



APPInep E-Newsletter no. 1—June 2015—Summer time

Introduction

Summer is here and so are we, the first edition of APPInep's E-newsletter. The first of many others, organised in seasons: Summer time, Back to school, Winter time and Spring time. Each of these four editions per year aim to bring an article that focus on methodology (*Food for thought*); practical tips for teachers (*Tips for teachers*); useful links; past and future events and a rubric on festivities. The content of the E-Newsletter relies on the contributions of Pre-School and Primary English teachers in Portugal

and abroad. If you'd like to share your thoughts or tips with us, please get in touch. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Cristina Bento

Sónia Ferreirinha

Group 120—Hopes & Fears

With English now a compulsory subject on the curriculum of 1st Cycle of Basic Education, and to be taught as such for the first time in the 3rd year in 2015-16, and the 4th year in 2016-17, the APPInep e-Newsletter is a timely initiative that will provide teachers with inspirational ideas and practical activities to take into their own classrooms. Further, this will help to raise and reinforce awareness among teachers, including the newly created 120 teaching group, of the importance of participating and sharing in a professional community of practice, thereby promoting their own professional development.

At the 2015 APPI conference, my presentation was called 'Welcome, Group 120 – Come on down!' 'Come on down!' is a famous catchphrase used in game shows to invite members of the audience to the stage and to become contestants in the gameshow. The contestants, usually with beaming smiles, come running down towards the stage, accompanied by applause and whoops of joy, in the knowledge that they could win something significant.



Events



Teacher training sessions:

- *Spice up your Students' Speaking skills*
29th/30th June & 1st/2nd July— Porto
13th to 16th July— Viseu
- *Teaching English to Young Learners*
June/ July— Lisboa

Young Learner & Very Young Learner

Conference

16th—17th October 2015

Escola Secundária Eça de Queirós—Lisboa

Over the last decade, English teachers involved in AECs and other ELT initiatives have felt marginalised, so Group 120 appeared to represent a real opportunity to gain full professional status, greater job security, appropriate remuneration and a sense of dignity.

My presentation title, therefore, aimed to convey the idea that, finally, primary ELT teachers were the recipients of some good fortune.

However, the optimism of the '120 spring' seems to be subsiding. My experience on the complementary training courses (Formação Complementar) implemented at my own institution, the School of Education and Social Sciences at the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, which allow 110, 220 and 330 Group teachers to gain qualified status for Group 120, has given me a privileged insight into teachers' thoughts and feelings.

Motivated and determined, these teachers were a pleasure to work with and I have nothing but admiration for their stamina and desire to help make 5-hour long classes a real learning experience – all this after a day's work! In my presentation at the APPI Conference I shared their voices (fortunately, the teachers attending the courses at ESECS-IPL were largely satisfied, despite their intensive nature) with other teachers. However, the teachers attending my presentation were largely dissatisfied and frustrated. Similar feelings were also voiced during the roundtable discussion at the conference.

This is not the space to dissect the administrative procedures ('Portarias', 'Leis' and 'Avisos' etc.) regulating the process of Group 120 qualified status. However, it has to be said that a combination of MEC/DGAE deadlines and the quality of instruction on some complementary courses has left a signifi-

cant number of aspiring 120 teachers feeling disappointed. Further, baffling interpretations of legal documents have only served to compound these feelings. For example, some teacher applications - apparently identical in content - have been validated by certain schools but not by others.

Despite such difficulties, those committed to improving the education of future generations in general and ELT education in particular will encourage positive teacher mindsets and the use of appropriate skills and tools to help teachers deal with 21st Century challenges.

All competitions, including job applications, involve winners and losers, and their respective feelings of delight and disappointment. The complementary training courses will run for one more year, some higher educations will be opening Master degrees in primary ELT in 2015-16, and the APPInep Newsletter will be an important strand in a web of networking opportunities and resources for ELT teachers – including those from Group 120 fortunate enough to hear their names followed by the call 'Come on down!'.

Mark Daubney—ESE Leiria



Useful links

Are you ready for some fun under the sun?

What are you going to take to the beach: Flip-flops, a hat, a towel, a ball, a bottle of water, a sandwich, sunscreen ...?

Right, that's super, and how are you taking all those things?

You need a beach bag!

What about doing an origami beach bag to pack all the things your class needs? It only takes a few folds and a cut. You can find the step by step instructions here:

<http://www.origami-instructions.com/origami-tote-bag.html>



Ana Catarina Rocha— Quarteira



Tips for teachers

As we roll into the final stretch of the academic year, here are some points to ponder if you want to keep your classes moving forward or indeed raise the bar, in terms of language and performance.

From you to them

Are there any routines or sequences you are still doing/saying that your students could be carrying out instead? They will now be familiar with the language you use to take the register, or the day and the date that you put on the board at the start of class.

Another way of handing over agency is to appoint student teachers to hold up flashcards for vocabulary revision and allow them to nominate others to answer, like you normally do. You could also go back over the stories you were telling at the start of the year but this time let the children tell them.

Familiar settings

Are there any objects or fixtures around the classroom that your students are still not able to name? One way to find out is to ask them to wander round the room in pairs, one choosing an object and the other having to say it in English. Can the children name the things they see from the classroom windows? If you don't want them all pushing against the glass, you could take a picture from the window and use that as a projection at the front.

I'm sorry?

What one word answers are your students giving that could be developed into full sentences? And are they now apologising in English, to you or to each other, when they do something wrong?

Crank up pronunciation

Are your younger learners including the 've in *I've finished*? When they say *My name's...* can you hear the /z/ sound that represents the verb *to be*? Can you hear the /k/ in *I like football*? And are they saying *You welcome* or *You're welcome*?

Go the other way

And if, by chance, you're lucky enough to have your classes exactly where you want them by now, in terms of management issues, then you might deliberately introduce a little chaos of your own by seeing how many students you can get speaking English at the same time through pairwork. In terms of order and productivity, sometimes less can mean more.

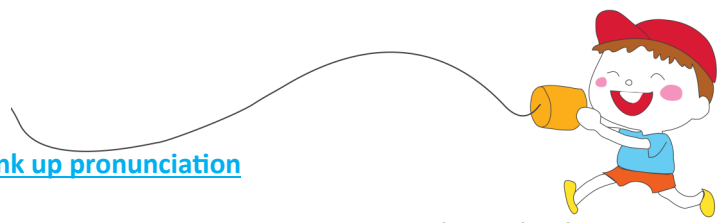
Smooth running

Using a stopwatch you could start timing how long your classes take to do things such as get their books out, transition to or from circle time or make a line to leave the class. This can be turned into a whole class game with the group trying to break their previous record. If you are normally quite tolerant of L1 in class, you might introduce an *English only* period, in a fun and light way, where students aren't allowed to say anything in Portuguese for a designated length of time. Start with something easy like thirty seconds, a minute or just see how long they can go.

Collecting together the strands

If another teacher will be taking your group/s next year, now may also be a good time to start noting down all the additional classroom language, above and beyond the book's syllabus, that your students either recognise or can say. That way, your hard work can not only be appreciated but also built upon next year.

Chris Roland—Seville





Holidays & Festivities

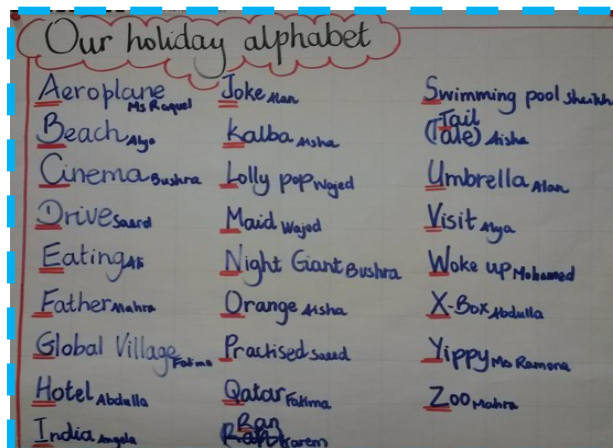
Holiday alphabet

Do you dread the idea of getting back to school and the moment when all the kids are keen to share their stories and you are dying to hear them, but know you will not be able to dedicate enough time to them, because there is a programme to 'get on with'? Well, for me it was that and the fact that all children want to talk about their holidays, but others want to do it more than others, which means the quieter kids don't get enough time to share as I would like them to have. This term I had a moment of inspiration as I prepared the classroom for our first day back. To me, this activity is as wonderful as it is simple:

Write all the letters of the alphabet on the whiteboard. I chose to do this on a large piece of paper so I could keep it for future reference.

Let the children say a word as it occurs to them. This avoids the tedious class-circle waiting time for that last child in the circle and it keeps them all on their toes. I was expecting some letters not to get filled in and told the class not to worry if we did not come up with a word for each letter, as the objective of the activity was to talk about our holidays. Living in the Middle East made it easy to fill in all the letters, so do move over here!

Here is an example of what our Holiday Alphabet looked like:



Please pardon the lack of aesthetics, but I had not planned it beforehand, so nothing pretty, but guaranteed fun and controlled sharing, as ideas sparked a chain of ideas which were unique to each child and meant that they did not all want to talk at the same time.

Raquel Coelho - Fujairah, United Arab Emirates



Keep your APPI membership fee updated so that you receive all publications and have access to all teacher training sessions and webinars. Thank you.

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