INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F

**General introduction**

**INTERVIEWER:** How are you?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** I’m alright, how are you?

**INTERVIEWER:** I’m alright thank you. Long-time no speak.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F**: Yeah

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah, you doing alright though?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA- :** Yeah busy but all good

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh good good. I think that’s the life of a teacher isn’t it? Busy but good.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** That’s shows.

**INTERVIEWER:** [Laughs] aw um well thanks very much for giving up your time today to talk to me about this project.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** That’s alright

**INTERVIEWER:** Um just to give you a bit of background we have been working with an organisation with the NHS that helps parents with children with ADHD and they are generally preschool children and then when the children go to school the parents say oh things break down at home as well as in school so they find it really difficult. So we want to see if some of the strategies used at home can be used in a classroom. But obviously it’s a completely different context cause you know you’ve got 30 children potentially with lots of different needs, a curriculum to teach and all the rest of it so we are interviewing teachers and head teachers to try and find what are their experiences of ADHD and what it’s like in school, what kind of training they have had in the past and what might even be feasible so it’s kind of broad ranging. Um so yeah that is why we are doing it all. Um can you just start off my telling me about your experience and what your typical classroom is and how that has changed over the years that sort of thing who’s in your classroom?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Do you mean the classroom in terms of the children or in terms of the physical lay out?

**INTERVIEWER:** In terms of the children.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** So I was um… what did I do… I did 10-11 years in secondary and I’ve done four years in the middle. So most of the children I have taught have been in mixed performance groups. I have taught almost entirely music although I have taught some R.E.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yep

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** So I have taught R.E. but in my current timetable it is all music. Um in the older years in GCSE and A level it has been more able groups as a whole because they are self-selected to do A level and GCSE music but at Key stage 2 or 3 it is always completely mixed ability. Um normally between 28 and 32 in a class um yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** And do you have quite a range of special needs or not so many or?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um quite a range. So the class I’ve just taught has got three children with ASD in it, one with speech and language communication, a couple with behavioural needs and three with ADHD.

**INTERVIEWER:** Wow that is quite

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** That is quite typical of… of the groups. It varies across year groups but that is of this year group.

**ADHD as a disorder and its symptoms**

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay so thinking specifically about ADHD how would you describe it? How have you seen it in children you’ve taught?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Ah um that’s interesting I think it varies hugely. Um so for some…I’m thinking in the class I just taught… for some it’s very difficult to sit still um they can’t concentrate so often we will give them wobble cushions that seem to help.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:**Um [2 secs] not being able to stick to tasks for a long period of time or not being able to sit quietly if they are asked to sit in silence and needing to call out within that silence. Um [2 secs] interesting to give them instruments a lot after needing wobble with the instruments. Um I spend a lot of time giving out blue tac as an alternative to playing with things like the Ukuleles.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay (laughs)

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Otherwise we would need a lot of retuning. Another tactile thing to play with… Um quite often a difficulty with group work. Um either because they irritate the group members in some cases um actually they feel that they are a weaker member of the group.

**INTERVIEWER:** Um all right. And how does that end up playing out in the classroom?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um [1 sec] I think it varies for individuals. Sometimes it will be a resistance to join in or want to do something different. Quite often its moaning about the group they are in. I don’t like this person. I don’t want to work in this group can I work in a different group.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um sometimes group members say they don’t want to work with this person they are not pulling their weight.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah yeah

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um but that’s not all cases that is just a sweeping observation.

**INTERVIEWER:** Have they always been boys that you have had with ADHD or have there been any girls?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um we have had girls

**INTERVIEWER:** Have there been difference between boys and girls or have they been still very individual?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um I think there are differences. Girls in a way tend to stand out more because the behaviours you see are less common among girls generally.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh okay well kind of things

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Normally with problems they stay more silent. So I think children stand out more if that’s not the case.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um [3 secs] I think girls also are better at managing it certainly socially they are better at masking

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh okay. And how do you see that happening? What do they do that the boys struggle with?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** So um I’m just looking at individuals. So I have one student who she is quite able but she will always opt to do the easiest role in a group task. Um she knows she can do that and look perfect at it [2 secs] without having to stress herself too much. Cause actually the kids in my groups with ADHD that I have had today, some of the more able ones in terms of music. Quite a lot of [inaudible]…

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh right. Ah and do you have any idea what has caused the ADHD in these different children?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** No idea

**INTERVIEWER:** You haven’t come across any information or been told by anyone?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Not in terms of cause no.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** We will get a profile so it will say this child has learning needs here are some strictures that will help with it in the classroom

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** That is in the information that we get given.

**INTERVIEWER:** And who would typically give you that?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** We use provision map

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** An electronic, online system so I can log in look at every child in the school on their one page profile. Um have a check at any of the SEN needs so um every teacher in the school can access it.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah that sounds good. And is that filled in by the SENCO on their own or is it other people that fill it in?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um so SENCO works by the form tutors are responsible with talking to the parents every term and keeping them updated and reviewed and the putting them on the system and then the SENCO over sees it. I mean there is 4… 6 hundred and 50 I think 650 kids at the school so the SENCO or their own wouldn’t be able to keep on top of that many.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. That sounds great that the parents can then review as well as the staff

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Yeah the parents can message on it as well so if they have any concerns they can message and it is all logged on the same system.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah and then I guess information can flow both ways, if things are happening at home the school can know and vice versa… yeah. Um what about, we’ve talked about some of the challenges the children present. Are there any benefits to having children that have ADHD in your class?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um I mean yeah in individuals they can be lovely class members um (2 secs). There are some tasks in music that they obviously enjoy and lead more. For instance doing African drums or when we are outside doing samba, they are quite kinaesthetic, active so you see actions that they really get into and they pull others along with them.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh that sounds good

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Which is nice.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** [Inaudible]

**INTERVIEWER:** So in terms of managing but obviously embracing those benefits, you’ve mentioned tactile kinaesthetic strategies like a wobble cushion or blue tac or whatever. Are there any other strategies that you feel you have used that have worked well with different children?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um sometimes to get them to scribe on the board

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh yeah

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** So it means they are listening and taking notes of what classmates are saying. If they’ve got a good level of literacy that works well. They get to feel a little bit like the teacher but also it keeps them really engaged.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um some of the time I give them more physical instruments to play and giving instruments out for group work. I always direct children as to what instrument they’ve got to play. And if the choice is between playing a drum kit and playing the piano I’m going to give the child with ADHD the drum kit.

**INTERVIEWER:** [Laughs] that sounds like a dangerous option.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** [Laughs] don’t worry I wouldn’t do this to anybody else.

**INTERVIEWER:** No that interesting. So in that sense you’re encouraging their energy and enthusiasm and directing it.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Well if they are going to do something anyway you might as well direct it to a positive.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Rather than trying to restrain something.

**INTERVIEWER:** No that sounds great. So does it kind of effect you in your planning beforehand or is it more of when you’re in the moment in the classroom looking around sort of handing things out?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** I can teach lessons six times in a week on average so I plan four lessons a week and deliver them six times because I have year five, six, seven, eight all for music.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** So actually I tend to make a standardized lesson but I will assume that I have children in every class that have ASM or some with ADHD and have some further needs. Um so there will be strands in there that will be appropriate for all of those.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Because most of my classes are mixed ability the differentiation in music is huge cause I’ve got children in the class that will be grade 7 musicians and children in class that cant tap four beats in time. So something in there will fit everyone.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay that makes sense. So you can be quite adaptive in each lesson then dependant on whose present or what move they are in or whatever.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Yeah so sometimes I will quickly rewrite parts as we go into it to make it suitable for what they can do. I think music blends itself to that flexibility.

**INTERVIEWER:** No yeah that sounds good. Do you find… some teachers you know say that they need to send kids out the classroom or that the child leaves the classroom and I mean do you find that that happens quite a lot with you or is there certain children that are in and out or?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Once or twice a week maybe. So I mean I have an external room cause the music department in across the playground from the other areas of the school. So I’ve got two classrooms with two practice rooms and two external doors so I would quite often if the weather is nice I would say would you like to go outside for a bit and calm down so they can have some time out. If behaviour is really bad we have a consequences system so they get a C1 which is a warning and then a C2 which is some points and then a C3 a member staff is called to remove them. I can’t the number of times on one hand that I’ve done that here but I’m glad the kids know it’s there. And occasionally you do get that child that (inaudible) themselves in the lesson and you’ve got children that have quite complex emotional needs um… and we’ve got a couple of children that are in care. Um so as someone that might walk out of lessons… um they would be my... as individuals they would be the ones that would go rather than the kids that have learning needs.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. It sounds quite good though that you have more flexible space than the average teacher in that you’ve got more rooms or…

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um yeah so if they are struggling we tend to put them in the practice room to practice as its more quiet so we will have 5 groups working in the classroom and 1 group outside, 1 group in the practice room and another group in the other practice room and I’m usually quite deliberate about which groups I put in the practice room so if I know they are going to be particularly noisy they will go in the practice room away from the rest of the class or if I think they will struggle with the noise then they will go in the practice room and that helps.

## The diagnosis and treatment of ADHD

**INTERVIEWER:** No that sounds really good. Um just turning our attention back towards sharing information and parents and other services do you get involved much so if they were maybe showing some symptoms but hadn’t yet been diagnosed would you be called upon to give information or fill in questionnaires or anything like that.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** We do use another electronic system called Epraise which has all our seating plans on it all our classes so I can see any needs in a class immediately on it that has a messaging system on it so what would happen is if we were going to have a meeting about a child a message would go out to their teachers and say can I have all their information and find everything that’s relevant.

**INTERVIEWER:** Um so you wouldn’t specifically fill in a long medical questionnaire or you know or behavioural programme?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** No. Once in the last 4 years I have been asked to do that.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay and was that for a child with ADHD or anything else?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** It was my first year so I can’t remember. I think it a child that needed seeing an educational psychologist.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay so that is a bit different.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Um then I guess on the back of that have you been approached to implement any specific behavioural actions towards a child with ADHD?

**INTERVIEWER:** Um yeah we are quite often told this is what we would like you to be trying with this child in the environment. So please make sure they sit in this place. Please make sure they can use this or use this strategy. If they have a time out card please let them use it or they boil over. That is most common.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh okay. And do you find that generally that works quite well and the strategies sort of fit with what works?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Well most of the time there is always a bit of trial and error isn’t there but generally it seems to work pretty well.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh that so great. It sounds like a really sort of joined up thinking across the school and communication and stuff.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** On the whole. Every school has its issues doesn’t it.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh the whole [laughs].

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** It is a good school and that. It probably works best here than any other schools I’ve worked in.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Do you know why that is or?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** It smaller because I’ve been in big secondary’s. Sort of been 1800/1900 students. But even though 650 feels big for a middle school its actually it’s a manageable staff size and we don’t have a massive SLT so I think that helps cause there is less risk of conflict in messages.

**Training and support for teaching children with ADHD**

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. Yeah. Um just thinking specifically about training. As a teacher… either in your teacher training or over your years as a teacher, have you had any specific training in teaching children with ADHD?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Specifically separated from other needs, no.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. Has it been part of more broader..?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** General special needs training and we did a lot of work on one to one interventions last year.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay could you tell me a bit about those?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Okay that would be about giving particular writing frames and particularly emphasising rewards. Not telling a kid off in front of the rest of the class if you know they are going to react badly to that. Setting different tasks or adjusting a task that needs contacting home. It’s the things you need to do before getting someone else involved.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay. And did you find it good training? Was it useful?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Yes. Yes it was. Um some of it more than others. Some of it felt a bit basic. But we are a school with quite a range of level of experience and we’ve got quite a few NQTs so probably its quite appropriate for that. Some things would have worked for everyone who was there.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. So you could kind of pick out what was there that you either knew or felt that you could use but kind of leave the rest to one side. And was there anything about the way in was delivered that you thought was particularly good or not?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Nah it was a bit dull. We get lost reading off PowerPoints. Um [Laughs].

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay [Laughs].

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Well someone reads the PowerPoints at you and you think well I could have read that in my own time.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah, yeah

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** It was one of those but the content wasn’t bad.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay. It’s pretty tragic when the teachers that are teaching the teachers are not engaging.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** It’s also quite common. I think if I did this to a class you would give me a 4 (laughing).

**INTERVIEWER:** And was that one of your inset days or twilight days or compulsory as part of your job?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Yeah it was.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay um and was it done by an outside agency or your own staff?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** That was by an outside consultant. We get a mix; some are outside some are ours.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay. Um [1 sec]… so one of the things that we are looking at doing is to offer some specific training around ADHD with teachers… um do you personally think that that is a good thing to offer or do you think that there is better ways of helping people teach kids with ADHD?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** I think there are quite a lot of teachers perhaps who have been doing it quite a long time who aren’t really convinced that ADHD is a thing and just its naughty children [laughs].

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Relentless naughty children. Um and actually I think that everyone has a few strategies but there are probably a lot of others that would help. I think with ADHD there is a lot of learning on the job which means that you don’t get a lot of consistency.

**INTERVIEWER:** And do you think that is because of the individual differences that you mentioned or because.. .well just because of another reason I don’t know?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** I think it doesn’t end up as top of the pile… [2 secs] a lot of kids with ADHD can get by.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** And they can probably get their required level in their SATS as they are relatively able so there are other needs that seem for urgent or more pressing. So we have done a lot of work of language acquisition um and teaching English and sound construction because we know we have children in the school that struggle with that and actually it is high stakes when it comes to SATS.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** So that tends to drive the agenda as to what gets… covered

**INTERVIEWER:** So do you think that if ADHD… if ADHD training was offered as of a larger program of behavioural needs or kind of… [2 secs] um or emotional needs… do you think that would be accepted more by teachers or they would see that as being broader and more appealing to a wider range of students?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Yeah I think anything that teachers look at and go ‘yeah and can see that being applicable for X, Y and Z’ interests them more.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah… Do you find when you do things like inset days do you prefer generally to have time to talk it over with some of the other staff? You know like people present some ideas and you chat about it a bit and think how that would work in my classroom kind of thing. Or do prefer to be given the information and you go away and sort of figure it out in your own way?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** I mean I prefer the second but that is my learning style.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** I’m not a social learner at all. Group work leaves me completely cold [laughs] and they appreciate that. Um I think what normally happens in training that makes staff cynical is that someone doesn’t plan enough material and gives group discussion time and actually the group discussion time feels [inaudible]. However when it is done well it can be really useful but staff can be cynical about it.

**INTERVIEWER:** No that is fair enough. And do the staff generally like lots of different sessions on a inset day or to have them spread on twilight sessions or online booklets or whatever?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** [3 secs] I mean we have a system where we do twilights and we get told about teachers days. But the only teaching days that we have are at the beginning of September.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** So we normally have normally a morning or a day on one of those days where we have a speaker in to do training. Um I think the generally feeling of the past two years has been that those sessions haven’t been particularly helpful and its more to do with the quality of the person. Um, twilights are quite fun times as everyone is tired.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Online stuff I think people quite like as they can do it in their own time and it doesn’t feel time pressured.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah yeah

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** But actually to do with all of them its more about being done well than when it is done.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay. And I guess maybe the timing of it as in if it was online and you have then got a child with ADHD you might have a look at it but if you have no child with ADHD that year then going to some training might feel a little bit wasted compared to what else you might be doing.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** I think that’s very fair and also it might be something you could go back to to and think I’ve got this child that I’m struggling with can I go back and check that again and see… yeah.

**INTERVIEWER:** I mean one model that some schools have used is that some sort of injection in your ears of information at the beginning of the year and then a consultant come back in to a twilight session say six weeks later and almost run a workshop where teachers can say ‘well I’ve tried that and I’ve tried that and it doesn’t work’ or ‘have you got any other ideas’ or sharing ideas. Has your school ever tried anything like that?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** No but it would probably be quite well received I’d imagine.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah? Give people a sort of personal space to work it out.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Yes. Because sometimes we feel we have quite a lot thrown at us [laughs]. Do this this this and this. Woah which one of those things do you actually want me to think about?

**INTERVIEWER:** [Laughing] Yeah. And it’s not like you know you’ve got lots of free time over the day

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Well exactly

**INTERVIEWER:** To through all these things... and um and finally I was gonna ask you about the support that you get in school. Um like your senior staff, your SENCO and any other Eps that come in. Do you feel like as a teacher generally that you get the support you need and if there is a child where you really don’t know what to do you can find help? Or do you feel a bit like you are alone and figuring it out?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Probably somewhere in between? I think the help is there if you go and search it out… [3 secs] but sometimes it’s the case of going and searching it out. Everyone is busy and actually the SENCO covers two schools in the [inaudible]. So he is only in two and a half days a week as he is with one of our linked schools for another two and half days. And I think the assumption is you try and figure it out yourself first and look up their profiles and read everything and then you go and ask for help.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. So have you ever felt in the position where you just don’t know what to do next? Or have you never got to that sort of desperate place?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** I definitely have got to it recently… (2 secs) I certainly got to it when I was teaching secondary. [3 secs] Yeah… [2 secs] uh I think the reaction to that varies in different schools. In my first school they definitely had the opinion of if you can’t handle this then you are not a good enough teacher to be here… That was very much the attitude. Um… (2 secs) But it was a 99.7% A\* so they had a ‘we are the bees knees’ attitude school.

**INTERVIEWER:** Ah okay

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Which unsurprisingly made you go read and look up stuff and cry in the toilets in the men’s cubicle [laughing] um yeah. The second school I was at in XXXXX that was a very big school but you could go and say I’m trying struggling with this child what do I do? The support was there and often it would be a few staff struggling so often they would get teachers and in a have a lets discuss what works and what doesn’t.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah. Just one thought that I had actually when you were talking before about teachers and the priorities being you know what is particularly going to stop a child doing well in SATS and performing well in a classroom. Do you think teachers are just solely interested in what strategies are going to work here or do you think they are interested in why this child is like this and the cause behind this condition or what are the treatments that are offered you know… do you want a wider picture or do you just want to know what can I do in this lesson?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Well that depends on the teacher.

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay then what about you?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** I quite like knowing a wider point of view. If I am the point where that child is making the lesson unteachable because they kicking off I want to know in the short term the strategy that works for that child and then when I have got the classroom calmer then I would like to know some more information. I think it depends what I going on really. I have had kids with other needs that are not ADHD that have really kicked off and the response has been this has been going on at home. And that helps me understand it but I have to have something to help me with that or that child is going to make that lesson unteachable.

**INTERVIEWER:** Yeah

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** So I think that it is a balance.

**INTERVIEWER:** So kind of knowing what to do but then when there is space to understand what is happening or? I guess that gives you opportunity to prompt what might happen if you know why things are happening.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Yes.

## Conclusion

**INTERVIEWER:** Cool well I think that is… we have covered everything I wanted to cover. I don’t know if there is anything else that you want to say generally about ADHD or?

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** No it was very thorough.

**INTERVIEWER:** Oh [laughs] .Great. Well thanks so much for your time I really appreciate it. And yeah it’s nice to talk to you.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Right well ill [inaudible]

**INTERVIEWER:** Okay then take care.

**INV-017-T-U-M-STA-F:** Bye.

**INTERVIEWER:** See you, bye.

[End of interview]