

Movement for improvement.

1. Deirdre, I've seen in your classes that the children often move around. Why is it important for them to do this?

Well probably your teachers at primary school, Bruce, told you to sit down, sit still and be quiet.

*(Bruce - All the time)*

But many educators today believe pupils should be given opportunities to move around during the lesson. Movement makes children more attentive and engaged in what they are doing and therefore helps them to learn efficiently. Children tend to become bored if they are sitting for a long time and this can lead to disruptive behaviour.

2. Can you give me some examples of the activities you do with your students?

With my 7 year olds I stick pictures on the classroom walls and shout out a word and the children run to touch the correct picture. With older children I do a running dictation. One child reads a short text stuck on the classroom wall and then runs back to his partner to dictate it. These types of activities give practice in all four language skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking, and they are also multi-sensory.

3. Some parents might be worried about this approach in the classroom. How would you reassure them?

A whole lesson would never be totally dedicated to 'moving around'. There needs to be moments when children are sitting in silence and concentrating or reflecting. But the contrast between these busy and quiet phases can make the lesson balanced and enjoyable. I should also point out to parents that we always think of safety first and therefore all furniture or obstacles are removed so that the children can't hurt themselves.

4. Can this approach only be used with young children?

No, not at all. I often get teenagers and even my adult students to do speaking activities standing up in a group in the middle of the classroom – we call this a mingling activity and it simulates real life – a bit like being at a party!