

“What about the teachers?”

A duoethnographic exploration of ADHD in TEFL

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*27th November 2022, Mental Health in Foreign
Language Education, Maximilian Ludwig University*

Marc

Teacher-researcher

Listening /Phonology

Diagnosed ADHD aged 39



Matthew

Teacher / Trainer

Online PLN-based CPD & RP

Diagnosed with ADHD aged 16



To do

- ❑ Background
- ❑ Teacher identity
- ❑ Methodology & CPD
- ❑ Assumed prevalence of ADHD & support
- ❑ Strengths & weaknesses
- ❑ Conclusion

Background

Background

Burgeoning literature on language teacher psychology

- Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018
- Gkonou et al, 2020
- Morris & King, 2018

Gap

Teachers: neurotypical by default?

Only Gregersen et al (2020): case study, depression.

Questions for those unrepresented “become both personally and socially resonant.” (Sawyer & Norris, 2013. p. 1.)

Raising awareness?

Teacher Identity

ADHD has...

Shaped identity profoundly

Felt isolating

Made us feel embarrassed and insecure

Especially: *learner's* disorder

Fallout

Undiagnosing oneself (willpower not medicine)

‘Self-medication’: alcoholism in TEFL unaddressed
(but see Stainton, 2018)

Impulsivity: led Marc to TEFL; Matthew as a
reaction *against* impulsivity

But!

“not a disorder of knowing what to do, but of doing what one knows” (Barkley, 1997. p. 314)

Matthew: seeker of CPD, reflection, observation

Marc: need to be occupied, cognitively challenged at all times

Teaching Methodology & CPD

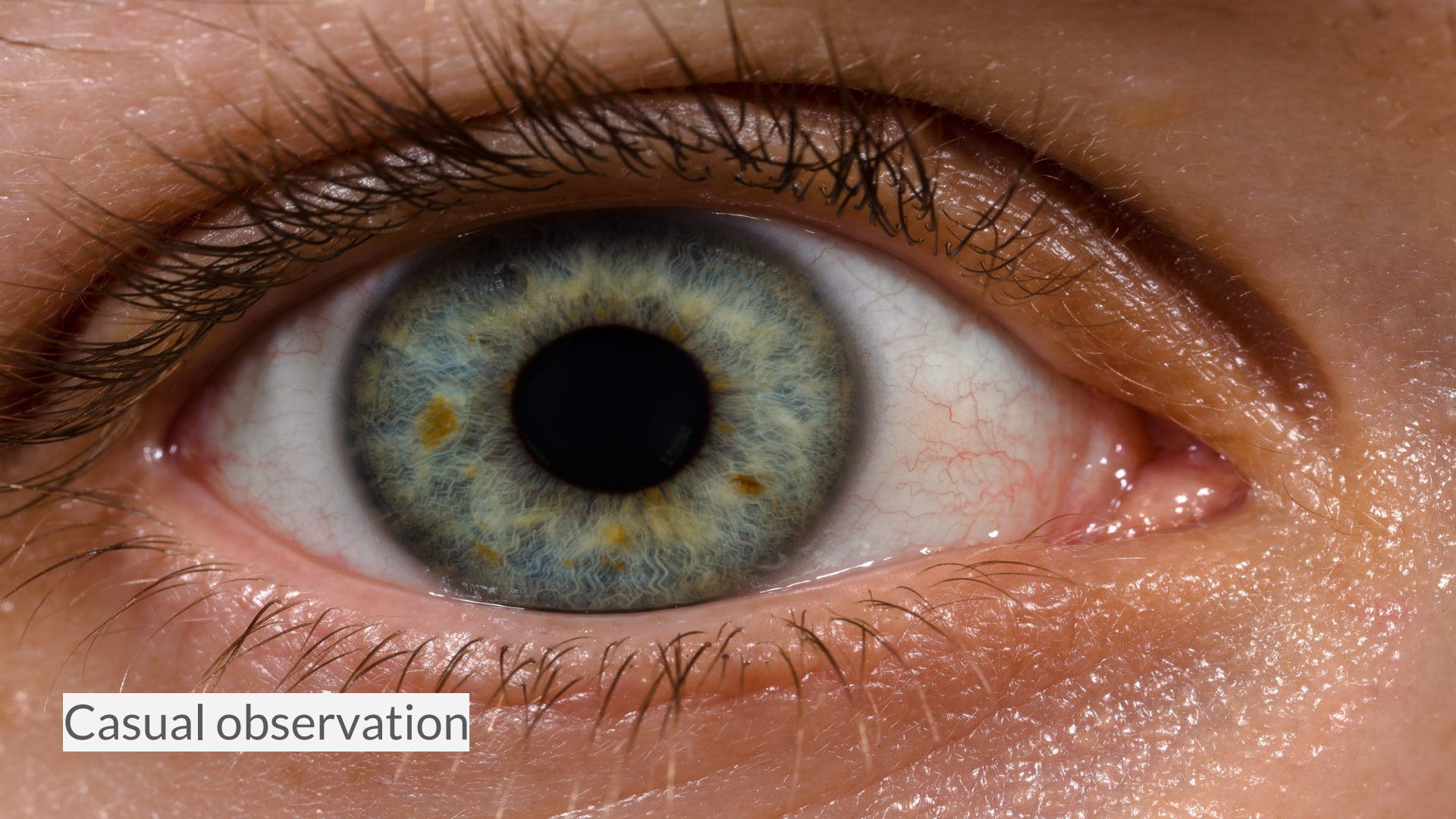
Conflict

Multidirectional friction:

'Teach like this' vs. evidence-based practice

Positive fallout

In a career requiring such a high degree of future-orientation (for planning) and self-regulation (for course management), I've had to learn to cope with and manage the many constant loose ends as I struggle to keep up.
(Matthew)



Casual observation

Assumed prevalence of ADHD in TEFL

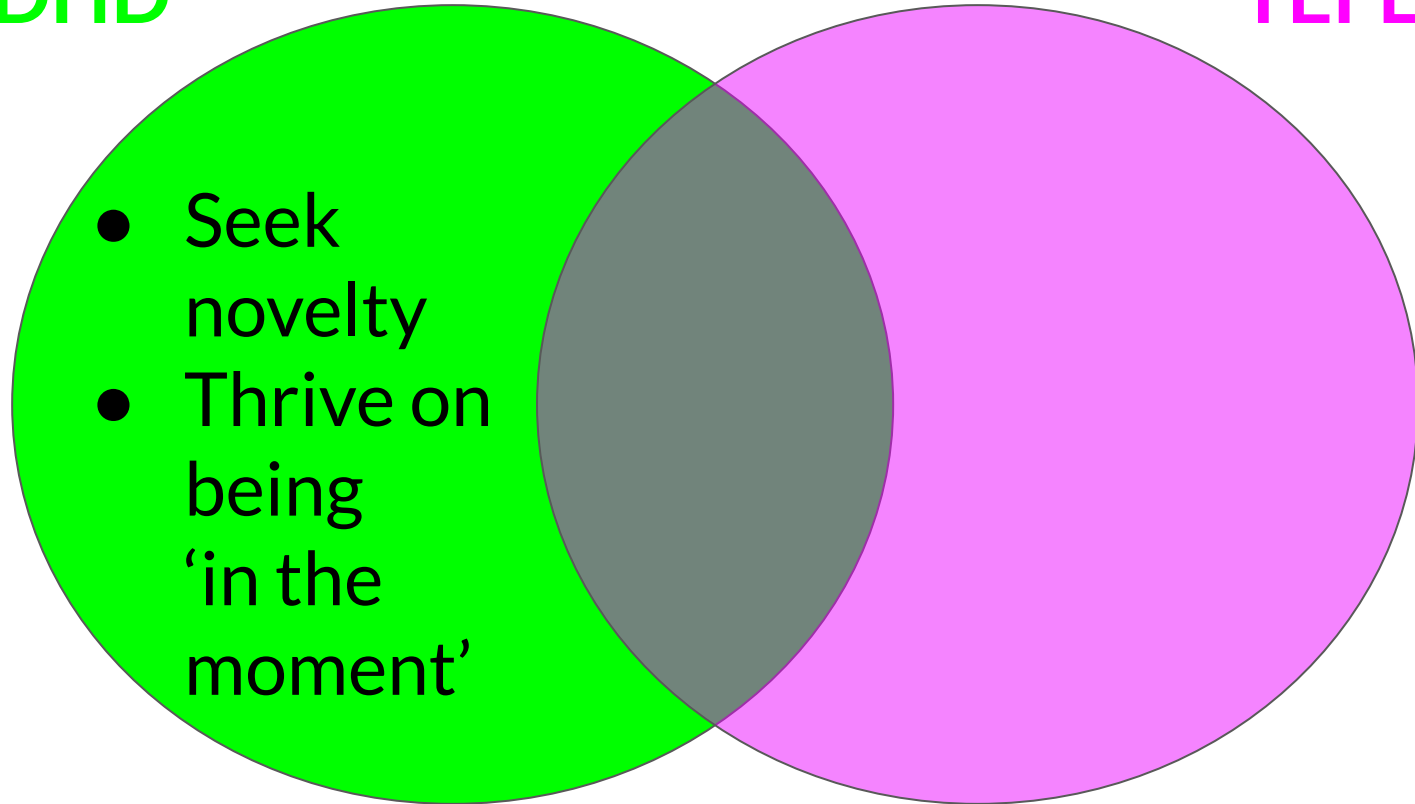
7.1%

Estimated prevalence of ADHD in the general population.

(Thomas et al, 2018)

ADHD

TEFL



ADHD

TEFL



Problems

Personality clashes & cultural misunderstandings

Legal & admin

Overwhelm

Adequate support?

Compounded problems

Transient workplace: few cues and reminders

Preparation spaces?

Access to psychiatric services:

stigma, disclosure (visa-granting agencies, etc)

Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths are weaknesses

Being in the here and now

Hyperfocus

Empathy (Rector-Aranda, 2019)

Weaknesses aren't strengths

Paperwork: complex course planning,
grading rubrics, filing

Excessive procrastination

Conclusion

Becoming-abled

I am *becoming-abled* (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013).

Steady job, Masters degrees.

Becoming-abled

What if:

- difficulty at work?
- a missed deadline?
- impulsive behavior?

Never actually *become* abled; just take on attributes

Conflicted feelings

Medication and internalized attitudes

Societal expectations of ADHD people

ADHDers' passion, creativity and reactive thinking.

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Preprint!

<https://edarxiv.org/xautd/>

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