meeting their needs. Remember that attitude and how the teacher accommodates learners with additional needs will impact on how they see themselves, as well as how they are viewed and accepted by other learners in the class, school or other educational setting.

The suggestions and tips provided here are not only aimed at helping learners with additional needs. Rather, teaching in an inclusive way, using many of these activities and techniques, will benefit all learners.

Trainers planning to deliver the sessions in this supplementary module should do so with close reference to **ALL** the other training modules in the inclusive education manual.

Remember: It is important to include the school inclusive education coordinator (IECo), the school inclusion team (SIT), the school's senior management team and the community when seeking advice and help.

Session 1: Including learners with cognitive or learning impairments

Cognitive or learning impairments

Cognitive or learning impairments represent a varied group of developmental conditions associated with intellectual or physical impairments. These developmental impairments cause difficulties in certain areas of life, specifically mobility, language, learning, self-help, and independent living.

Developmental impairment may affect all aspects of a learner's ability to meet their developmental milestones – in motor skills, speech, cognitive skills, and social and emotional development. This can have a significant impact on their ability to function with daily tasks. Developmental impairments are also referred to as 'global developmental delay', which is an umbrella term used to describe learners who experience significant delays in their cognitive and physical development. Learners with certain conditions that cause developmental impairments can have learning impairments as well. For example, learners with Down's syndrome or autism also have learning impairments.

How can a teacher tell that a learner may have a cognitive or learning impairment?

The following may be evident:

- visible signs of conditions like Down's Syndrome;
- significant difficulty with physical coordination;
- speech and communication problems;
- significant difficulties with problem-solving or reasoning tasks that peers of the same age can undertake.

Learners may have significant difficulty accessing, remembering and processing information you give them. They may find problem-solving tasks difficult, as well as struggling to remain focused and pay attention. They often experience significant challenges with reading and writing, understanding and following verbal instructions, as well as understanding and completing maths and visual comprehension tasks.

It is important to remember that just because a learner has signs of a physical impairment, does not mean that they also have a cognitive or learning impairment.

Girl with Down's syndrome[1]

[Image description: A girl with Down's syndrome is standing next to a woman. They are both smiling.]

How might cognitive or learning impairments exclude learners from education?

Learners who have cognitive or learning impairments often find academic or intellectual tasks difficult. They may also need help with everyday routines or self-care that other learners manage independently at school. They may take longer to process information and to learn, and may need support to develop new skills, understand complicated information and interact with other learners. Learners may have low confidence. Some learners may be very trusting and easily influenced and are therefore at risk of abuse from adults or other learners in school and in the community.

However, all learners can learn and make progress, no matter what their impairment. Each learner is an individual with different abilities. The level of support needed depends on the individual. Some learners may experience

[1] From www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/08/living-syndrome-kinshasa-drc-160811090938621.html

significant challenges in one area, and less difficulty in another. It is important for teachers to focus on a learner's abilities and interests before thinking about how to help them. Many learners with cognitive or learning impairments, given the right support and education, can lead productive, independent lives. From an educational point of view, perhaps the most challenging issue is that it is difficult to predict what learners with cognitive or learning impairments may achieve.

What can you do as a teacher?

School environment

- It is important that all adults and learners are sensitised about cognitive and learning impairments to address stigma and prevent discrimination. Cognitive and learning impairments are not a curse or 'witchcraft' and they cannot be caught or shared between learners.
- Talk to other learners and their parents/care-givers and the school community – promote a culture of kindness.

Classroom environment

- While no physical changes may be required to the school's environment, it is important that learners with cognitive and learning impairments are fully included into your classroom. Ensure that you do not exclude learners from activities and lessons.
- If a learner is easily distracted or requires additional attention, consider where they need to sit in order to learn the best. This may be closer to your desk with their group, learning with friends who are caring and willing to assist them. They may be able to focus or learn better when they are seated away from windows or open doors.

Peers

- Make sure the learner has a group of friends who are caring, helpful and who allow the learner to be as independent as possible.
- You may want to identify a buddy/buddies, learners who would like to assist a learner with a cognitive or learning impairment on a regular basis.
- A buddy, or small group of friends, will also be helpful in keeping the learner safe from abuse or teasing from others during break-time and after school. This is important because you, as a teacher, will not be able to

physically accompany and keep them safe throughout the whole day, especially when they leave your classroom.

- Plan activities so that learners work in pairs or groups whenever possible; encourage learners to read out text and assist learners with cognitive or learning impairments if they require assistance.
- Learners without disabilities, and those who are gifted and talented, often benefit from explaining or teaching content to other learners, so peer-to-peer teaching should be encouraged.

Teaching tips and ideas

- Get as much information as possible from the learner, parents/care-givers and your colleagues in school, about how they learn best. Other teachers may have good teaching strategies they want to share with you. Find out from parents/care-givers what the learner is able to do at home.
- Observe the learner and find out what activities they can do and what they need help with. It is important to find out their interests and use these in your teaching.
- Establish clear routines for all your classes. Depending on the age and level of your learners, consider using visual timetables, where you draw, take a photograph, or find a picture or symbol for different lessons. For example, you could use the picture of a ball to show when it is playtime, or the picture of a pencil when it is time for writing. You could also include the written word next to each picture or symbol. At the beginning of every lesson and each task, explain what is going to happen. This is helpful for all learners and especially important for learners with cognitive or learning impairments (see example below).
- It is important that you encourage all learners in your class, including those with cognitive or learning impairments. Do not exclude learners from activities that you feel may be too advanced for them. Some learners with cognitive or learning impairments respond well by copying or imitating other learners.
- Set individual learning targets using an individual education plan (IEP). This should be done by reviewing what the learner has previously done well (look at their previous workbooks, chat to their past teachers and parents/care-givers), and what they are interested in. Make plans to improve on those achievements plus on one or two of their weaker areas.

IEPs can focus on practical skills, social skills and self-care as well as academic work.

Visual daily schedule[2]

[Image description: A blue poster has the heading 'Daily Schedule'. Below the heading are two columns – the left column has text showing times and activities, the right column has photos illustrating those activities. For example, '8:00 – 8:15 welcome, block center buckets' next to a photo of children doing this activity; and '8:15 – 8:30 circle time and center train' next to a photo of the activity. The photos on the poster are not clear enough to describe.]

- Develop a target sheet with small, achievable targets. Review the targets at the end of each week. Remember to praise the learner as each target is reached. Do not reward learners with things like sweets or treats, rather use positive words and actions.
- Divide each lesson activity into small achievable steps that are appropriate for their level and understanding. Some learners may give up or stop trying if they feel they cannot complete a task.
- Ask parents/care-givers or other family members, who have time, to join lessons as a classroom or teaching assistant. Arrange a plan for how they will support the learner with both care and learning activities. They should be able to work with groups of learners including their own learner.

[2] From: www.virtuallabschool.org/preschool/comm-lang-development/lesson-4

- Make a plan for how the learner will be supervised through the school day so that they are safe. Trusted learners, parents/care-givers and non-teaching school staff can help. Do not leave the learner alone, and try not to leave the learner with only one person.
- Be patient! If you find that a learner takes longer than others to learn or to do an activity, allow them more time. Give extra one-to-one explanations where necessary.
- Assign tasks that allow learners to move around, so that movement does not become disruptive but is part of the lesson.
- Monitor background noise. Some learners with autism or similar conditions will find a lot of noise distressing. Allow them to wear earphones or ear defenders if these are available. If not, set up a quiet space in a nearby room or office. Give learners the chance to have time in this quiet space if other learners are doing very noisy learning activities, or if a learner has become overwhelmed. You will need to arrange for a teaching assistant or older learner to look after them in the quiet space.
- Let the learner do activities with other learners and encourage them to help each other.
- You may need to clearly explain 'rules' for certain social situations (for example, the importance of making eye-contact when speaking to someone, how to take turns in a conversation, etc.) as these can be overwhelming or not understood by some learners. Some learners respond well by practicing these 'rules' in role-play activities.
- Most learners benefit from hands-on practical learning activities rather than only listening to what the teacher is saying. The more physically involved they are the better they will learn. Using as many senses as possible will assist learners in participation as well as retention. Remember they have different learning styles.
- Use fun activities and games to teach concepts. Using songs, poems, games, singing and dancing in your teaching will benefit all learners.
- Show the learner what you want her/him to do rather than simply telling them. Use pictures from magazines or draw them. Use acting and drama.
- Use simple words when giving instructions and check that the learner has understood.
- Use real objects that the learner can feel or handle rather than relying on paper and pencil work.

- Do one activity at a time and finish it. Make it clear to the learner when one activity is completed and when another is starting. Immediately give them feedback about their work.
- Break tasks into sub-tasks (or simple steps) and learning objectives, and move from easier tasks towards harder tasks, or from known tasks towards unknown tasks.
- Give the learner extra practice at doing a task. This ensures they learn the skill and increases their confidence.
- Give plenty of praise or reinforcement and encouragement when a learner is successful.
- When assessing a learner with a cognitive or learning impairment, ensure that you are focusing on both their strengths and challenges. If they find writing difficult let them complete their assessments orally. If they find reading challenging, consider asking them the questions verbally. Get them to act out or draw their understanding of things. Be creative and use the learner's interests. For example, a love of bicycles can be used in maths assessments, e.g. how many wheels would there be altogether if you had two bicycles? Use objects as counters if needed.

Session 2: Including learners with speech and communication difficulties

Speech and communication difficulties

There can be many different reasons why some learners do not speak or communicate at the same level as their peers. Hearing impairment or developmental impairment can be the cause. Learners who have a cleft palate will often speak in an unclear way. Previous or ongoing trauma in a learner's life can cause a learner to stammer, have unclear speech or not speak at all. Speaking a different language at home to that used in school can also be a barrier to inclusion for many learners.

How might speech and communication difficulties exclude learners from education?

Several learners in a class during the early grades of education are likely to have speech or communication difficulties of various types, particularly if parents/care-givers are not used to talking to their child or encouraging their speech and language development. Teachers must not assume that because a learner does not speak clearly or properly, that she or he has a hearing impairment or developmental impairment. It is important to discover if the learner has been referred to a specialist and what the outcome of the referral was.

Learners who have grown up speaking their mother tongue (or home language) before starting school will find changing to a different language used in teaching difficult (for example, if they grew up speaking Swahili and they are taught in English). Sometimes learners move from one country or one region to another, and find themselves in a classroom where they do not understand the language at all. Or a teacher may be sent from their home province to work in a distant province, and learners speak a different mother tongue. These are all needs in the classroom that the teacher must try to address.

The key to addressing speech and language difficulties is to start where the learner is at – encourage them to use the type and level of language that they find easiest, and gradually introduce new language in ways they understand. You may find that many learners who have speech difficulties, such as a

stutter, may become much worse when they feel anxious, scared, teased or judged. They may be able to hold a conversation with their friends in the playground or at home, but when under pressure, such as standing up in-front of the class or during an oral examination, they may find it difficult to speak.

What can you do as a teacher to include these learners?

School environment

- It is important that learners are encouraged to be kind and caring to each other. Different languages, cultures and abilities need to be celebrated.
- You may want to invite adults from the school community or past learners with speech and communication impairments to share their experiences during school assemblies or events.

Classroom environment

- Some learners' speech and communication impairments, and confidence, are influenced by their environment. If they feel accepted and cared for, instead of being teased or pressurised to speak 'correctly', their anxiety can decrease, which may improve some of their symptoms.
- You must think carefully about the example that you set to others. It is important that you model how you would like the other learners in your class and school to act. If you ignore, tease, shout at, or get frustrated at the learner with a speech or communication impairment, the other learners in your class will see this as normal. If you show acceptance, kindness and support, this behaviour will be replicated by your learners.

Peers

- Make sure the learner has a group of friends who are helpful and who accept the learner as she/he is and do not judge them. You may want to allocate a buddy/buddies; learners who would like to assist a learner with a speech or communication impairment on a regular basis.
- It is important that you explain to their buddy or group of friends that the learner is not choosing to speak in the way they do, or not speak at all. They need to understand that they may need to protect the learner from being teased, bullied or harmed in other ways.

- Learners will often come up with their own creative and suitable ways of communicating which may include gesturing, signing or other non-verbal ways.
- Plan activities so that learners work in pairs or groups whenever possible; encourage learners to help and possibly read the learner's answers or feedback if needed, or helping them to share with others in their group (do thank them for doing this).

Teaching tips and ideas

- Find out from parents/care-givers how the learner communicates at home. Use the same methods in the classroom – even if that means learning some of their language.
- Talk to the learner – she or he may be able to tell you what they need. Be careful not to single the learner out in front of their friends. Social inclusion is important and the learner may not want to appear different.
- Sit learners with lower communication levels with their groups near the front of the class, so you can check for understanding and progress.
- Speak clearly. When introducing new information, use the simplest vocabulary possible. Introduce new words carefully, using images and examples.
- Use objects and pictures frequently to help all learners understand what you are teaching.
- Put labels on objects around the classroom stating what the objects are. Use the same writing fonts that learners are expected to use in class when writing.
- Some learners may benefit from pointing to pictures or symbols when trying to communicate. You can cut out pictures from magazines or newspapers, or print them from the internet, and laminate them in plastic if you can. Then let the learner select which picture is applicable rather than asking them to speak. For example, you could select, cut out and stick a selection of pictures depicting a toilet, lunch box, and cup of water on a page. You could ask the learner to point to the different images to let you know what they want. Increase the number of images based on their needs and cognitive abilities by creating communication boards. For some learners, you may just have a 'yes' and 'no' option where you would be able to ask them questions ("Do you want to go to the toilet?" "Are you hungry?"). You could extend the communications boards by creating

different sheets containing images based on different subjects or scenarios. If a learner is unable to point with their finger you could ask them to use another body part (e.g., elbow, chin, foot, etc). See below.

Communication board[3]

[Image description: There are nine squares arranged in three rows of three. In each square is a different picture: a hand/arm, a person eating, a person sleeping, a person bathing, a person pushing a shopping trolley, a person reading, a person throwing hoops, a person watching TV, and a person walking to a house.]

- Try to find at least 5 minutes each day when you can sit and talk to learners who have lower communication skills. It should be one-to-one, just general conversation such as “what you did at the weekend”. This will help build the learner’s confidence.
- Be very patient when listening to each learner – they may not get it right at the first attempt and may have difficulty getting the words out. It is important to wait and give them the opportunity to try again. Do not finish the learner’s sentences for them.

[3] From: www.disabilityresource.blogspot.com/2010/07/communication-boards.html

- Help learners to make friends – social inclusion will build confidence which will lead to better speech.
- Plan classroom activities to allow the learners to work in groups and find out how each learner works best.
- Encourage learners to talk freely and frequently to each other. Being exposed to each other speaking often helps learners who are having problems to make progress. This means your lesson plans must include plenty of time for learners to speak freely. Monitor whether the noise of everyone talking is distressing for some learners, and remember to manage the volume of learners talking during free talking periods so that the noise level does not get too loud.
- Be as visual as you can when teaching, make full use of body language, facial expressions, gestures, objects and pictures. Give demonstrations of what you expect the learners to do.

Session 3: Including learners with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties

Behavioural, emotional and social difficulties

Some learners have difficulties, sometimes severe, in managing their own behaviour and emotions, and may show inappropriate responses or feelings towards others, including teachers and their peers, in different situations. Unlike other impairments, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are often invisible or hidden, and may reveal themselves in behaviour ranging from disinterest to disruptiveness. Such conduct may make it difficult for teachers to remember that these learners often have little control over their behaviour or emotions. Examples include learners on the autistic spectrum, learners with bipolar disorders, learners with anxiety, learners with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and learners with oppositional defiant disorder (ODD).

It is important that teachers remember that **all** learners are different and getting to know each learner's strengths and challenges (such as their behavioural triggers) will assist you in better meeting their individual needs.

How can a teacher tell that a learner may have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties?

Learners are identified under this category if they have demonstrated one or more of the following characteristics over a period of time, and to a marked degree, that negatively impacts on their educational performance:

- an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
- difficulty in building or maintaining satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- inappropriate types of behaviours or feelings under normal circumstances;
- a general mood of unhappiness or depression;
- a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

How might behavioural, emotional and social difficulties exclude learners from education?

Learners with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties may find understanding the feelings of others, controlling their own feelings and behaviours, and generally getting along with their peers and teachers very difficult. Other learners may become easily annoyed, anxious or nervous. They may have regular irrational anger outbursts, refuse to follow rules, question your decisions or instructions, and find managing their frustrations and feelings very challenging. This can make learning very difficult, especially in social situations like the classroom.

What can you do as a teacher to include these learners?

School environment

- It is important that **all** learners are educated about behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. They should understand that these difficulties impair a person's learning, and are not something that a learner choses to do; she/he is not bluffing or 'play-acting'. It would help the class environment if you educate your learners about the condition, especially after an outburst or event, or when they notice a learner's anxiety escalating.
- While learners with behavioural, emotional or social difficulties may not require physical changes to the school environment (such as ramps), ensuring that other learners are aware of some of the challenges that these learners go through should assist in creating a welcoming and accepting environment.

Classroom environment

- Most learners find that having a calm learning environment assists them, while others find a fixed daily routine makes them feel safe and reduces their anxiety.
- You may want to use visual daily schedules and even weekly planners for some learners who struggle with change, so that they can plan ahead and prepare themselves, thus feeling more in control.
- If there are going to be changes, for example, to the daily schedule or the classroom environment, it is important that you let these learners know beforehand so that they can start preparing for the change.

- Some learners respond well to having a ‘cool down’ or ‘time-out’ place. This should be encouraged as it motivates them to manage their own behaviour and actions. When they start to feel angry, overwhelmed or anxious, they can remove themselves from the situation and move to the cool-down or time-out area. You need to establish a place where you can still see them, and where they are not able to damage property, or distract or hurt other learners or themselves.
- **Together with your learners**, establish classroom rules with clear expectations and consequences. These need to be consistent and applicable to all learners and worded in a positive manner. Rules and structure are also important in the classroom because they help all learners understand what is expected and this eliminates stress. It is advisable to write these rules down and place them on the wall so that all learners can see what has been agreed. Some learners may benefit from the inclusion of pictures or symbols to reinforce and remind them of the rules (see image below).

Classroom rules[4]

[Image description: A poster has the heading ‘Rules’. Below the heading, on the left-hand side, are four pictures of children, one above the other. On the right-hand side, next to each picture, is written: ‘Quiet Voices’, ‘Walking Feet’. ‘Gentle Touches’, and ‘Listening Ears’. The photos on the poster are not clear enough to describe.]

[4] From: www.virtuallabschool.org/preschool/comm-lang-development/lesson-4

Peers

- Many learners with behavioural, emotional or social difficulties find making and keeping friendships very challenging. Many of them are teased and bullied, while others are isolated. This may be as a result of negative behaviour or outbursts. You should encourage some learners to be friends/buddies. It is important that you educate them about the difficulty, but also set clear boundaries. For example, explain that it is not all right to be hurt or verbally abused and discuss what they should do if this occurs, such as remaining calm, not reacting, calling a teacher, etc.
- Plan activities so that learners work in pairs or groups with learners who may have more patience and understanding. Allocating important roles to learners with behavioural, emotional or social difficulties can assist in making them feel valued and important which may assist in reducing negative outbursts and behaviour. Other learners may find that having responsibility makes them feel anxious and they may require another group member to speak or share on their behalf.
- It is important to understand learners' strengths and challenges and make accommodations in line with these.

Teaching tips and ideas

- As hard as it may be, if a learner has an anger outburst or behaves in an unacceptable manner (i.e. hitting another learner, breaking resources, tearing books, etc), you need to remain calm and not be reactive. If you shout, hit or loudly reprimand the learner in front of their peers, it may make the situation worse. Rather take a few deep breaths, calmly go to the learner, drop your voice, and speak slower than your usual pace.
- It is important that you separate the behaviour from the learner in the words and phrases that you use. Be specific and name the behaviour, words or actions that were inappropriate. For example, do not say, "You are bad and what you did was wrong." Rather say that, "Ripping up Thabo's book was not acceptable."
- Be consistent in your actions and consequences as stability and routine may assist some learners. For example, you need to take action every time a learner hits another learner, ensuring that they are aware of the consequence of their actions. Every time they hit another learner they will be placed on a time-out chair/place. Research some different time-out strategies (see below).

Time-out chair[5]

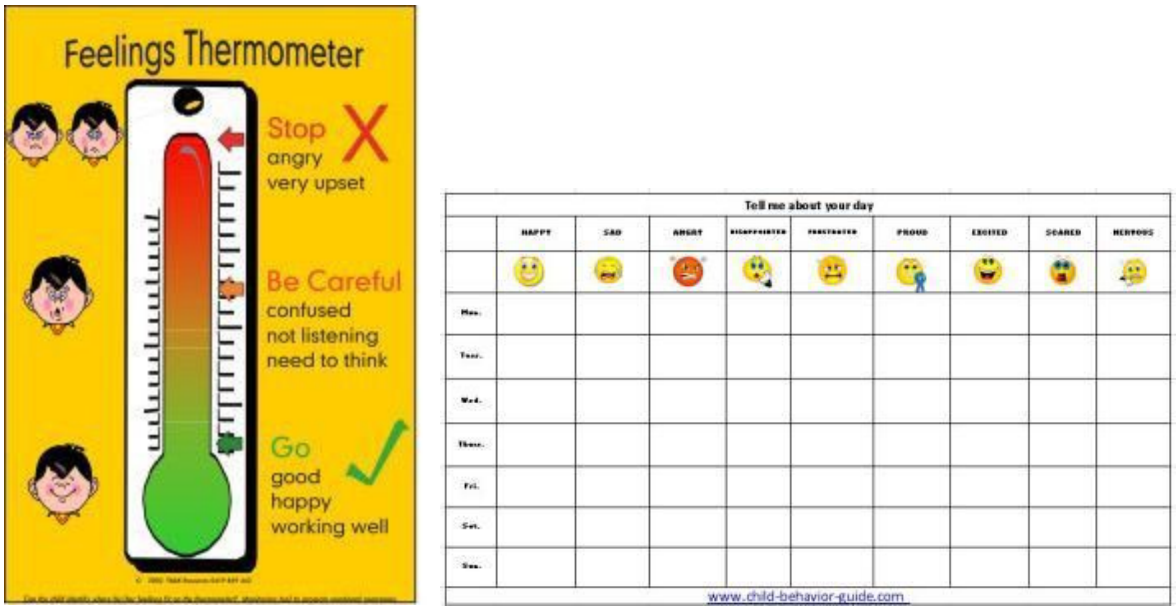
[Image description: A white chair has 'Time Out' written on the back rest. On the seat is written: 'To think about the things you do, but ALWAYS REMEMBER… that I LOVE YOU!'.]

- Encourage learners to be aware of their feelings and emotions through asking them to 'check-in' on their feelings and anxiety levels. For example, you can teach them to think of a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being calm and 10 being very high, and get them to identify what number they are. For younger learners, you could make a chart with numbers 1 – 10 like a thermometer with a happy face at the bottom and angry face at the top and ask them to point to where they are on the chart. Getting learners to identify their feelings and emotions early can make them more aware and give them, or you, a chance to put interventions in place.
- Encourage them to use some calming techniques such as slowly breathing in for 10 seconds, holding their breath for 5 seconds, and exhaling for 10 seconds and repeating this until they have calmed down or are feeling less anxious or overwhelmed. Some learners find saying a poem or rhyme, thinking of a story, focussing on a happy memory or activity helpful. Look

[5] From: https://za.pinterest.com/naenaemcdaniel/time-out-chair/

up some other tips and techniques that are suitable for the individual learner.

- Social skills do not always come naturally to learners with behavioural, emotional or social difficulties and some respond well when teachers take the time to teach and practice these. For some learners making eye-contact or following social cues of conversation turn-taking is challenging. Some learners find jokes and sarcasm difficult to understand and as a result are often teased and bullied, which can lead to further negative behaviours and actions. Getting learners to role-play certain situations and scenarios may be useful.
- Some learners find creative ways to calm themselves and identify some of their triggers, for example, things that lead to an outburst or increased anxiety. Some learners find reflecting on their day in the form of writing a journal, drawing pictures or rating their feelings on a scale, very helpful (see below).



Feeling thermometer and feeling chart[6]

[Image description: A picture of a 'Feeling Thermometer' is on the left-hand side. At the top the thermometer is red and says: 'Stop, angry, very upset'. In the middle it is orange and says: 'Be Careful, confused, not listening, need to think'. At the bottom it is green and says: 'Go, good, happy, working well'. On the right-hand side is a 'feeling chart' for each day of the week. The days are written along the left-hand side, and columns for emotions, such as happy, sad, angry, etc, are written across the top.]

[6] From: https://za.pinterest.com/pin/241505598744656037/ and www.pinterest.jp/pin/10696117834750519/

- Encourage learners to focus every day both on what did not go well as well as what did go well. Also encourage them to list or talk about what they could have done differently. (Do not try to get them to do this while they are angry or anxious, rather wait until they have calmed down.)
- Give learners problem-solving techniques such as action-based research activities where they identify problems or challenges, prioritise them, select a few that they can work on, and devise a plan (such as considering what they can do, who they can ask to help them, etc.). Giving learners these skills will make them more independent and may lead to a better chance of implementation as they have developed the ideas themselves. Developing these skills will take time and you may need to assist them in the beginning to develop their own confidence.
- Teach all learners active listening skills; this will benefit **all** learners, not only learners with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Teach them the importance of watching a person as they speak or share, staying focused, using non-verbal cues such as nodding, and reflect on what was shared, etc. Let them practise these activities in pairs and small groups. Asking their buddies to do this with them is very constructive.
- Encourage positive talk. Many learners only hear negative words and phrases all day (such as “you never listen”, “stop shouting”, “don’t do that”), which can lead to negative self-esteem and fuel negative behaviour, thoughts and emotions. Encourage them to identify their own positive attributes (such as “I can run fast”; “I love my mother”). This is an activity that can benefit all learners in your class. You can extend this by asking all learners to write positive things about each other. At the beginning of the activity ensure all learners understand the type of words they should use and they know how the activity works because you do not want negativity creeping in and undermining the aim of the activity.
- Use positive reinforcement and focus on what positive behaviour or action you expect. Praise the learner when they do something positive and ensure that this is genuine. Select the timing and type of praise because some learners may find that being praised in front of a large class is overwhelming and anxiety provoking, and they would respond better if you talk to them privately after class. In some instances, it may be suitable to praise them in front of the class so that the other learners can be reminded of the positives within all learners.

Session 4: Including learners with visual impairments

Visual impairment

The term visual impairment includes a wide range of visual difficulties, from mild to severe loss of vision through to total blindness. A person is considered to be visually impaired if they cannot see well even when wearing prescribed glasses. Many learners in lower-income countries are visually impaired because they do not possess glasses; with the correct glasses they would not be visually impaired.

How can a teacher tell that a learner may have a visual impairment?

The following signs may indicate various types of visual impairment:

- red eyes, swollen eyelids, watery eyes or discharge, eyes that do not appear straight, uneven-sized eyes, eyes with drooping eyelids or crusts on lids between the eyelashes. Some learners' eyes may be painful;
- eyes move quickly from side to side, jerk or wander randomly;
- the pupil (black circle in middle of the eye) looks white or cloudy instead of black;
- seems to have crossed or turned eyes or a squint;
- repetitive, stereotyped movement e.g. rocking or rubbing eyes;
- some learners may be sensitive to bright light and may shut their eyes or squint;
- squinting, blinking or frowning while reading or doing close work;
- unable to locate or pick up small objects;
- withdrawn and/or dependent on others;
- does not respond to visual cues;
- bringing a book or object closer to their eyes;
- turns or tilts their head or covers one eye when looking at things up close;
- cannot see items at a distance;

- gets tired after looking at things up close (i.e. reading or drawing);
- have problems distinguishing similar shaped letters, numbers or words, such as *b* and *d*;
- will often move slowly and without confidence around their classrooms or school environment;
- may seem clumsy – for example, they may knock things over or often trip over.

If a learner shows any of these signs, a teacher should contact their parents/care-givers and ask them (or assist them) to organise an eye test for their child, if one has not been carried out.

Living with visual impairment

Some learners are totally blind. Many other visually impaired learners have some sight, e.g., residual vision, ranging from light perception to the ability to make out shapes or outlines. The amount, direction and type of light available will affect what visually impaired learners can see. Visually impaired learners with light perception may be able to see whether it is night or day and may be able to judge the time of day by the location of the sun. They may be able to locate windows in a room and sometimes have an idea of how big the room is. Learners with light perception will have spatial awareness to help with mobility – e.g. they may be able to walk down a corridor with windows down one side.

A boot, as seen by someone with 'normal' vision (left) and someone who is visually impaired but has some remaining sight (right). This is just one example of a common eye condition – each eye condition is different.

[Image description: On the left is a clear picture of a yellow wellington boot. On the right is a picture in which the same boot is blurred and only partially visible.]

This image shows what a person with Retinitis Pigmentation, a deteriorating visual impairment, may see.[7]

[Image description: On the left is a clear image of a road, countryside and blue sky. On the right is a picture of the same road but only the centre of the image can be clearly seen, the rest of the image is black.]

[7] From: www.welchallyn.com/en/education-and-research/research-articles/overcoming-vision-impairment-as-lions-club-member.html

How might visual impairment exclude learners from education?

Learners with visual impairments are dependent on touching and feeling items (or text) rather than seeing them for conceptual development. If this is not recognised by adults, a learner may grow up with little stimulus and thus less conceptual development than other learners.

It may be difficult or impossible for a learner to get to school alone, as they may have problems moving over uneven ground, avoiding traffic, and navigating the route by themselves. It may be difficult or impossible to get into classrooms or move between classrooms on time without help.

Imagine that most of your information comes through touch or sound. You have difficulty writing things down. How do you keep information together so that you can refer to it and learn it? You may have to rely on mostly verbal memory (remembering what you have heard), whereas many people also use visual memory (remembering what they have seen). This means you may find it hard to retain information and use it in building up learning.

If a learner has difficulty seeing in dim light or cannot see in the dark, and lessons take place in classrooms using window shutters, when it is cloudy or take place in dark winter months without electricity, they may not be able to see the teacher, the board or their books.

If teachers and other learners are discussing visual information (pictures, text, numbers, objects), visually impaired learners will not know what they are referring to and will miss out on that learning. A learner may disconnect from lessons completely, unless the teacher or a friend describes every item very clearly and gives the learner plenty of chances to touch items or their outlines.

A learner with a visual impairment may not see others waving and smiling at them or may not be able to make eye contact. This can make them appear to be lonely or distant. Some learners with visual impairments find playing and socialising with other learners difficult. For example, they may seem clumsy, not able to read non-verbal cues and gestures, get lost in a group of learners, or have trouble making friends.

Teachers must give more time and extra effort to help visually impaired learners access school and the curriculum through sound and touch. It they do

not receive this assistance they may miss out on most of the education that their peers receive.

What can you do as a teacher to include these learners?

Teachers can use the strategies below to help learners who have difficulty seeing. Some of the ideas may need additional money, for which you could fundraise with help from your school IECo, SIT and your community.

School environment

- Get as much information as possible from parents/carer-givers – they will be able to tell you how the learner manages at home. If the learner is older, she or he will be able to tell you or even show you.
- If a learner requires assistance with navigating their school environment and classrooms, they could benefit from being guided by a sighted peer (a buddy), family member, teacher or volunteer. Find out who can give you training on how this can be done (i.e. ask your local or national DPOs, watch YouTube clips from international organisations for people with visual impairments, etc.).
- If your school has steps linking floors or leading to the playground, you can paint a white or yellow line/stripe on the lip/edge of first and last step. This colour contrast can assist some learners in identifying where the steps start and end.
- Many classrooms have windows that open into passages or courtyards where learners play or walk. Make sure that windows are not fully extended (open) so that learners do not accidentally walk into them and injure themselves.

Classroom environment

- Involve learners in the decision-making process. Ask the learner where they would prefer to sit and what they need. You can also involve parents/care-givers or other family members if the learner is young.
- Keep the classroom layout as constant as possible (i.e. where the learner's desk is located). If you need to change the layout, inform and involve the learner beforehand. You could physically orientate/show them where their new desk or mat is or ask their buddy to assist them.

- As far as possible, keep the classroom neat and tidy with a minimum of clutter. For example, make sure that if learners have school bags, these are kept away from walkways.
- Carefully consider where your learners are seated. Some learners with visual impairments find the glare from light shining through a window difficult. Some may benefit from being closer to the blackboard or to your desk. Others may prefer to be seated with their group of friends so that they can find their place more easily. Consider seating them next to their buddies who can assist them.
- Encourage learners to push their chairs or benches under their tables/desks when they leave the classroom (if this is possible) to make moving around the room easier.
- If you have classroom doors, make sure they are either fully opened or fully closed as this makes it easier for learners to enter and exit safely.

Peers

- Make sure the learner has a group of friends who are helpful and who allow the learner to be as independent as possible. You may want to allocate a buddy/buddies, learners who would like to assist a learner with a visual impairment.
- Plan activities so that learners work in pairs or in groups whenever possible; encourage learners to read out text for learners who cannot see well.
- Encourage other learners to help the learner practise walking around the school using a cane. Encourage the learner to move around independently after practice.

Teaching tips and ideas

- Always involve learners themselves in decisions relating to accommodations (i.e. “where would you prefer to sit?”). If the learner is young, ask family members, friends or teachers from previous years for information of what works best.
- If a learner’s eyes are sensitive to bright light, move them away from the window. Some learners benefit from being allowed to wear a peak cap which helps to cut out the glare. Negotiate for exceptions to school uniform policies if this is an issue.

- When speaking, use the learner's name and give yours so that they know you are asking them a question directly, and are able to identify who is speaking. Encourage the other learners to do the same (i.e. "Hello Thabo, its Mrs Duma here").
- Ask the learner what she or he can see – you can ask them to read from the board to find out the best place for them to sit in the class. They can then sit there with their group.
- When trying to establish how much they are able to see, avoid asking the learner "can you see the blackboard?" as they may be able to see the shape or outline but cannot access or describe what is written on it clearly. Rather ask them if, for example, they can locate the drawn tree without guessing, or whether they can see certain parts of the tree better than others.
- Help learners to use their other senses (hearing, touch, smell and taste) to play and learn.
- Use simple, clear and consistent language. It is all right to use words that refer to sight, e.g. "see you later", just like their peers who are sighted; these words should be included in all learners' vocabulary. For example, learners with visual impairments use touch and hearing to 'see' and navigate the world. However, avoid using terms like, "as you can see on the blackboard." Rather, explain what you are drawing, writing, etc.
- Use tactile objects to help explain a concept. The best way to describe an apple is to give the learner an apple and allow them to hold, touch, smell and taste it.
- When doing maths or numeracy activities, give the learner physical counters, abacuses and/or shapes that they can feel to represent numbers and quantities.
- Make your writing clear, a good size, and with good contrast; black or dark blue pens on a white-board, or white chalk on a blackboard.
- Always read aloud what is written on the board, on posters or on charts.
- Use books or papers with thick or raised lines: ask if other learners can help you copy out key texts into raised-line format, e.g. using cardboard outlines of words.
- Encourage learners to use a pointer or finger when reading.
- Use magnifying aids if possible. These can be physical magnifiers. However, if a learner has a smartphone and good Internet access, they can use text-

to-speech software. Download the texts you use onto the phone and it will read them out.

- If a learner or family member has a smart phone or voice recorder, encourage them to voice-record the lesson so that they can play the lesson back (later) rather than having to rely on written textbooks or workbooks.
- Where possible, use Braille in order to give learners a means of reading and writing. You can ask your head teacher, school IECo, SIT or local DPOs that support people with visual impairments, for training. In some countries it is easy to buy a stylus from the Internet and look up videos on how to use it on YouTube.
- Try to reach out to your local or national DPOs supporting people with visual impairments, older learners who previously attended your school, adults with visual impairments in your community, etc., and ask them for support and ideas.
- Emphasise physical activities and group games (with help from other learners) so that learners with visual impairments can learn to orientate their body and move confidently.
- Be careful of only using gestures while teaching. Always verbalise what you are doing, drawing or writing so that the learner has access to this additional information and is able to follow the lesson's activities. Try using words that express location, position and direction like 'above', 'under', 'on top', 'between', 'in front of', 'to the left', 'higher', 'lower', etc. Rather than saying "the cows are over there", say, "the cows are in the field to the left of the farmer". Words and phrases accompanied by pointing like 'here', 'there', 'over there', 'over here' should be avoided because the learners may not be able to see where you are pointing.
- During assessments, tests or examinations, use the learners' strengths and adjust them if needed. Some learners may benefit from having oral assessments where you ask the learner the question rather than have them read it from the exam paper or blackboard. You would then write down the learners' answers for them while others may be able to write their answers down themselves. Some learners may benefit from having the writing on the question papers enlarged, or the font changed to one that they can read better.
- Some learners may have a deteriorating visual impairment condition, which means they will lose more and more sight. Some learners lose their sight gradually, while other learners' sight deteriorates quickly. The more skills you give learners the more independent they will be later in their lives.

- Be patient – visually impaired learners often need extra time to complete each task. Give learners opportunities to explore and solve problems themselves.

Albinism

A learner with albinism[8]

[Image description: Two children are smiling. One of the children has albinism, with reduced pigmentation of his skin and hair.]

If a learner is visually impaired because of albinism (where the pigment melanin is reduced in skin, eyes and hair), they are likely to have some additional support needs:

- Learners with albinism are more likely to burn in the sun, and to suffer sores and skin cancer as a result. Make sure their arms and legs are covered with long clothes, and that they wear hats in the sun. Negotiate for exceptions to school uniform policies if this is an issue.
- Their eyes may also be very sensitive to light, so learners with albinism should be supported and allowed to wear sunglasses.
- In some countries, people with albinism face stigma and abuse. It is very important that teachers challenge all forms of discrimination and abuse on the basis of albinism. Make it clear to learners, parents/care-givers and community members that any negative stories or beliefs about albinism are untrue. Encourage and facilitate learners with and without albinism to play together and treat each other well.

[8] From: www.Egp.tsearch.com

Session 5: Including learners with hearing impairments

Hearing impairment

A hearing impairment can vary from mild loss of sound to full deafness. It can be caused by diseases and viruses (such as meningitis, measles, mumps, syphilis, etc.), untreated ear infections, poisoning, injury such as head trauma, pre-natal complications (if mother contracts illnesses such as rubella (German measles), herpes or syphilis while pregnant), problems during birth (e.g. premature birth, low birth weight, birth injuries, lack of oxygen, etc.), certain medications, or be passed on genetically. A small percentage of learners have parents or family members who are deaf or hearing impaired. Some learners are completely deaf but others have partial hearing. Sometimes learners are identified as hearing impaired but have partial hearing that is still very useful. It is important to find out exactly what the learner can and cannot hear.

How can a teacher tell that a learner may have a hearing impairment?

Teachers should suspect a learner may have a hearing problem if she or he:

- does not respond when spoken to or called, or cannot ask for what she or he wants;
- does not speak correctly, leaves out sounds or words, uses incorrect grammar, has limited vocabulary, has a strange voice (monotone voice that does not go up or down when speaking), or speaks too loud or too softly;
- does not follow instructions, does not understand tasks and does not react to questions;
- often asks you to repeat a word or a sentence;
- turns or tilts head to one side in order to catch sounds better, especially if their hearing loss is not the same in both ears;
- does not respond when called in noisy or dimly lit areas, or when far away (such as the playground or passages);
- appears to be inattentive and easily distracted;
- gets frustrated or withdrawn when there is a lot of background noise;

- does not like to interact with others, appears to be shy and withdrawn; does not take part in conversation;
- has chronic colds or ear infections with discharge from the ears (sometimes yellow and smelly), rubs or pulls their ears a lot, has been ill with high fever (meningitis or malaria – these are often causes of hearing damage).

If a learner shows one or more of these signs, the teacher should encourage parents/care-givers to take her/him for a hearing assessment or clinic if they suspect an ear infection.

Living with hearing impairment

Learners with hearing impairment often experience the following:

- difficulty in locating direction;
- difficulty in understanding verbal instructions;
- poor speech development or distorted speech;
- constant ringing noises in their ears (tinnitus);
- difficulty in perceiving higher sounds or lower-range sounds (often words containing S, H and F, or difficulty understanding higher voices such as women and other learners' speech);
- may talk louder than normal because they are unable to regulate their voices.

Levels of hearing impairment are often measured by the quietest sound, measured in decibels, that someone can hear.

Mild deafness
Can only hear sounds from 25 to 39 decibels and above (are not able to hear a clock ticking). They may find it difficult to follow speech in noisy situations.

Moderate deafness
Can only hear sounds from 40 to 69 decibels and above (are not able to hear a dog bark or a vacuum cleaner). A person may need to use hearing aids.

Severe deafness
Can only hear sounds from 70 to 94 decibels or above (are not able to hear a baby cry). Even with hearing aids, a person may rely on lipreading. Sign language is likely to be their preferred language.

Profound deafness
Can only hear sounds from 95+ decibels (are not able to hear an aeroplane flying). Sign language is likely to be their preferred language.

Learners with high levels of hearing impairment – particularly those who have been deaf from birth – may think mainly in visual terms and emotions. This is because they have not grown up speaking and hearing words.

How might hearing impairment exclude learners from education?

Education is especially important for deaf and hearing-impaired learners because it allows them to develop their thinking, their ability to communicate with other deaf and hearing people and to make friends. As so much of teaching comes through speaking, there are two major challenges for educating hearing impaired and deaf learners. The first is how to communicate information that would normally be verbal. The second is how to help learners develop language. Without strong language skills, learners will not have the basic concepts they need to develop educational learning.

What can you do as a teacher to include these learners?

School environment

- Ask parents/care-givers to show you the signs and gestures they use at home for communication – use the same signs yourself and encourage other learners to also use them.
- Teaching the whole class basic sign language is a good way to make sure learners are included. Try to find an NGO or DPO that supports deaf people and ask them to teach you some signs. There may also be deaf people in your community who you can ask to help teach you some signs and share their tips.
- Try teaching all learners in your school some basic signs so that they can communicate during break-time, in the playground, playing field, in the

classroom and on the way to/from school. If you have school assemblies, this can be a great way to introduce a few signs each week.

- Keep background noise to a minimum – both inside and outside the classroom.

Classroom environment

- Stand where there is enough light to enable the learner to see facial movements and expressions. Make sure you are not standing in front of a window or open door as this will make your face appear dark as it will be in strong shadow (silhouetting) and this makes it very difficult for learners to lipread (see below).

Silhouette[9]

[Image description: The picture on the left shows a silhouette of a person's head and shoulders in front of a white circle. The silhouette of the person and the rest of the picture are black. The picture on the right shows a silhouette of a person standing in front of a white curtain. Beside the silhouette is a glass door leading to a garden. The silhouette is black. The garden is green and brown.]

- If possible, consider arranging your learning groups in a semi-circle or horse-shoe shape so that all learners can see each other when speaking. Otherwise, seat the learner with their group at the front of the class, slightly to the left or right of centre, and in a position where she or he can see you when you teach from the front of the class.

[9] From: https://lonerwolf.com/shadow-work-demons/ and https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/irish-refugee-commitments-hold-firm-in-face-of-anti-immigrant-backlash-1.4120667

Peers

- Make sure the learner has a group of friends who are helpful and ensure that a learner with a hearing impairment does not feel excluded. You may want to allocate a buddy/buddies, learners who would like to assist her/him on a regular basis.
- Consider asking another learner (a buddy) to take notes or share their written work so that the hearing impaired or deaf learner can focus on watching you. It is impossible to lip-read and write at the same time.
- In group-work activities, ensure that the learner with a hearing impairment is in a group of learners that she or he is able to easily lip-read. Some learners may not feel very comfortable reporting or sharing information with a larger group so consider allowing them to have other responsibilities within group-work activities. Encourage other learners to explain their work individually, if necessary.

Teaching tips and ideas

- Always get the learner's attention before you begin to speak. You may want to consider using an object or card (i.e. an image of an ear) to assist learners in taking turns to talk. When doing this you, or one of the other learners, must hold up or refer to the object or card before speaking. This allows learners with hearing impairments the time to identify and follow the speaker. Otherwise, they may miss out on vital information because they first have to identify the location of the speaker before being able to lip-read. It is also very tiring for them to do this and they often miss out on the first message of what is being said. This method should also be considered during group-work activities and especially during 'rapid-fire' activities where the teacher or speaker asks a question and learners are encouraged to shout out their answers.
- Repeat the comments and questions of other learners, especially those groups further away from the learner. Acknowledge who has made the comment so learners who are deaf or hard of hearing can focus on the speaker.
- Encourage the learner to look at your face – they will need to see your facial expression and may need to read your lips.
- Use gestures, body language and facial expressions when teaching and communicating.

- Keeping eye-contact is very important as it also shows that you are interested and want to communicate.
- Use pictures and objects as much as possible – this is good teaching practise for all learners.
- Never cover your mouth (with your hand, cup or pen) when talking and do not chew chewing-gum or food while speaking.
- Never face the board when talking or teaching. Remember that deaf and hearing-impaired learners need to see your lips and face to understand what you are saying.
- Write down instructions on the board or on the learner's exercise book (if the learner can read).
- Give demonstrations: for example, if you are teaching about measuring liquids, demonstrate with empty bottles and water.
- Give brief summaries during your teaching and check for understanding.
- Speak clearly but at a normal loudness level – do not shout as this makes lip-reading very difficult because it distorts your voice and lip-patterns.
- Periodically ask a 'W' question (what, who, why, when, etc.) to make sure the hearing-impaired learner has understood.
- Provide visual clues (e.g. have a picture about the topic available, when changing the subject write key words on the board, etc).
- Find out what government clinics or hospitals, NGOs or international organisations are available to test and provide hearing aids if appropriate. Make sure you learn how to test the hearing-aid batteries and change them if the learner is too young to do it themselves.
- If possible, and dependent on the age and literacy level of the learners, consider sharing your lesson notes or content beforehand. Lip-reading is much easier when the subject area is already known.
- Avoid handing out worksheets or books while talking or teaching because losing eye contact may also mean that learners miss out on important information.
- If you have limited textbooks or printed materials, then prioritise them for learners with hearing impairments as they may benefit more from visual texts and materials than from the hearing content being taught.
- If learners are ill, then encourage parents/care-givers to seek immediate treatment to reduce the risk of infections causing hearing impairment.

- To reduce risk of injury causing hearing impairment, make sure that learners do not hit each other around the head or ears, put objects in their ears or make loud noises such as screaming or clapping close to each other's ears.

Session 6: Including learners with physical impairments

Physical impairment

The term 'physical impairment' can cover a wide range of difficulties with body functions, which may require different strategies for support. Some learners may require personal mobility devices such as wheelchairs, crutches, or walkers. Others may need the assistance of friends, buddies or family members to help with daily functions such as feeding and toilet tasks. Some learners are born with physical impairments that developed during pregnancy (such as spina bifida), or as a result of factors like a lack of oxygen to their brains during birth (such as cerebral palsy), or a birth injury. Most learners acquire their disabilities later from accidents/injuries (e.g. car accidents, falls, etc.) or illness.

How can a teacher tell that a learner may have a physical impairment?

Physical impairments can affect bones, muscles, nerves, balance, and coordination. Learners with physical impairments may have impairments affecting their arms or hands and have difficulty holding objects such as pens. They may have difficulty moving around independently and safely, or they may have difficulty sitting in an upright position without support. Infants with physical impairments may be delayed in rolling, sitting, crawling and walking. A learner may have poor urine/bladder or bowel control. Many physical impairments can cause pain that is invisible to other people. Learners who have been in pain all their lives will often find it difficult to express this to others, but may be tired, sad, agitated or withdrawn.

How might physical impairment exclude learners from education?

Teachers sometimes presume that because a learner has a physical impairment, they will need special consideration or support in the classroom. This type of thinking, where teachers worry the learner needs a lot of support, may actually exclude learners with physical impairment from education. In fact, the learner may not need anything from a teacher – and may have already

arranged for friends and family to help, or can manage quite well independently. Sometimes the only thing that prevents a learner from getting an education is being able to get to school. Or, once at school, a learner using a wheelchair or crutches may not be able to physically enter the classroom because of stairs or uneven surfaces. Learners may also be excluded because there are no accessible toilets or equipment such as grab-rails, to assist them when they use the toilets.

It is important to ask the learner what she or he needs to be able to come to school and access lessons. The school or teacher should contact the family for advice and information about how the learner manages in their home environment. This is particularly important if the learner is young or too shy to tell the teacher what she or he needs. It is important for teachers to remember that pain from physical impairments can cause exhaustion and distraction from learning.

What can you do as a teacher to include these learners?

School environment

- Make sure that parents/care-givers, as well as the SIT, are aware of any problems that the learner has in getting to school, and ask them to work together collaboratively as a community to help. This could involve applying to government offices, DPOs or NGOs for assistive devices such as crutches, standing frames, wheelchairs, etc. If transport is an issue you can speak to local taxis or buses to arrange free transport passes, or organise people with transport to bring learners to and from school. There may also be someone in the community who has the skills and is willing to make an assistive device to help with the learner's mobility challenges.
- Not all accommodations require expensive materials or devices. Sometimes all that is needed is clearing existing pathways, or making them smooth.
- Make sure the learning environment is as accessible as possible. Involve the community in making ramps and handrails where necessary and/or clearing the ground, particularly after wet weather.
- Look carefully at the ground or floor surfaces and identify what can be done to prevent learners from tripping or slipping, as hazards can result in falls and possible injury.

Classroom environment

- Discuss with parents/care-givers or experts whether supportive seats are needed, and ask the SIT for help with making or buying these.
- At home, ask parents/care-givers, or the community, to assist with adapting furniture – e.g. a table may need to be made higher or lower so that a learner can reach it or fit their legs (or wheelchair) underneath it. A table may also need to be very close to the floor if a learner is using her or his feet to write.
- Collaborate with the school IECo, SIT, parents/care-givers and the community to discover what low-cost or free materials can be used to make your classroom more accessible. For example, a learner with restricted growth may benefit from being able to place and rest their feet on a pile of old magazines or newspapers if they do not reach the floor. You could use old bricks under the desk legs to make the desks higher so that a wheelchair can fit underneath, etc.
- Make sure the whole classroom is accessible and that it is not only the doorway that is clear. Desks should be well spaced, and grouped together, so there is enough room for movement. Floors should be free of obstacles – instruct all learners to keep the floor clear by hanging their bags on hooks or nails on the wall.
- Think carefully about where you seat your learners. Some may prefer to sit closest to the aisles so that they can move in and out from their desks easier, or can reach their crutches more easily.

Peers

- Make sure the learner has a group of friends who are helpful and ensure that a learner with a physical impairment does not feel excluded. You may want to allocate a buddy/buddies, learners who would like to assist her/him with physical tasks such as pushing a learner in a wheelchair from class to class, providing them with support if they find balancing difficult or are unsteady on their feet.
- Consider asking another learner/their buddy to take notes or share their written work so that a learner who finds writing difficult can focus on watching and listening during lessons.
- In group-work activities, ensure that the learner with a physical impairment can participate and is assisted by other learners in their group if necessary

(i.e. another learner writes down their answers, or assists their friend with transferring from a wheelchair to school bench/chair if required.

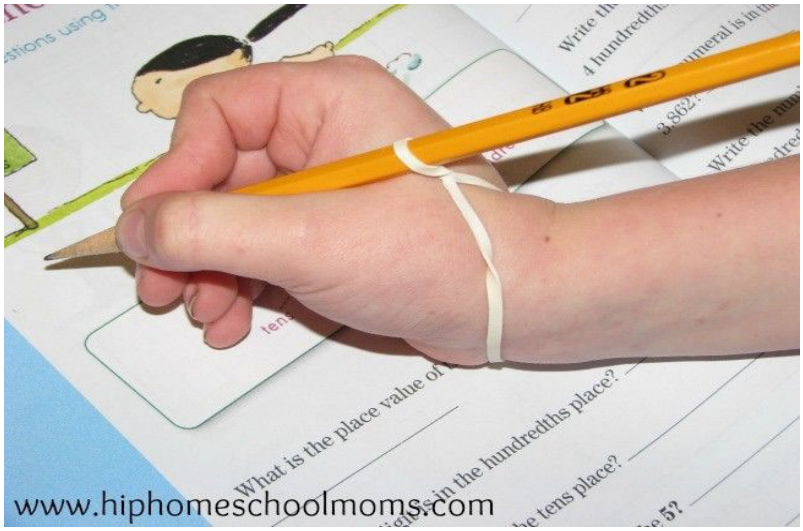
- Encourage peer support within the school – friends can help friends. Learners with impairments do not want to be singled out as different and they will not want to arrive late for lessons due to mobility barriers.
- Friends can help by pushing a wheelchair, carrying books or school bags, helping with getting to the toilet, or clearing pathways that are cluttered.
- Make sure that learners' assistive devices, e.g. wheelchairs, are not played with or used without permission. These devices need to be respected and cared for.
- In class, some learners may have difficulty with certain tasks that require fine motor skills, such as turning pages. Encourage other learners/their buddies to assist.

Teaching tips and ideas

- Never make any learner hold a fixed physical position for a long time as this could be painful and exhausting for them. Do not expect learners to sit still all day, particularly if they have a physical impairment.
- Monitor the situation and observe the learner to make sure that she or he is fully included in lessons, sports and games.
- Some learners may find moving from one classroom to another difficult or impossible (especially if the classroom is located on an upper floor or across an inaccessible surface). You may want to consider asking their teachers to move to different classrooms, rather than have the learners move. For example, a teacher on a second floor could move to a more accessible location on the ground floor to accommodate the learner for their specific lessons.
- If teachers are unable to move, allow additional time for the learner to move from class to class, and ensure that an easy-to-access seat or area is kept available for them to limit disruptions and feelings of exclusion. Make sure that you recap your lesson so that they do not miss out on information. Also encourage other learners to assist them. Remember moving from class to class, sitting through lessons and paying attention to the teacher may be very tiring for the learner.
- If a learner requires assistance with toilet tasks, ask them what they require and develop a plan. They may take longer to use the toilet, require running water or need assistance from friends, buddies or family, etc. Make sure

that you do not embarrass the learner and remember that your attitude and how you accommodate learners with impairments will impact on how they feel about themselves, and how they are viewed and accepted by other learners in your class and school. If you do not have an accessible toilet, or these are located too far from the classrooms, you can try to get permission for the learners with physical impairments to be able to use the toilet reserved for teaching staff.

- If a learner or family member has a smart phone or voice recorder, encourage them to record the lesson so that they can play the lesson back at home if they find writing in class difficult or too tiring.
- Adapt activities so that learners who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids, or who have difficulty moving, can participate. For example, if the lesson involves collecting things from outside (stones, etc.), ask learners to work in pairs so that just one of them goes to collect the items while the remaining learner begins to write about the topic (use a flexible approach to teaching and learning and adapt your lessons to accommodate learners with different needs).
- During games and sports activities, divide the class into 3 or 4 groups and offer a variety of activities so that they do not all involve moving around. Learners with physical impairments should have the same choices as other learners and not be restricted or left on the sidelines. If the learners have trouble with the activities, you can give them certain tasks, such as saying "ready, set, go!" at the beginning of races or completing the scoreboard. It is important to keep them involved in the activities in some way.
- Help learners with physical impairments develop skills that involve the use of body muscles and movement (**all** learners will benefit from this). Make plenty of time and space for non-competitive walking, running, dancing, and writing. Demonstrate and gently guide learners in these movements.
- If a learner has difficulty holding a pen, or keeping their page still while writing, then get advice from a physiotherapist or rehabilitation worker about how you can help her/him (see below).



Using an elastic band to help with holding a pencil[10]

[Image description: A hand is holding a pencil in the writing position, with the pencil between the thumb and first finger. An elastic band is wrapped around the pencil and the hand.]

- If learners find writing with a regular pencil too difficult, consider using a larger pencil, or wrap a rubber band around the pencil to stop their fingers from slipping.
- For examinations, negotiate with the inspectorate and examination boards to provide significant extra time for the learners, and/or allow someone to write the learner's answers down for them if necessary.
- Talk to parents/care-givers to find out if they have already taken the learner to see a specialist or rehabilitation worker who may have recommended specific exercises. Encourage the learner to do any exercises they have been given in school.

[10] From: https://hiphomewschoolmoms.com

Session 7: Including learners with health difficulties

Health difficulties

Health difficulties could exclude learners from education: illness can cause or worsen an impairment, a learner may experience brain damage from severe malaria, learners may catch polio and lose the ability to walk or bilharzia (Schistosomiasis) while fetching water from dirty water sources. Missing school through illness can mean a learner never catches up with their learning, loses confidence, falls further behind, and even drops out. Some long-term conditions do not cause visible impairments, but make the life of the learners more difficult by causing seizures or digestive problems. Some conditions cause a learner constant pain, which affects their level of energy and ability to attend school and learn. Some conditions remain constant while others deteriorate or fluctuate.

What can you do as a teacher to include these learners?

An inclusive teacher should try to find ways to help a learner who experiences health problems to come to school, learn in as much comfort as possible, and catch up with lessons. A teacher should notice if a learner is missing school or has trouble concentrating; should ask the learner what is wrong; and should speak to the learner's parents/care-givers, head teacher and school management team, the school IECo and the SIT for help.

- Make sure your school has clean drinking water available for learners.
- If possible, have snacks ready for learners who may feel faint or hungry – or encourage the school to offer a meal. There may be government, international or local NGO- or DPO-run feeding schemes that could be accessed for support.
- If a parent/care-giver, learner or other person shares confidential or sensitive information about a learner's health or personal situation, it is important that this information is not shared with the general public, other learners, teachers or anybody else without the consent of a parent/care-giver. Be sensitive and caring, especially when dealing with conditions that may have stigma attached, or are terminal.

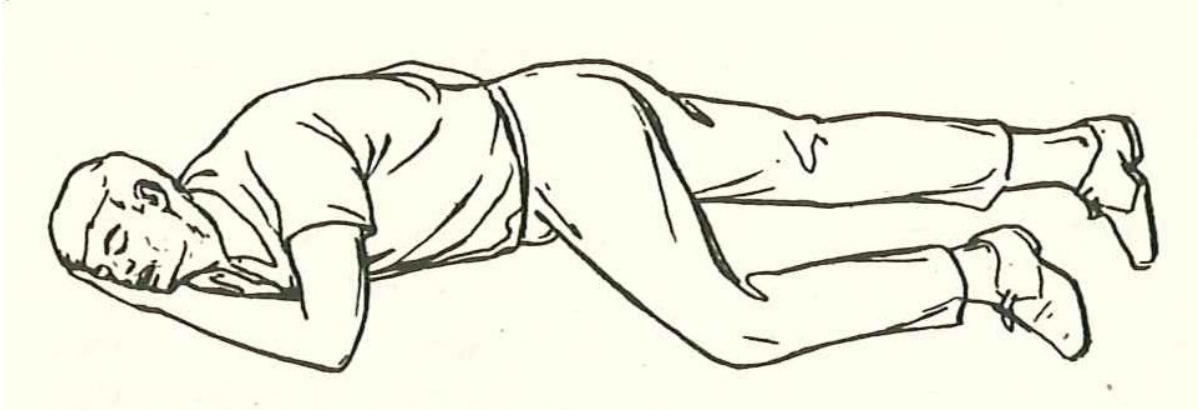
- Allow learners to change their position while seated. It can be painful or distressing for learners to sit still for long periods. Allowing learners to move does not mean they are badly behaved or are not paying attention.
- If a learner looks tired or weak, or has trouble concentrating, ask how they feel and how long they have been having these problems. If they have headaches, stomach pains or other symptoms that concern you, encourage the learner's parents/care-givers to seek medical treatment.
- If you are concerned about a learner, ask whether they have any pain. If so, encourage them to move frequently, and encourage their parents/care-givers to seek physiotherapy if available. Gentle massage is often helpful. Ask the school IECo and the SIT whether the community can help the learner's travel to school, or if there are volunteers who can give a few hours each week to act as teaching assistants to help the learner (and their classmates).
- Ensure that you give the remaining learners in your class the appropriate information (appropriate to their age and level) about the learner's situation. You do not want to scare learners, rather create a classroom of care and inclusivity. You need to address any teasing or bullying immediately and provide the correct information regarding a learner's difficulties.
- If a learner is missing school, ask their classmates why. Agree with your head teacher how many days of absence you will wait for before contacting the learner's parents/care-givers (or getting the head teacher to contact the parents/care-givers). Bring the parents/care-givers in for a meeting (or make a home visit), to find out why the learner is absent and how long it will be for.
- If a health condition will keep a learner away from school for more than a week, arrange to send back homework with a sibling or a learner who lives near the family.
- Every three months, review the attendance register and note which learners have missed more than two days of school. Under each learner's name, write down which parts of the curriculum they missed when they were not at school.
- Arrange to meet your head teacher and other teachers to discuss what could be done to help learners catch up with their learning. Could you help your strongest (e.g. gifted and talented) learners run some catch-up sessions after school? Could you assess learners' skills in key areas and organise catch-up lessons?

- If a learner will be at home for a long time with health problems, you can arrange to visit them at home once a week or every two weeks and give them homework. This will help with key learning. Explain the homework to parents/care-givers and/or older siblings, and ask them to supervise the learner's studies.

If a learner has seizures, for instance, due to epilepsy, or collapses during a lesson, follow these first aid steps:

- Stay calm. Remember if you are calm, the more likely the other learners will remain calm and listen to you.
- Look around – is the learner in a dangerous place? If not, do not move them. Move objects like furniture, e.g. desks and tables, away from them.
- If the seizure happens in the classroom, reassure the rest of the class that the learner will be all right and ask them to go calmly to a neighbouring classroom. This is because watching a seizure can be frightening for other learners, as the learner in seizure may have saliva coming out of their mouth, their eyes may look different and their body may jerk. If the seizure happens in the playground, do not allow the other learners to crowd around and stare.
- If the learner is having a seizure, note the time it starts.
- Stay with them. If they do not collapse but seem blank or confused, gently guide them away from any danger and get them to sit or lie down on the ground. Speak quietly and calmly.
- Cushion their head with something soft, like a school jersey, if they have collapsed to the ground or are having a seizure.
- Do not hold them down or try stop them from moving.
- Never put anything in their mouth.
- Check the time again. If a convulsive (shaking) seizure does not stop after 5 minutes, then call for urgent medical help – ideally an ambulance or other nearby medical help.
- After the seizure has stopped, put them into the recovery position (*see image below*) and check that their breathing is returning to normal. Gently check their mouth to see that nothing is blocking their airway, such as food.
- If their breathing sounds difficult after the seizure has stopped, call a doctor or local medical help or an ambulance.
- Stay with them until they are fully recovered.

- Keep a blanket or soft material to use for protection and keeping warm during seizures, periods of faintness, etc.
- When the learner recovers calm them down and reassure them that they will be all right. Most learners will have a very sore headache and their bodies may be stiff and sore. They may also be disorientated and tired.
- They may be worried or embarrassed as they may have wet themselves, and will have no memory of what happened during that period. Reassure them and stay with them.
- If they have wet or soiled their clothes, arrange for spare clothes to be given to the learner and wash their clothing.
- Reassure the rest of the class that the learner is going to be fine.
- Educate the class about the condition appropriate to their age and level. Stress that it is not a curse and the learner is not bewitched. Let them know that they cannot catch conditions such as epilepsy and that they need to be kind, helpful, welcoming and caring when the learner returns to class.
- Ensure that teachers in your school receive first aid training.



The recovery position[11]

[Image description: A man is lying on his side with his left hand under his head and his left leg bent at the knee.]

[11] From: www.epilepsysociety.org.uk/10-first-aid-steps-for-convulsive-seizures#.WNkK48ksD_R

Practical ways to promote learners' health

- Promote the benefits of vaccination with parents/care-givers and community members, as well as the school community. Invite doctors or nurses from local clinics and NGOs to speak to the school and community about the value of vaccinations and other basic healthcare practices. As a teacher, your judgement is respected. If vaccinations can be done early, learners will get sick less often and less severely.
- Encourage parents/care-givers to seek medical treatment for learners as early as possible. Where necessary, encourage the school IECo, SIT or parent-teacher association (PTA) to raise money for treatment. Find out what government, international organisations or local NGOs are available to assist you.
- Advise parents/care-givers to feed a sick learner often with small amounts of food, as well as providing plenty of clean water to drink. Recommend oral rehydration salts (a combination of salt, sugar and cooled boiled water) to parents/care-givers whose children have diarrhoea.

Session 8: Including learners with multiple impairments

Multiple impairments

Many childhood diseases or birth difficulties cause multiple impairments (particularly in relation to developmental impairments). For instance, a learner can be both deaf and blind, while hearing impairment can cause speech problems. For a learner with multiple impairments, communication may be the biggest challenge.

While a learner may have more than one impairment, try to establish which is less severe and focus your attention on providing as much support as possible on this impairment. For example, a learner who is deaf-blind may have slightly more sight than hearing so you could focus more on giving them some basic sign language to assist them in communicating. Remember that some conditions deteriorate, therefore, in many cases, early intervention is very important in giving the learner as many skills and tools as possible so that they can be as independent as possible.

Applying the suggestions from each impairment session will help. But, as with all impairments, it is impossible to predict how a learner with multiple impairments may be affected and what they can and cannot do.

Spend time with each learner and discover:

- What types of communication (speaking, drawing, sign language, writing, demonstrating, touch) work best for the learner? Use as much of those types of communication as possible. Encourage other learners in the class to do the same.
- What can the learner already do? Think of activities that encourage the learner to do more of those things and to build up their skills in that area. Remember that it may take time and that developing their confidence is very important.
- What is the learner interested in or what do they enjoy? Use this to plan tasks and activities, as they will be more likely to try them.

- What does the learner struggle with? Get others to help the learner with those difficulties, as well as demonstrating ways to improve whenever you can.
- Ask other teachers, parents/care-givers and the learner themselves, as well as other adults in their community with similar conditions for advice.
- Break information into small steps, and give small pieces of information at a time, if needed.
- Give parents/care-givers activities to do with their child at home. This will help their child make progress in learning.
- Record and celebrate progress and new achievements, with the learner, their parents/care-givers and other teachers and staff members.

Session 9: Including gifted and talented learners

Gifted and talented

What does being 'gifted and talented' mean? Learners who are gifted and talented include those who have:

- the ability to recognise and solve difficult and unusual problems;
- the ability to take in and process information quickly;
- the ability to see connections, relationships, and multiple perspectives;
- the ability to understand abstract and complex concepts;
- an extensive and detailed memory;
- an intense love of reading at a level higher than average;
- an advanced vocabulary and communication skills;
- curiosity in many areas;
- the desire to ask a lot of questions;
- an intense, sustained passion in one area, which may change over time;
- the ability to concentrate for long periods of time on projects of interest.

How might being gifted and talented exclude learners from education?

- We need to remember that while a learner may be able to think, reason and academically achieve at a higher level, some learners find managing certain social and emotional tasks challenging.
- Learners who are gifted and talented learn in a different way. They are often able to understand a concept and complete a task far quicker than other learners, and may be self-critical when being accurate or grasping something new. Some learners place a great deal of pressure upon themselves to achieve, which can lead to heightened anxiety and stress.
- Some learners are teased and excluded by their peers, and have feelings of not being able to 'fit-in' or of 'difference'.
- Many teachers do not realise that they have learners who are gifted and talented in their classrooms and therefore do not accommodate their

needs. Others place labels on learners which can increase anxiety, stress and the need to achieve.

- Many teachers only focus on accommodating learners who fall into a 'middle' group. As a result, many learners who are gifted and talented are not suitably challenged or extended. Some learners become bored or disruptive when their needs are not being met. This may lead to negative behaviour and labelling.

What can you do as a teacher to include these learners?

- It is vital that you get to know individual learner's strengths and challenges. Get to know your learner's interests and use these in your lessons and in activities to extend their learning and keep their interest.
- Understanding how your learners think and process information can assist you in developing extension activities that are suitable and stimulating.
- Create tiered tasks, activities and assessments. This will benefit all learners in your class. Ensuring that all learners are able to achieve and succeed in tasks that are pitched at their level is as important. However, it is also important to provide activities and tasks that extend your learners just beyond their comfort zones without discouraging them.
- Using examples that link to real-world events or situations is important. By doing this, learners gain skills that they can apply in multiple settings and contexts.
- Encourage learners to support and teach learners of different abilities. Sometimes learners can teach a concept to another learner in a far more creative and effective way than we can.
- Ensure that during group work or other activities, you use a variety of different groupings. For example, sometimes allowing learners to work with other learners who are stronger in certain areas will motivate and push them, while providing them with opportunities to share and explain. This may also increase their confidence and self-worth. However, you need to monitor your groups as you do not want other learners feeling insecure or stupid if they are not able to understand what a gifted or talented learner is sharing.
- Be aware that not all gifted and talented learners may excel in all areas. For example, they may be very strong academically in mathematics and social

science, but find physical activities such as sport or social engagements with other peers difficult.

- Provide learners with decision-making activities where they get to understand that their decisions may have consequences. Sometimes learners try to push themselves too hard and do not think of the consequences of their actions, and what the positives and negatives for each decision they make has on different areas of their lives (i.e. what the emotional consequence of studying late into the night will be).
- Encourage learners to take charge of their own learning. For example, encourage learners to find creative ways of extending the writing task that you have set.
- Give them additional projects or topics that they can research independently.
- Some learners are anxious and self-critical, so providing them with calming strategies and tools may be useful. Look into some options such as mindfulness and breathing techniques.
- Assist learners in finding mentors in their communities who share similar interests or skills with the learner. For example, if a learner is really interested in animals, then see if they can be mentored by a local vet or farmer who can allow them to link their passions and interests to real-world situations.
- Use vertical enrichment in your lessons, activities and assessment planning. Here learners are required to go above and beyond what is covered during your lesson. Do not only give learners more of the same task as this may lead to boredom or disruptive behaviour. Include higher-level thinking skills and problem-solving tasks. You may want to look at Bloom's Taxonomy[12] for ideas on how you can adapt questions and tasks to better suit your learner's interests and needs.

[12] See: https://tophat.com/blog/blooms-taxonomy-ultimate-guide/