

Managing Post-Covid Attention Deficit in Under-Graduate Classrooms

Suneeta De (suneeta.de@bcrec.ac.in);  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6174-1089>; Associate Professor,
Dr. B. C. Roy College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences, Durgapur, West Bengal, India



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Licensee JRSP-ELT (2456-8104). This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the **Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 International License**. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>). **Crossref/DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.54850/jrspelt.9.47.003>

Abstract: *Attention deficit disorders are extremely commonplace in most adults today. It is seen in teachers as well as learners. It is lived experience from classrooms, that one often struggles to find engaging activities that would disseminate the content of curriculum required, while not making a chore out of a class. The commonest approach to Teaching Communication is Communicative Language Teaching Method. This requires the participation of students as well as teachers to absorb new information through active involvement in a communicative process. While this works for a few first weeks, it is seen to fast decrease in terms of preference as the semester moves along. With the statistically proven drop in attention holding capacities of adults, post Covid 19, it has become increasingly challenging to plan class content and retain enthusiasm throughout the tenure of the class. The objective of this study is to attempt to probe the different ways in which subjects can be taken to the floor and made fascinatingly engaging for learners as well as teachers.*

Keywords: CLT, Post-Covid, Learning Management Systems, Online Teaching, Under-Graduate Classrooms

Article History: Received: 26 Dec- 2024; Accepted: 10 Jan-2025; Published/Available Online: 30 Jan- 2025

Introduction

A common sight in Professional Colleges in the first few minutes of a class is a cohort of stakeholders, teacher and learners, avidly engaged in a group discussion, a role play, a listening or speaking activity. Cut to the second half of that CLT class, teacher and learners remaining the same, the scene is sometimes that of a mélange of background activity while the teacher tries to re-engage the learners as their attention has drifted away to something else altogether. Many studies have mapped a marked dip in attention spans of learners, across the world, and have raised concerns about it being a post-Covid syndrome. Whether that is true or not and entails medical solutions, is a matter of on-going research. However, this poses significant challenges to the teacher and the student engaged in a lesson or activity that goes on for more than 30 minutes and is not always actively participatory in nature. There are certain modules in the curriculum of Communication, or any other subject, for that matter, which require an initial dissemination of information by the teacher. If such dissemination continues for more than 10 minutes at a time, both stakeholders tend to get weary. The sessions which require written responses from learners are, at times, comparatively worse in terms of learner interest. One finds a tendency to, in the very least; periodically check one's device for incoming updates, during such sessions. Defaulters in this regard are not only students. When there is a class on Group Discussion going on, participants in the group are also sometimes seen to lose interest while still being in conversation on the topic. Participants as well as evaluators zone out once they perceive that their role is done. It is truly challenging for anyone to continue to captivatedly engage in an activity for a length of time that is more than 10 or 20 minutes, if one is not an active participant in it. While this is easy to experience as a learner and conclude that the teacher or her class is less than inspiring, it is not as easy if one is a teacher, who herself feels disillusioned with the repetitive nature of some class activities carried out by different students, with the general sameness of outcomes. Covid taught us to get lost in an animated virtual world at a flick of a finger. It has habituated us to the luxury of continuing to move from content to content in an instant, searching for something more fascinating. The Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) that mankind now suffers from is not a geriatric condition, but one pervading across age-groups. The digital tsunami that one is riding for the last few years post the Covid19 pandemic, has attuned us to a host of information available at our fingertips. There are reasons to wonder if the attention deficit one encounters in a classroom is a result of ennui on the part of the teacher and the droning repetitiveness of the self-

same assignments. Or, if it was because of the reduced attention span of adults the world over resulting from Covid induced information formats.

A study of different research and discussion sites propose some new theories, which is focused upon in the Literature Review.

Literature Review

The phenomenon of studying attention spans is a recent phenomenon. Noted a few years back generally and post Covid 19 specifically, the learner today is under a deluge of digital information. Content and information are not lacking in the ambience for anyone with a smart phone. However, the amount of attention that a learner gives to a site is reducing as time passes. This has a domino effect on classroom teaching and seriously impacts outcomes of the teaching-learning process. Research for studies on this issue yielded the following material.

The study from the online resource (Sherrell, 2021) reveals surprising data to derive that what one considers a “disorder” may really be a subtle advantage some learners have over others. Learners with ADHD differ from their neurotypical counterparts in that:

- They have enhanced creativity
- They can hyper focus to the extent of zoning out of current context and residing only in a bubble of their craft.
- They are more resilient, as happens so often with people who are aware of their condition and determined to not let it limit them in any way.
- It is often found that learners with ADHD are more talkative, great conversationalists, more socially intelligent.
- These learners also have higher energy levels. Indeed, high energy levels combined with a capacity to hyper focus makes many of these people some of the greatest athletes and achievers in their league. Michael Jordan appears to be a case in point. The best way to manage these superpowers or advantages in a classroom would be to (a). Manage their environment and (b). Manage the peripherals of their activity roles for ex – time, emotions, planning etc. and allow these learners to go into their “zone” and perform.

In the study (<https://youtu.be/5jXkPoTq8bs?si=HTmfNhHO2sIkLKs>) and (McGinley, 2014) it is revealed that Attention Span Deficit may be managed by slow reading. This is a phenomenon that is propagated by Professors Newkirk and Mikics. Professors Thomas Newkirk and David Mikics have studied the phenomenon of attention span deficit recorded since the 2000s when it was 12 seconds, to 2013 when it was noted to have dropped to 8 seconds, which alarmingly, is lesser than the proverbial “goldfish.” The current studies put the adult attention span today to be 3 seconds and reducing. Professors Newkirk and Mikics have authored a book on this phenomenon where they advocate “slow reading” to be a solution. Mitigating learner disinterest and disengagement with words may be achieved by deliberate slow reading, practiced in book clubs, or in study groups. It seems to enhance absorption of content and increase brain function in savoring the experience through discussions and repetitions. Started by enthusiasts from Italy and the US, slow reading is popular among many adults who have shown remarkable benefits in terms of both, retention as well as comprehension, of content (Bradbury, 2016). Here one finds a purposeful deliberation on the purported attention deficit plaguing Gen Z and has the distinguished Dr Neil A Bradbury – in his paper in Advances in Physiology Education 2023journals.physiology.org, very categorically arguing in favor of smaller lecture lengths.

In his study published on 8th Nov2016, titled “Attention span during lectures: 8 seconds, 10 mins or more?” (Bradbury, 2016), Bradbury notes that traditional lectures are under scrutiny for their continued efficacy. Some institutions have reduced their teaching sessions to the duration of 10 or 15 minutes in length, based on “common knowledge” and “consensus.” The reasons for which a learner appears to disengage after 10 to 15

minutes is not clear. It could be the teacher, the learner who suffers fatigue or it could be the content which is unappealing. The duration of a typical TED Talk is 18 mins. The premise for this being that 18 minutes is long enough for serious deliberation, but crisp enough to sustain attention. Lectures, as we know it, first started in the 11th century. The duration was probably about an hour. This format of the 50-minute lecture continues to this day. It has been recorded though, that beyond 10 to 15 mins, the learners' attention begins to wane precipitously. In 2015, a study commissioned by Microsoft found the average attention span of adults to be 8 seconds. This was famously quoted to be "less than a goldfish." It is scientifically difficult to measure the attention span of a goldfish but what has been measured is the retention capacity or memory, according to School of Psychology at the University of Plymouth. The 8 second time span is actually the time that an adult spends on browsing a website, before moving on to another. This is the data from before Covid19. In the book "Tools for Teaching," Davis states that "...student attention during lectures tend to wane after approximately 10-15 mins." McKeachie, in "Teaching Tips" (8th Ed) maintains that "Attention typically increases from the beginning of the lecture to 10 minutes into the lecture and decreases after that point." This was correlated by a study done by Maddox and Hoole (Kiewra, 2020) mapping "note-taking" that increases up to 10 mins into the lecture and declines thereafter." Hartley and Davies (1978) however, disagree. Many researchers (Bunce et al., 2010; Johnstone & Percival, 1976; Stuart & Rutherford, 1978) carried out direct experiments on learners and recorded their observations. These observations aligned with the attention-span waxing-upto-10-min-mark-and-waning-after-that-theory. McLeish's report of the work by Treneman contends that there is an inverse relationship between length of lecture and content retention. It is interesting to note that attention peaks again at the end of a lecture session, as noted by Giles et al. (1982). In the book "What's the Use of Lectures?" Bligh (2000) highlights learner interest spiking for "performances" by faculty groups or pairs involved in disseminating knowledge rather than "solo" efforts. These sessions also subliminally teach learners how to interact professionally.

The days of the "sage on the stage" seem to have passed. The times require "guides by the side" instead. Podcasts and recorded lectures are also attention grabbers today. However, the emotional connect of a live teacher in person, if achievable; makes the virtual modes seem unappealing. The "emotional buy-in" of learners is crucial to retaining both interest and content (Mills & Mark, 2023). In a podcast on "Speaking of Psychology: Why our attention spans are shrinking," with Gloria Mark, PhD (Episode225). Gloria discusses different kinds of attention. She begins with the thoughts of William James, the father of psychology: "There are times when people are focused and engaged in rhythms rather than in a sustained and continuous manner. Gloria mentions noting the timings of persons working at their computers and then after rhythmic intervals, zoning out. The median tenure of continuous attention was 40 secs. This was around the late 2010s. Gloria Mark also differentiates between "attention" and "attention flow." She references Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2008) and what he calls the optimal state of attention. When people immersed in a task lose sense of time. According to Mihalyi, "flow" is an optimal state of attention where a task is challenging and engaging enough to cause an immersive effect. While this ensures a complete single-minded focus of attention, after a period of time, this can become exhausting. This brings one to the natural breakpoint of attention and is an inevitable requirement of disconnection. This break of attention requires recharging and/or resting of the brain may be then different from "attention deficit." In page 29 of The Anatomy of Consciousness, Mihalyi discusses how the limit of human brain is said to have a processing power of "126 bits of information per second, or 7560 per minute, or half a million per hour."

Conversely, in order to listen actively, one needs to process 40 bits of information each second. The nervous system is "adept at 'chunking' bits that comprise habits. Therefore, to a seasoned driver, driving a car does not require processing information. It is almost automated. Mihalyi however contradicts himself in the very next paragraph when he mentions that consciousness is an infinitely open system. "Attention" is defined by the author as a distinct process that attracts relevant bits of information from the ocean surrounding us. Those who can control their attention efficiently, are not easily distracted. However, there is a dissonance of this idea in the post Covid classroom where young adults are often in the presence of multiple media of information. Their engagement time for any and all of which is close to only 8 to 18 minutes. Today TV as well as YouTube also

promotes more “shorts” than full length films, serials, commercials. This too seems to feed into the attention deficit syndrome of adult consumers. Indeed, Al Khomri Law, instituted in 2016 in France, actually legislates the right to disconnect. Periodic, after office hours, or on personal time offs, the adult employee may exercise her/his right to be unavailable on a digital device. This is acceptable in the states of France, Ireland, Ontario, to name a few places. It is believed that intelligent people are easily distracted because there are so many different things going on in their minds at any given point in time, that they find it difficult to focus on any one specific task given (Wooll, 2022) focuses on Attention Deficit Management. Some of the best ways to reduce distractions and improve attention tenure is to follow the following practices:

- Remove devices from vicinity that are required for the work at hand- this advisory seems plausible and natural until one factor in the necessity of the device as being central to the activity under discussion.
- Avoid multitasking - This is definitely a suggested step in the right direction. Multitasking does encourage one to distribute one’s focus onto many tasks, other than the one that attention is measured for.
- Practice active listening so that one can remain focused. Also, in line with actionable results.
- Indulge in some physical exercise before performance- known to increase oxygenated blood flow to the brain. It also synchronizes the body and the mind towards the task ahead.
- Staying hydrated - ensures optimal physiological fitness.

Some of the reasons that cause attention deficit are:

1. ADHD – when diagnosed clinically, becomes more of a learning challenge than mere attention deficit or distraction. Solution to ADHD, once diagnosed conclusively, requires clinical intervention.
2. Neurological Disorders- management requires experts in the field outside the classroom.
3. Learning Disabilities- require non-classroom interventions, for the most part (Ducharme, 2023) Aug 10th 2023, in an article on Mental Health, titled “Why Everyone’s Worried About Their Attention Span-and How to Improve Yours” by Jamie Ducharme, there is a reference to Margaret Sibley*’s study on adolescence and adults who have attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder –ADHD, including some people who fear they have a dysfunction, even if actually they do not. What this signals is a rising worry of lack of attention holding. The adults are concerned that “focusing is getting harder.” *(Sibley is a Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Washington School of Medicine.) Adam Brown, Co-Director of the Centre for the Attention, Learning and Memory at St. Bonaventure University in New York is concerned that attention deficit is reaching epidemic proportions. However, he feels that this problem may be corrected. He believes that the one of the reasons for this is the ambient device-noise in current days. Device notifications and “alerts” flashing on the screens provide tiny doses of dopamine that work as a reward system in the body. Barbara Shinn Cunningham, Director of the Neuroscience Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, does not believe one is “losing” focus. If anything, she believes that there is a constant focus on data on devices. The Bradbury contention that focus lapses every 10 to 15 mins is considerably contested. While focus may shift from one thing to another, it does not support the idea that attention deficit is lack of continuity on any one area of interest. Multitasking may not, here, mean that there is attention flow (Brain Balance, 2021). This study focuses on the normal age-based expectations of Attention Spans. Average attention spans are as follows:

- 2 years old: four to six minutes
- 4 years old: eight to 12 minutes
- 6 years old: 12 to 18 minutes
- 8 years old: 16 to 24 minutes

- 10 years old: 20 to 30 minutes
- 12 years old: 24 to 36 minutes
- 14 years old: 28 to 42 minutes
- 16 years old: 32 to 48 minutes

This is a generalization that depends on task assigned and distractions. These seem no longer valid post Covid. The uniform attention span now is 10 to 15 minutes (Roberto, 2023). Microsoft conducted a research survey in 2015 that found average adult attention span to be 8 seconds. Generation Z (born 1997-2012) represents the newest wave of digital natives who decide to pursue or ignore information based on the first 8 seconds of engaging in it. The few determinants that influence pursuance are as follows:

- Quick response to queries
- User friendly (web) experience
- Smartphone compatible interference
- Vertical video format as opposed to YT video in landscape mode
- Simple content
- Informal, short, clean and unpolished content
- Name dropping may be considered archaic

Methodology

The paper aims to study the available information, and review it on the basis of lived experiences as a teacher over the last 2 decades. Innovations in pedagogy have made a notable difference to learner attention and engagement in classrooms.

Discussion

Noted since 2015, the reduced attention span of adults is a matter to not only be studied and verified in different contexts but also to be discussed with reference to its techniques for management. Lived experiences over the last few years have made many a teacher give learners what they want. Learners know what they do not want, even if their exact wants are not clear at many levels. They do not want a “sage on stage” in classrooms. Chalks work best in all types of classrooms because they can be used spontaneously and creatively on the basis of an immediate ask. They are not device or electricity dependent. However, for the same reasons, they are also, somewhat unappealing to Gens Z (1997-2012) and Alpha (born 2010 onwards). While teachers are able to “create” an analogy on a teaching board with their chalks, or markers or stylus, learners tend to prefer multisensory media where the world and its sages can come together on a screen creating for the learner a multitude of inputs and perspectives and images of a single idea. Suffice then to safely conclude that chalk and talk do not work to attract learner attention for a considerable period of time. Exceptions do not disprove this derivation.

How then can one address the issue of reduced attention span among adults impacting classroom learning? 2020 saw the whole world function on a plethora of online platforms thereby giving us a taste of myriad possibilities, avenues, resources of learning hitherto unexplored by the average learner. Some typical Post-Covid19 Attention Deficit issues have been chosen below, in order to be discussed in focus and solutions proffered, so that professionals may test for effectiveness.

1. Post Covid Fatigue- While Online Teaching – Learning as practiced during Covid19 shutdown, gave rise to a bouquet of courses, digital tools, platforms of connectivity, as well as Learning Management Systems (LMS), it

also brought on its share of woes. Over exposure to digital content, exhaustion from being constantly online in order to somehow absolve oneself of the guilt of not being physically present and continuing to be treated as “at work/school” bore upon one’s psyche and one did yearn for a return to in-person contact by the end of it all. However, both for the teachers as well as learners, digital content had become a quick and an efficient substitute for resources at work as well as for leisure. This habit of having a choice to “browse” resulted in random disappointment and boredom at not having much, in an in-person classroom. This, then, resulted in breaks in attention because one person, 1 content, 1 mode was not satisfying and engaging enough anymore. Irrespective of a talented and erudite teacher disseminating content, learners “tuned out.” And this usually happened into 10 to 15 minutes into a class. It is a time to go back to the drawing board to explore options one had used successfully in the past, albeit for other subjects, reasons, etc. perhaps periodically in the curriculum.

2. Project Based Learning (PBL) is a case in point. One of the important reasons why one yearned to get back to in-person work/learning was that one yearned to be part of a group and work together while being together physically. To recreate this feeling in class, teachers may consider giving them a live project, related to the area of study and let the learners learn through the process of figuring out a way to reach desired outcomes, trying out different paths, delegating responsibilities, discovering each other’s strengths and weaknesses, overcoming setbacks and learning to communicate their way through it all. It is common for some terms, semesters, etc. to have these sorts of engagements prescribed in the curriculum. However, it need not be limited to mandated projects only. One could incorporate a real world feel to any subject in any part of the program and get learners engaged in it. This has yielded significant interest and little to no attention deficit among learners as well as while at work.

3. Research Based Learning (RBL) is gaining traction the world over as mankind endeavors to leapfrog from a Type 0 civilization to a Type 1 civilization. No learning can be successful in an isolated silo. Teaching Learning has to integrate contents from the outside world in which its outcomes are designed to impact. There is a strong requirement of a synergy between the learners’ world in the classroom where foundational theoretical principles are discussed, and the industry/world of action where the classroom learning has to be applied practically. Therefore, the model of RBL is a powerful tool to allow learner interface with the outside world whether online or offline, collect and survey inputs in the relevant field, collate and analyze such information, classify and look for patterns that would ensure the accumulation of augmented knowledge outcomes.

4. Total Physical Response (TPR) propounded by Dr. James Asher, correctly concludes that there is a definite connection between language acquisition in the left hemisphere of the brain and motor skills of the right hemisphere of the brain. This could also be seen as a form of exercise that one undertakes during the class, to facilitate learning, comprehension and retention of information. Role Plays, Simulations of Case Studies, (Mock) Interviews, Debates, Skits and Street Theatre, Music and Dance are all considered proven ways to ensure better Teaching-Learning outcomes, and fewer Attention Deficit moments. Personal experiences with TPR in a Business Communication Teaching class have resulted in phenomenal participation and better attention spans. However, TPR can be a challenge as well, if the class is culturally heterogeneous, in that, for cultural and /or traditional reasons, some learners do not wish to participate in any activity involving movement. This could be born of a fear of judgment or social awkwardness in a mixed gender class.

5. Story Boards – work well for artistic and visual teachers as well as learners if they can create it to flesh out their ideas and learning into a 2D visualization. There are the Traditional Story Boards with paper and pencil, the Digital Storyboard which can have 3 D effects with Augmented Reality (AR) and/or Virtual Reality (VR) and the ubiquitous Thumbnail Storyboard that appears everywhere in present times. Most animation videos and even short features are preceded by thumbnail representations of the storyline. It is the miniature preview of content that is being planned for exhibit. There is software available that assist in creating Storyboards. Storyboarding, if possible, in class is a sure shot tool for attention retention and learner engagement. However, the prerequisites for this sort of a class would be digital.

6. AI as a Resource – While the world is debating the pros and cons of AI and its applications in terms of ethics and safety, AI sits quietly in all our devices and machines, monitoring our every move. It is already omnipresent. Perhaps nowhere more so than in our learners’ lives. Hence the time to question its veracity and applicationality is long past. The best way forward in the present scenario is to make it work to assist us in achieving our outcomes. We have already actively utilized Learning Management Systems (LMS) during Covid19, and have reaped immense benefits from the tools offered by Microsoft, Google, Webex etc. Dashboards, AV, VR are the new ways to promote immersive and interactive learning. If a live and editable platform is available to the stake holder of teaching learning process, there is more engagement and less chances of zoning out of the activity, lesson or process in question. It has been observed as part of one’s lived experiences, that the “drifter” (learner with an ebbing concentration) tends to be more focused if continuously put in charge of the learning by doing process. Though expensive and not easily available to many classrooms in India, it is undoubted that immersive experiences like 3D modeling, Augmented and/or Virtual reality promote better attentiveness and longer attention spans.

7. Blended Learning – Hybrid Lessons, Flipped Classroom, Self-Learning, Buddy System are some of the composites of Blended Classes which incorporate both face to face sessions with a robust amount of screen-time. It is futile to resist technology, devices and the world-wide-web being infused into teacher talk and curricular content. Traditional dissemination of knowledge follows the path of maximum teacher activity in class, followed by invited participation of learners. It is not always voluntary- the spontaneous engagement of learners in given tasks. Flipped classrooms where the teaching content has already been shared among learners, and the classroom merely acts as a discussion and doubt clearing arena, are also a novel method of keeping the learner focused in class. Self-Learning is another gift to us from the pandemic Covid 19. Confined within the walls of our homes and relying only on devices, almost all of us learnt from the YouTube, the web, everyday retooling and up skilling and adapting to the myriad challenges of WFH. This self- learning is not something the teacher in an in-person class, harnesses anymore. One is too comfortable being the “sage on the stage,” which is not quite necessary. The Flipped Classroom is one of the many ways to inculcate “self-learning.” With a tremendous amount of globally accredited content widely available online in present times, one definitely second guesses the relevance of brick-and-mortar learning centers which confine learners in a zone they are not always open to being confined in. In self-learning, the learner chooses her own time, place, topic, media and hence there is very little chance of her losing focus and attention. Buddy System or Pair Work is collaborative in nature thereby ensuring that attention on the task is not lost. Any pair or group activity with a buddy is something that most learners find enriching. Loss of attention is often not an issue in this case.

8. LEO – Peer Learning or Learning from each other (LEO) in a classroom, is preceded by auto correction or self-correction. Both these methods of one reviewing one’s own work and automatically realizing the points of improvement, and the second layer of editing by colleagues in class, encourages learning through introspection and dialogue. This trains for self –learning as well as empowers a person to become a lifelong learner. It is common practice of many teachers to consider a learner as an empty vessel into which knowledge or information needs to be poured. That is rarely the case. All learners are resources of rich knowledge themselves in an area of expertise known and unique only to them. Unknown to the teacher, this reservoir of knowledge remains untapped if not encouraged to be shared and discussed in class. Though language may be a prohibitive factor in this sharing, it is nonetheless imperative that all make a concerted effort to engage in whatever way possible to harness this immense wealth and creativity in class. There are numerous ways in which a peer is able to add value to another’s assignment in a way not envisioned by the teacher. Learning from each other (LEO) is, therefore, an integral new way of keeping all learners focused on a task even when there might be one student performing at a time.

9. Considering learner diversity as a resource is an encouragement to teachers to welcome heterogeneous classes and not try to impose too many strictures in a bid to generate some homogeneity. Filters are often set up to ensure a semblance of sameness to the profile of learners that one has in a class. This homogeneity, even if artificially induced or hypothetically assumed, translates into a level of assignments, tests, tasks and mode of

content delivery. Heterogeneous classes, with differences in language, competence, and geographical areas of origin, etc. contribute to a richer and more complex learning environment. “One-size-fits-all” – assignments and lecture patterns are sure to make learners zone off in course of the class. The only way to keep the focus and attention “on,” is to take the content and curate different content assessment techniques and different levels of tasks that different profiles of learners would effectively enjoy. Learner Diversity, when utilized as a resource, becomes one of most spontaneous and creative wealth that keeps the learner attention focused on the action within the classroom.

10. Use of Multiple Languages in class is now a mandate in many institutions in India, per The National Education Policy 2020. This makes it easy for the learners to express themselves even when learning a foreign language, or a second language like English. It is important to mention here that institutes in India teach English as a second language (ESL). As practiced in many environments, language is taught best when immersed in the environment of the language, its culture, etc. and not by means of its syntax. However, in Indian classrooms, when taught immersively, loss of attention is a possibility for those who cannot comprehend it at all. On the other hand, if interlaced with chunks in the regional and, or the national language, accepted mostly as such, attention remains a little more concentrated upon the subject of discussion in class. The 3 Language Policy advocated by the National Education Policy of 2020 (NEP 2020) inadvertently created an extra dimension of focus for attention deficit learners, who by the sheer novelty of a new language used in the classroom, avoids their mindfulness to ebb.

11. Multiple Intelligences among learners is yet another issue which when not harnessed effectively in a classroom may transform from a resource to a roadblock. One often wrongly assumes that learners of a certain academic level will be equally proficient in the areas of curricular ask. That is far from reality. A learner not at all comfortable with language may be a connoisseur of art, music, a passionate and intuitive athlete, a wizard with numbers. If only one can identify these intelligences, acknowledge their richness and use it to build context for language use, one would not have their attention and focus in class drifting off when taught language through its literature or any other frame of reference that they do not resonate with. The underlying logic here is the presumption that perhaps a certain amount of disinterest and attention deficit of the learner comes from dissonance with the reference frames or contexts being used in class. When teaching Language, it is advised for teachers to do what the Chinese do in their English classes in China. They use the English Language to tell Chinese stories, and propagate Chinese ideas. This is a surefire method to tap into the indigenous wealth of knowledge of the learners, albeit in the language of the teaching mandate.

12. Learner Challenges – ADHD, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Dyslexia, Autism, L1 Interference, Cultural Anxiety are all proven obstacles to the path of learner engagement in class. These are psychological and sometimes medical conditions arising out of some actual impairment of learner. These are issues that contribute to attention deficit disorder in class. Management of Challenges include taking into consideration the following suggestions that may be considered in a classroom:

- Non-Linear Teaching- To keep the class interesting and spontaneous, it is oftentimes wise to not stick to pre-published lesson plan. One comes across learners who are in class not to learn but to merely mark their presence to meet attendance criteria. When they expect a topic coverage and are offered something else altogether, it could pique their interest.
- Facilitation- The days of “sage on the stage” is well and truly over. Time is ripe for teachers to encourage learners to learn themselves, while offering them support of whatever resources they need.
- Teacher-Performer – It is not enough to be a disseminator of knowledge anymore. Teachers may not have more knowledge than the web. In this situation, one may unapologetically source additional knowledge from internet and simplify, creatively curate, or present information visually to engage learners better. In this case, teachers are required to be performers, often enacting in the classroom a certain aspect of body- language, module of Communication via communication games etc. Literature

studies perhaps afford the occasion for performances, better. However, Language Studies, Communicative English classes may include role-plays, small skits, street theatre shorts, jingles, etc with the facilitator playing an equitable role.

- Technology as a resource – Post Covid19, life in all its aspects, from the mundane to the professional, exists in the hybrid format of the in-person co-existing with the virtual platforms. There used to be a time when it was a matter of debate whether phones would be used in classrooms. Not anymore. The devices today are sources of content and research. As a teacher of Communication, one finds varied content on LSRW, sample cases for Role Plays, Live Aptitude worksheets, Group Discussions as well as Personal Interview Shorts to keep more than a semester of classes engaging and enriched. These resources, being accessible on the phones of the learners in the classrooms, become a treasure trove of repository that could keep the learner engaged and interested for longer durations than normally would have been the case.
- Learner Centricity – Ever since one relied on self-learning in the WFH context, post 2019 pandemic, one is used to learn at one's own pace, time and per one's own content-preference. Hence it is moot that the teacher today is only a facilitator who paces the learning process along the lines of student preferences. YouTube, Reels, Shorts and Pinterest video lets are replete with byte and bite sized content that explain any and every query of the modern mind. Google and other search engines, imbued as they are with their AI Bots, are a one stop shop for all knowledge, tailored to the required locational, time and language preferences. The teacher may well be absent and learning would still continue. Hence the top-down methods of teaching-learning are obsolete and engaging in that provoke s the learner disinterest heavily.
- Agility- With technology evolving at nearly warp speed, curricular content and accrediting academic bodies cannot truly keep up. Premier institutions in India notwithstanding, most academic process and programs fall short of being able to bridge the skill gaps that exist between Industries and Academia. Irrespective of age, the need of the hour today is that all stakeholders of the teaching-learning process practice agility towards the process. Assignment formats, Testing, Teaching, or Facilitating concepts are changing all the time. Priority areas of teaching content are not excluded from this flux. Grammar, today, may not be taught syntactically. Coding Languages, indeed coding in itself, may soon be totally unnecessary. History, irrespective of country, is constantly being rewritten from different perspectives. AI has forced netizens to reconsider their knowledge and upskill adequately. Keeping the learners on their feet with this dynamism and fluidity of the academic process forces focus on the task at hand.

Conclusions/Implications

One of the obvious ways in which a teacher-facilitator may look at the attention deficit issue, present in classrooms today, is mandating that the surfeit of “lecture” time be reduced and diverse activities be incorporated to substitute it. However, though radical, it is easier said than done. The second consideration would be to offer a shorter duration class. There is some research that points to the ineffectiveness of a 50 min session in today's time. There is also, a negotiated acceptance of a shorter “lecture” session, which could be followed by diverse activities, catering to different categories of learners, who would be simultaneously engaged effectively. One cannot but wonder at the practicality of these wonderful ideas in a classroom in India with a capacity of 60 learners in a batch. Would there be teacher-facilitators handling smaller classes? Multiple activities at the same time would require simultaneous monitoring and evaluation of the same. Would that be practicable? One could lament screen time and the bane of options /drop menu, both of which seem here to stay. In the face of these different scenarios that hint at a solution to the pronounced Attention Deficit in Young Adults, post Covid19, lies the dilemma of an effective teacher- facilitator; to co-exist with AI/Online Resources or to dominate/surrender to it. Lived experiences have taught one to use the tools available to support one's effort in the classroom. The learners have access to them anyway and will not shy from using them. It is through harnessing ideas like these that are available, tested and proven effective to a decent extent, by which the

present-day teacher-facilitator may choose to allow for a robust amount of agility in the planning of content, the delivery/management of that content.

Towards that end, the template for reimagining a lesson plan for learners in the present times may be along the following lines:

Mode of work- LSRW

Divide work into small parts

Accept late work

Positive reinforcement (Reward not punish)

Book/Pictures encouraging visual, tactile, sensory inputs

Gamify comprehension

Despite being designed to curate content delivery for children, this lesson plan may be adopted and adapted for young adults with incorporation of many activities, robust technology support as well as peer evaluation modes to keep the session engaging. It is interesting to note that the study advises placement of students away from window (Julian, 2024; Graciele Joie Reganit, 2024). The teacher-facilitator, post Covid, has then evolved into a counselor and therapist who customizes content and media of dissemination of curricular content as per the needs and wants of the learner. Very few classes may be the same. Predictability becomes a thing of the past. To be schooled by the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, one must remember that attention and concentration are different. While the former is the natural willful “flow” of energy when the mind is calm and harmonious, concentration has to be forced. Meditative techniques could address the seeking of constant newness that has contributed to post Covid attention deficit in many young under graduates in India.

References

- Benjamin Jr., L. T. (2013). Lecturing. In S. F. Davis & W. Buskist (Eds.), *The teaching of psychology: Essays in honor of Wilbert J. McKeachie and Charles L. Brewer*. Psychology Press.
- Bhatia, S. C., Madabushi, J., Kolli, V., Bhatia, S., & Madaan, V. (2013). The Bhagavad Gita and contemporary psychotherapies. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 55(6), 315. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.105557>
- Bligh, D. A. (2000). *What's the use of lectures?* Jossey-Bass
- Bowen, J. A. (2012). *Teaching naked: How moving technology out of the classroom will improve student learning*. Jossey-Bass
- Bradbury, N. (2016). Attention span during lectures: 8 seconds, 10 minutes, or more? *Advances in Physiology Education*, 40(4), 509–513. <https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00109.2016>
- Brain Balance. (2021). *Normal attention span expectations by age*. Brain Balance. <https://www.brainbalancecenters.com/blog/normal-attention-span-expectations-by-age>
- Bunce, D. M., Flens, E. A., & Neiles, K. Y. (2010). how long can students pay attention in class? A study of student attention decline using clickers. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 87(12), 1438–1443. <https://doi.org/10.1021/ed100409p>
- Bunce, D. M., Flens, E. A., & Neiles, K. Y. (2010). how long can students pay attention in class? A study of student attention decline using clickers. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 87(12), 1438–1443. <https://doi.org/10.1021/ed100409p>
- Davis, B.G. (1993). *Tools for Teaching*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, USA.
- Debajit, B. (2020). Method of learning-concentration [Chapter 6.6]. In B. Debajit (Ed.), *Social philosophy of Swami Vivekananda*. Wisdom Library. <https://www.wisdomlib.org/hinduism/essay/social-philosophy-of-swami-vivekananda/d/doc419413.html>
- Ducharme, J. (2023, August 10). *Why everyone's worried about their attention span—and how to improve yours*. Time. <https://time.com/6302294/why-you-cant-focus-anymore-and-what-to-do-about-it/>

- Ellis-Jones, I. (2021). *Mindfulness according to Vivekananda and Yogananda*. <https://ianellis-jones.blogspot.com/2013/10/mindfulness-according-to-vivekananda.html>. *Focus by Daniel Goleman summary*. (2023). Briefer. <https://briefer.com/books/focus>.
- Forsyth D. R. (2003). *The professor's guide to teaching: Psychological principles and practices*. American Psychological Association
- Gee, P., Stephenson, D., & Wright, D. E. (1994). Temporal discrimination learning of operant feeding in goldfish (*Carassius auratus*). *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, 62(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1901/jeab.1994.62-1>
- Giles, R. M., Johnson, M. R., Knight, K. E., Zammett, S., & Weinman, J.(1982). Recall of lecture information: A question of what, when and where. *Medical Education*, 16, 264–268. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.1982.tb01262.x>.
- Gita Sanjeevni. (2018, April 28). *Karmas according to Bhagavad Gita*. Gita Sanjeevni. <https://gitananjeevani.com/gita-articles/karmas-according-to-bhagavad-gita/>.
- Gmail. (n.d.). [Accounts.google.com](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm&ogbl#inbox?projector=1). <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm&ogbl#inbox?projector=1>
- Goleman, D. (2013). *Focus*. Blinkist. <https://www.blinkist.com/en/books/focus-en>.
- Goleman, D. (2013). *Focus: The hidden driver of excellence*. Harper Collins. https://is.muni.cz/el/med/jaro2021/MIMO041p/111500888/Daniel_Goleman_-_Focus_the_hidden_driver_of_excellence-Harper_2013_.pdf
- Graciele Joie Reganit. (2024). *Lesson plan*. Scribd. <https://www.scribd.com/document/348267178/Lesson-Plan>
- Graham, L. (2014, January 28). *Daniel Goleman's focus - Linda Graham*. Linda Graham. <https://lindagraham-mft.net/daniel-golemans-focus/>.
- Green Message. (2024a). *Swami Vivekananda on guidelines for meditation*. https://greenmesg.org/swami_vivekananda_sayings_quotes/meditation-guidelines_for_meditation.php
- Green Message. (2024b). *Swami Vivekananda on mental concentration and meditation*. https://greenmesg.org/swami_vivekananda_sayings_quotes/mind-mental_concentration_and_meditation.php
- Hartley, J., & Cameron, A. (1967). Some observations on the efficiency of lecturing. *Educational Review*, 20, 30–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0013191670200103>.
- Hartley, J., & Davies, I. K. (2019). Note-taking: A critical review. *Programmed Learning and Educational Technology*, 15(3), 207–224. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ190904>
- Hindocha, A. (2021, July 28). *Do you have trouble remembering what someone said to you a few minutes ago? Not tasting your food while eating? Paying more attention to your phone rather than the person you are speaking with*. LinkedIn. (https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/experiment-9-playing-silence-anish-hindocha?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android&utm_campaign=share_via)
- Johnstone, A. H., & Percival, F.(1976). Attention breaks in lectures. *Education in Chemistry*, 13, 49–50.
- Julian, A. G. (2024). Sample lesson plan for ADHD. [Www.academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu/35708557/SAMPLE_LESSON_PLAN_for_ADHD). https://www.academia.edu/35708557/SAMPLE_LESSON_PLAN_for_ADHD
- Kiewra, K. A. (2020). Note Taking on Trial: A Legal Application of Note-Taking Research. *Educational Psychology Review*, 28(2), 377–384. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9353-z>
- Knowledge Glow. (2023, April 14). *Best Swami Vivekananda quotes arise, awake, and stop not until the goal is achieved. "Swami Vivekananda" Take up one idea*. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/200-most-inspiring-swami-vivekananda-quotes-slogans-vivekanand-glow>
- Krishnan, R. (2022, February 22). *The Bhagavad Gita as the epitome of Indian psychology vis-a-vis modern psychology*. Indic Today. <https://www.indica.today/research/conference/the-bhagavad-gita-as-the-epitome-of-psychology/>.
- Maddox, H., & Hoole, E. (1975). Performance decrement in the lecture. *Educational Review*, 28(1), 17–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0013191750280102>.

- McGinley, A. (2014, December 30). *Slow reading: New trend to increase attention span, intelligence*. <https://www.clickorlando.com/news/2014/12/30/slow-reading-new-trend-to-increase-attention-span-intelligence/>
- McKeachie, W. J. (1986). *Teaching tips: Strategies, research and theory for college and university teachers*. Heath.
- McKeachie, W. J., & Sviinicki, M. (2006). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers*. Houghton Mifflin.
- McLeish, J. (1968). *The lecture method*. Cambridge Institute of Education.
- Mihalyi, C. (2008), Chapter 2-The anatomy of consciousness: The limits of consciousness. In *The psychology of optimal experience* (pp. 38–39). Harper Perennial
- Mills, K., & Mark, G. (2023, February). *Speaking of psychology: Why our attention spans are shrinking, with Gloria Mark, PhD*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/attention-spans>
- Mitra, A. (2021, January 11). *Concentration: An important component in Swami Vivekananda's idea of education*. <https://www.vifindia.org/2021/january/11/concentration-an-important-component-in-swami-vivekananda-s-idea-of-education>
- Mohan, A. (2015, April 25). *Implications of Bhagavad Gita in management*. Slideshare. <https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/bhagavad-gita-and-management-anoop/47400122>.
- Oliver, J. D. (2013, December). *Focus: The Power of Paying Attention*. Tricycle: The Buddhist Review; Tricycle: The Buddhist Review. <https://tricycle.org/magazine/focus-daniel-goleman/>.
- Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of North Texas. (2021, November 21). *Swami Vivekananda's mindfulness meditation | Pravrajika Brahma-prana*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhwsQ-CLiro>
- Roberto, T. (2023, August 21). *The first 8 seconds – Capturing the attention of gen Z students*. KEG. <https://www.keg.com/news/the-first-8-seconds-capturing-the-attention-of-gen-z-students#:~:text=Recent%20studies%20have%20shed%20light>
- Scerbo, M. W., Warm, J. S., Dember, W. N., & Grasha, A. F. (1992). The role of time and cuing in a college lecture. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 17*(4), 312–328. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-476x\(92\)90070-f](https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-476x(92)90070-f)
- Schawbel, D. (2024, June 4). Daniel Goleman: Why professionals need focus. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danschawbel/2013/10/08/daniel-goleman-why-professionals-need-focus/?sh=6f64409d44d6>
- Schwerdt, G., & Wuppermann, A. C. (2010). Is traditional teaching really all that bad? A within-student between-student approach. *Economics of Education Review, 30*, 365–379. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2010.11.005>.
- Sherrell, Z. (2021, July 21). *6 strengths and benefits of ADHD*. Medical News Today. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/adhd-benefits>
- Sims, A. (2016, January 19). *If you are easily distracted, you might be a genius*. The Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/intelligent-people-are-more-easily-distracted-research-suggests-a6821596.html>
- Stuart, J., & Rutherford, R. J. (1978). Medical student concentration during lectures. *Lancet, 2*, 514–516. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(78\)92233-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(78)92233-X).
- Svinicki, M. D., & McKeachie, W. J. (2013). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research and theory for college and university teachers*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Swami Vivekananda Life Lessons - Know Top 10 Lessons in detail*. (2023). Testbook. <https://testbook.com/static-gk/swami-vivekananda-life-lessons>.
- Swami Vivekananda. (2018). *Buy meditation and its methods by Swami Vivekananda*. Grapevine India. <https://www.amazon.in/Meditation-Its-Methods-Swami-Vivekananda/dp/938184108X>.
- Swami Vivekananda. (2023, September 21). *Swami Vivekananda on concentration - Swami Vivekananda*. Renaissance -. <https://renaissance.aurosociety.org/swami-vivekananda-on-concentration/>.

- Vishwanath, S. (2015, October 5). *Bhagavad Gita summary -How to easily avoid distractions? - Part I*. Bhagavad Gita University. <https://www.bhagavadgitauniversity.com/blog/bhagavad-gita-summary-how-to-easily-avoid-distractions-part-i/>
- VivekaVani. (2011, August 16). *Concentration and breathing - Swami Vivekananda*. VivekaVani. <https://vivekavani.com/concentration-breathing-swami-vivekananda/>
- VivekaVani. (2019, December 9). *Swami Vivekananda's quotes on concentration of mind*. VivekaVani. <https://vivekavani.com/swami-vivekananda-quotes-concentration-mind>
- VivekaVani. (2020a, February 17). *Swami Vivekananda's quotes on meditation*. VivekaVani. <https://vivekavani.com/swami-vivekananda-quotes-meditation/>
- VivekaVani. (2020b, March 15). *Swami Vivekananda's quotes on mind*. VivekaVani. <https://vivekavani.com/swami-vivekananda-quotes-mind/>
- Wankat, P. C. (2002). *The effective efficient professor: Scholarship and service*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Whitworth, E. (2023, January 18). *Focus: The hidden driver of excellence—Book Overview*. Shortform Books. <https://www.shortform.com/blog/focus-the-hidden-driver-of-excellence/>.
- Wikipedia Contributors. (2024, January 9). *Swami Vivekananda and meditation*. Wikipedia; Wikimedia Foundation. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swami_Vivekananda_and_meditation
- Wool, M. (2022, October 4). *How to increase attention span: Here's what you should do*. <https://www.betterup.com/blog/how-to-increase-attention-span>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I (author) gratefully acknowledge the generous support and cooperation of my family, my colleagues and seniors at Dr B. C. Roy Engineering College in inspiring this research. Commitment to betterment have often come at the cost of unspent moments of joy with them. I apologize for sometimes prioritizing my work before their needs and overwhelmingly value their understanding of it. I could not have done this without you in my life. Thankyou.

Funding Details: I (author) have not received any funding for this paper from anywhere at any time during my career.

Disclosure Statement: Ethics approval and consent to participate – This is original research and I consent to participate.

Consent for publication – I consent to publish this paper under my authorship.

Conflict of Interest: Author(s) declares “No Conflict of interest”.