



APPInep E-Newsletter no. 2—October 2015—Back to school

Creating a Positive Learning environment

School has started and in front of you there is a group of kids eager to know you and to learn English. Some of them probably will have had their first contact with the language at AECs but real learning begins now. English has finally become compulsory in the primary curriculum and hopefully some issues teachers faced at AECs will now fade away and we will face a better teaching environment. Will all be smooth and perfect? No... English teachers will deal with different schools, different social and economic backgrounds, different staff, classrooms that don't 'belong' to them, children that are disruptive, just to name a few. But it's up to us to deal with all those challenges bearing in mind that changing attitudes and behaviour starts within the classroom.

How can we promote a positive learning environment? What can we do to turn the classroom into a secure, motivating, pleasant space for learners?



•Here are a few tips that will help you establish a positive approach in the classroom from the start: Learning requires trust in relationships. Building a solid relationship with the children is essential for a well-grounded learning.

- ◆Be genuine! Children will notice if you fake it.
- ◆Develop *rapport*. Create a sense of togetherness.

- ◆Use inclusive language. Use 'we' instead of 'I' or 'you'. Example: "We are going to play a game"; "Our next activity..."

- ◆Use your voice in a quiet and calm tone, even if you are reprimanding them. Try never to shout or yell at them. It will stress you and the children and you are showing them the opposite attitude you want them to have.

- ◆Help children develop their self-esteem.

- ◆Praise children for what they have done - 'Catch them being good' - and praise for encouragement as well.

- ◆Begin the school year with a set of rules and routines which are understood by all children. Rules are necessary to establish limits between what we find acceptable and not. Routines help learners to feel more confident.

- ◆Refer to what you value in the classroom.

- ◆Express rules in a positive way. Tell the children what you want them to do, not what they shouldn't do. Use Dos not Don'ts. Instead of "Don't shout!" say "Be quiet, please!" or "You're not paying attention!", Pay attention, please!"

- ◆Be firm and stick to the rules.

- ◆Be consistent in what you say and do.

- ◆Model the attitudes you would like your learners to follow.

- ◆Foster learners to behave positively with their classmates.

- ◆Anticipate behaviour problems that might appear when planning the activities.

Looking back at these tips (and many other could be added), we'll notice that there is an imperceptible thread that binds them. We call it **AFFECT**. We need to create an affective learning atmosphere to make it effective. Affect will help develop their social and emotional skills. Affect will help learners feel more confident. Affect will provide a sense of belonging to a group, as long as children feel that you care about them as individuals. "Children don't care how much you know until they know how much you care"¹.

And we do care!

Isabel Brites, APPI member no. A – 424

¹ Attributed to John C. Maxwell, although this quote is often referred to be anonymous.



School is back and so is Autumn

As incredible as it might seem I've got a little young friend that loves Autumn! I was surprised, usually children love Summer, which means holidays. Wondering why, this little princess told me that she loves the Autumn colours, she loves the smell of roasted chestnuts in the air; and most of all, she celebrates her birthday in Autumn too!

So, Autumn may arise some nice feelings and we teachers may also contribute to it by creating a happy and friendly atmosphere at the beginning of the school year. Children love to play with the first Autumn leaves that fall down, so if you have trees around the school, invite your pupils to go outside with you and pick up the leaves, they find the most beautiful; if you can't do it in school, ask them to go for a walk with their parents, relatives, friends and pick them up during the weekend and bring them to school.

In the classroom:

1. Make a circle on the floor with the class; children must bring one or two leaves with them.

2. Teacher takes one leaf too and starts talking about it: its colour (brown, orange, yellow, pink, green...), teacher's favourite colour; its size (big, small, medium); its shape (like a diamond, a star, a circle, half a moon...); it smells of earth, fruit, grass....

3. Invite each child to talk about his/her leaves, help the child by questioning: what colour is it? Is it big? Invite children to help their peers when talking about their leaves.

4. Ask children to stand up, to raise their hands up holding their leaves and then invite them to let go their leaves. Dramatize the action and say: "Look the leaves are falling down, falling down!"

5. Repeat this procedure and elicit children to repeat with you: the leaves are falling down, falling down.

6. Ask them to look at the floor and ask: what colour are the leaves? They should answer as many colours as they find or can.

7. Ask children to sit down and hold their leaves up and down while teacher starts song:

The leaves on the tree are falling down, falling down, falling down (x2)

Red, yellow, brown (x2)

(The wheels on the bus' tune)

8. Invite the children to join you and to sing along the song.

9. To finish, ask children to stand up again holding up their leaves and start singing the song as they let the leaves fall down.

10. Next step, ask the children to choose one leaf to be glued on an A4 sheet of paper and to create their own "leaf man/boy/girl". Give them time to be creative. Let them decide what part of the body will be the leaf, where they are going to glue it, which materials are needed to.

Afterwards, display their works with the song on a wall with a trunk of a tree in the middle.

Remember to sing the song at the beginning and end of the lesson, pretending that children's hands are leaves. You can even show a more extensive version of this song, using the four seasons of the year:



An example of a child's work

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/songs/the-leaves-the-tree>

Make the most of Autumn with your children!

Sónia Ferreirinha - APPI



First Lesson Activities

Now that the year has started, new challenges arise! You're now faced with teaching Young Learners and you don't know what to do or if your ideas are appropriate for this age.

This article will try to give you some ideas of what to do in your first lessons. Most of these games / activities can be easily changed so that they fit your own group of students and yourself. Younger students learn better through movement. The younger the child, the more the need to learn through play activities. Hopefully this article will give you plenty of ideas to get your students up and moving and therefore learn English better. Teaching Young Learners is a daily challenge and I'm sure by the end of the

year, you'll be looking forward to repeat the experience.

1. Easy activities are the best way to start.

Make a ball using a piece of paper and put students in a circle. Students then have to throw the ball to each other saying their names. You start by saying "My name is..." and ask them to repeat and throw the ball. The added advantage of this game is that if you play for about 10 minutes you can easily learn the names of all the students in the group.

2. We can then begin to ask "what's your name"? "what's his name or her name". I say, "boys put your hand up" - putting my own hand up to show them.

3. From the start make them understand what they don't understand. Say "Stand up/sit down everybody" simultaneously doing it yourself and encouraging them with your hands - they are likely to do it as well. Tell someone to open/shut the window - do it with a proper gesture. Say "Come here, Peter", again inviting the student with your hand. They will be proud to follow your instructions. After that, try asking them to repeat the commands and act them out. It is also in the first lesson that I teach them to recognise some classroom expressions so that we can hold most of the lesson in English. These tricks and a good syllabus are half of our success.

4. If you still have time, you can ask them what English words they know, they soon get the hang of it when you give them one or two (eg jeans, chewing gum, hot-dog, tennis, etc.). They are impressed to see how many they know. Finish the lesson by saying "goodbye" to each one individually and getting them to say "goodbye Cristina" and "see you next time."

5. Take a doll or something else the kids might like to be the class mascot! Ask the students to give it a name and take it with you to all lessons! If

possible, leave it with the students.

6. **Simon Says game.** Replace the name and use the mascot's name. Give instructions to students: "Simon says: sit down!", "Simon says: stand up!", etc. After repeating the main ones several times (you can do this in different ways: slow, fast, etc.), ask a student to take the mascot and give instructions to the others.

7. **Stand up / sit down game.** Give instructions to the students to sit down or stand up. Children must follow! Sometimes, change the order so that they start paying more attention to what you say.

8. **"Who's Max?" game.** After teaching the structures "My name is..." and "what's your name?", blindfold a student or turn him against the blackboard, and tell him to say aloud "What's your name?". The teacher chooses one student from the group and he should answer "My name is Max" but disguising his voice. The first child tries to guess who said it.

Cristina Bento - APPInep



Halloween

The Super Powerful Spider Web

Ordinary spider webs catch flies. The Super Powerful Spider Web catches all kind of Halloween monsters!





Halloween is great fun for most kids, but there are always those who keep some fears secret. No worries, the Super Powerful Spider Web will keep all the zombies, vampires, black cats, witches, ghosts, and monsters alike away from the classroom!

You'll only need a paper, markers, a transparent punch pocket, white glue and glitter. You can stick it on the windows or hang it in the corner of the classroom's door.

You can find the step by step instructions here: www.teaching-frenzy-primary.blogspot.com

Meet Santa-Cool-Claus!

Santa-Cool-Claus loves skiing and skating but his favourite sport is diving. He's afraid of reindeer so he has contracted a team of dragons to pull his sleigh this year. Because he's a cool Santa Claus, he is tired of his red coat, his red trousers and his black leather boots. He is looking for a fashion adviser to help him change his look. Be creative! Here are some ideas for you: dress Santa Claus with a cool t-shirt, green shorts and flip-flops, a rain coat and a yellow hat. Oh, what about drawing a snorkel too? That would be ultra cool!

Before my help	After my help
 <p>Santa is wearing a red and white coat, a red and white hat, red and white trousers, a belt and black leather boots.</p>	 <p>Santa is wearing:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Ana Catarina Rocha - Quarteira



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

APPInep Committee:

Cristina Bento
Raquel Coelho

Sónia Ferreirinha
Velma Costa

E-Newsletter Editor: **Helena Soares**