

CAN BUILDING EXPLICIT STRATEGY
INSTRUCTION INTO CURRICULA
ASSIST STUDENTS WITH MANAGING
EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION AND
PROCRASTINATION BEHAVIOURS?

SELF INITIATED PROJECT

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION/DYSFUNCTION (EF/DF)

An umbrella term for the complex cognitive processes that serve ongoing, goal-directed behaviours. (Meltzer 2007)

PROCRASTINATION

The action of delaying or postponing something.

LAZINESS

The quality of being unwilling to work or use energy; idleness.

EXPLICIT STRATEGY INSTRUCTION (ESI)

A method of teaching skills or concepts to students modelling for how to start and succeed on a task and giving them ample time to practice.

KEY TERMS

DISPLACEMENT ACTIVITY

"Apparently" irrelevant activity that is produced as the result of two contradicting instincts in a particular situations of conflict or thwarting.

"LAZY STUDENTS"

- Teaching on the MA Applied Imagination course, I noticed that our students are required to work through the holidays, with deadlines during the first week of term.
- We frequently tell students **what** to learn but do not necessarily teach them **how** to learn. We give them very little to no Explicit Strategy Instruction (ESI).
- We expect that students can manage their own time, but my research suggests that most students were never taught how to do this.
- For some, being unable to manage their time leads to a cycle of overwhelm, "procrastination", overwork, burnout, repeat - leaving no time for rest or reflection.
- Students in this cycle are often deemed "lazy".
- This is particularly true if the student is disabled or neurodiverse. (Watson et al 2016)

Secondary research

Data collection

Interviews

METHODOLOGIES

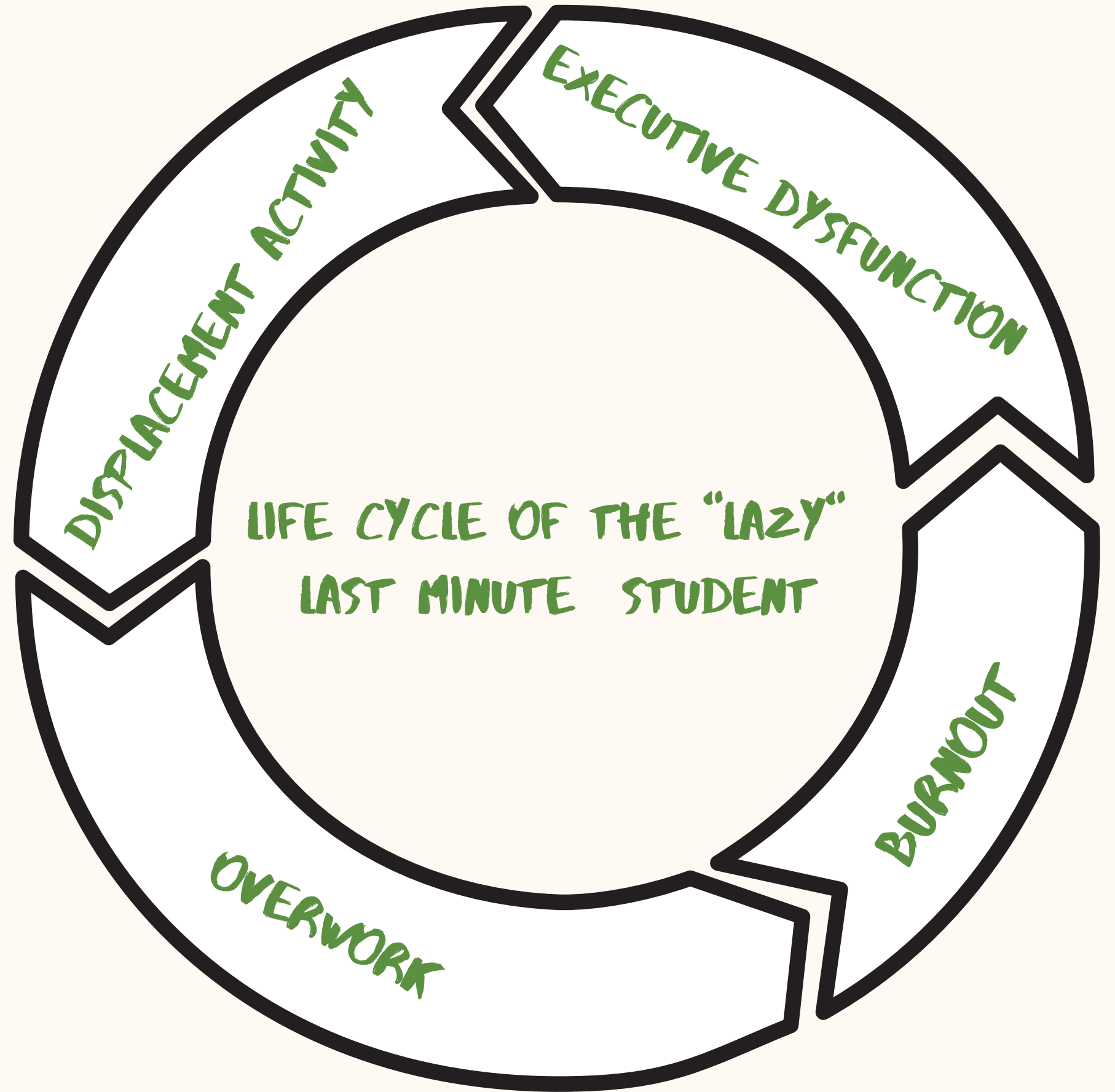
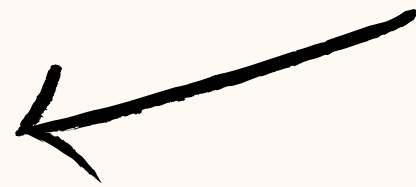
Auto-ethnography

Observation

Reflexive practice

Despite the progress which has been made in terms of accessibility in HE, people with hidden disabilities or processing issues still experience multiple barriers when it comes to teaching and learning.

These factors often operate in cycles making learning environments extremely stressful for students and educators with processing issues.



Lynn Meltzer suggests in *Executive Function - From Theory to Practice* that by building ESI e.g. rest breaks, time management, SMART goals, SWOT analysis into the fabric of our lessons, all students benefit.

Objectives

1. To build strategies into lessons/interventions which help with the *how* of learning.
2. To enable students experiencing executive dysfunction to feel better about lifelong learning.

INTERVENTION- ROUND 1

Following this, I conducted a series of interviews with fellows on the Teaching Within PgCERT course who identify as procrastinators and asked them questions to gain a baseline understanding of how these functions show up for others.

INTERVENTION- ROUND 1

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “procrastination”?
2. What do you think of when you think of the term “lazy”?
3. Are procrastination and laziness the same thing?
4. Would you consider yourself to be a procrastinator or lazy?
5. Do you think procrastination can be useful?
6. Tell me the story of your procrastination - what usually happens, what do you feel?
7. Were you ever given tools that helped you to understand how to learn by teachers or other education figures in your life?
8. Have you ever heard the term Executive Function?
9. What do you think educators can do to help students who procrastinate?
10. What do you think is misunderstood about people who procrastinate?

Round 1 Takeaways

Further Interventions

Round 2: Contacting Academic Support

- Next steps are to contact academic support and see what can be done to build strategy instruction into curricula
- What are academic support already doing for students experiencing executive dysfunction.

Round 2: Distraction Journal

- Invite participants to journal or note when they become distracted.
- What is happening for them in those moments where they notice they are distracted or feel they are procrastinating?
- This action needs to be simple and easy to do.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!