

**Autumn Discussions on the
Portuguese Primary English Teachers' Discussion List**
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Discussion nº 2 - Friday 3rd November to Friday 11th November
“Consequence and Reward in the Primary Classroom”

Fielded by **Dave Tucker**

Discussion summaries

The following are excerpts from the participants who contributed to this discussion.

BEHAVIOUR / REWARD & CONSEQUENCE / CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

1. "You can shine too!". **By Ana Alexandra**

Management behaviour game called "Também tu podes brilhar!", which I adapted into English and it came out like "You can shine too!". It's from a set of books called "*Stop! Disciplina e autocontrolo*" and "*Ser professor - Competências básicas...1*", by Paulo Moreira (Porto Editora). It's like a points system, but instead of points, children get "bright suns", "effort winds" or "cloudy suns" depending on their behaviour / behaviour modification / achievements. When they have 3 bright suns, they can exchange for a Big Sun, which will earn them a prize.

The list of prizes was made by them, with some adding of my own, and they go from free passes to the toilet to choosing an activity for next class, or taking home the "bright sun" medal saying how wonderful they are. At first it seemed they didn't care much, but after they saw the first students getting a prize and being praised in front of everyone, they became very interested in the game. When they misbehave terribly, I give them a cloudy sun and they have to hand back 1 bright sun or 1 effort wind, depending on what they have. I made a big, secret and "magical" prize box, which I carry to their class every time, so they don't forget.

2. Activity list for English today. **By Sandie Mourão**

This was put into practice with a very difficult 4th year group.

I would list the activities/tasks I had planned for the lessons at the side of the board. If we were able to complete what was planned they could choose an activity they wanted to do.

They enjoyed working in groups doing different things, which I was able to organise sometimes. This depended where we were on the learning cycle, as group work needs a feeling of confidence in language use. If children can't say anything in the target language of the activity, group work is useless! So these different activity groups only worked once children had gone through the first two stages of learning. So they could only do this about 2 thirds of the way through a unit of work.

[I like to describe children going through three stages which become gradually more independent. They encounter language for the first time, engage in it with support from the teacher (or more able peers) becoming gradually more confident at using it in context, and finally exploit the language freely using it for their own personal benefit.]

The list served many purposes.

- It guided the children. They commented as soon as they entered the class on what was to be done that day... Good ... Wow! And even Urghhh!!! They knew what to expect, this helps calm a group, as nothing is a surprise!
- If I did want a surprise element to appear I would substitute the activity with the <A surprise!> this was almost always well received.
- It helped them see a progression within a lesson, and they would say in Portuguese < we've done two activities one to go>... etc
- If we managed to complete the list they felt proud that the lesson had gone as planned and enjoyed their well deserved prize! It was positive feedback on their behaviour.
- The list would often help more enthusiastic children to encourage others to get going so that we can (do something more interesting later in the lesson)
- The list was written in English, as my written Portuguese is not brilliant, so it also focused the children on English for classroom management – sing a song, do a puzzle, listen to a story, do a writing activity, do a reading activity, play a game.
- The list also helped the children reflect on their learning, see Simon's end of lesson reflection task which I've been using for four or five years.

3. Territory, **By Simon Cantle**

I have found with unruly classes, the idea of 'territory' is very important. If students are already in the classroom, before I arrive, I ALWAYS ask them to leave, line up outside and enter the class again when I ask them to - when they are calm, quiet and paying attention. This gives them the clear message that, rather than me walking into their territory, I am in charge and helps establish some initial form of order and discipline.

4. Responsible stars, **By Sandie Mourão**

In my classes I try to encourage children to be responsible. Children get a responsible star / point if they remember their English stuff, do their homework, bring something I asked them to bring or return an information sheet sent home for parents to sign. It takes five mins at the beginning of a lesson to collect this info and is part of our registration routine.

These stars/ points are added up and at the end of the month the children with the most stars/ points get an <I'm responsible> badge (a star with the word responsible in it and a smiley face, which I print from my computer and then stick a safety pin on the back!) We have a little ceremony at the beginning of each month when I give out the badges and everyone is encouraged to clap each child who has been responsible. Responsible is a word the children pick up very quickly and they are very proud of their badges. I've also found that even careless children make a conscious effort to remember everything so that they get a badge.

5. Reflection/Summary cards, **By Sandie Mourão & Simon Cantle**

Something I have found incredibly useful in terms of both classroom management and reflection on learning are end of lesson summary cards. This idea was introduced to me by Sandie Mourão at a training session she gave at The British Council in Lisbon. As well as the activity cards, there are cards that encourage children to reflect on their behaviour. When using these cards, if they decide their behaviour was bad or very bad, I always ask them to explain what was bad and what they have to do to improve – too much talking, we didn't know what to do - We need to listen when the teacher is explaining something.

I also find that if their behaviour is beginning to 'slip', I can put the behaviour cards on the board where they can see them. They soon notice that the bad behaviour card is on the board – again I tell them why (playing – not paying attention). I change the card to good as their behaviour improves and again explain why it's changed – you're all working really hard and

concentrating.

I have also noticed, particularly with younger learners, that the cards I use to assess whether they like the lesson have an effect when I apply them to myself after a 'bad' lesson. If I tell students that I usually enjoy the lesson and show them the smiley face, but today I really didn't enjoy the lesson and show them the sad face, it has a significant effect. Classes (usually particularly difficult ones!) I have used this with often want to continue this as part of the lesson summary and are keen to know whether I enjoyed the lesson.

6. Stars/Points, *by Simon Cantle*

I also use a points system. A good lesson = 1 point, very good 2 points, bad – 0.5 very bad -1 etc. They can gain or lose points or half points in the course of the lesson as dictated by their behaviour. Again, if I add or deduct points, I ask the students to tell me why they are gaining or losing points to be sure they understand why. I have a number of films and DVDs with worksheets prepared as a module of work. When the students have 10 points, we work with a video or DVD. I write the points on the board at the beginning of the lesson.

Carol Read mentions using a similar technique in an article 'Managing Children Positively' (English Teaching Professional Issue. 38, May 2005). The idea is the same, but instead of points, you use a small jar and add or remove marbles according to the behaviour of the class or individuals within it. When the jar is full, the class gets a reward. She emphasises that the jar has to be small enough for the pupils to receive a reward in a realistically short space of time, say 2 weeks for it to be effective. I have used this with very young learners as it is more visual than mere points on a board.

Last year I used the Star system too but I could add/change some things to it now. Each student had 3 stars in each lesson and if something happened (not bringing their English material, misbehave, not speak the English they know, etc), they would lose stars. At the end, all students would get a paper with the amount of stars they kept and students with more than a certain amount of stars would receive a diploma. Seemed to work most times and they hated losing the stars.

7. Stars & Certificates, *by Dave Tucker*

Each class has a name chart on the wall, with 10 spaces for Gold Stars next to each name. Gold Stars are 'won' by being participative, not interrupting but putting your hand in the air, returning to your seat after an activity, making an effort to use English, being quiet when someone else is speaking, bringing your materials. Stars can be lost simply by not following these rules. There is only one star per student per lesson, so students can redeem themselves after some bad behaviour by really making an effort to be good for the rest of the lesson. These stars are very popular with the students, and are negotiated with the teacher at the end of the lesson: "Star today, Joana - yes or no?". Students who complete a line of 10 stars get a certificate thanking them for their participation and behaviour - bronze certificate for 10 stars, silver for 20 and gold for 30 (or rather, as some students are quite happy to tell you - orange for 10 stars, grey for 20 and yellow for 30! We can't afford that much metallic-effect card!) These certificates are signed by the Director of Studies and the Teacher and are received with great enthusiasm and usually carried proudly out in front of them as they go to meet their parents after the class!

8. Rewards, *by Cristina Bento*

- Use of the computer - if the classroom has one (First thing I do is create a folder for English, put lots of English games in, and make a selection of links to online games and activities)
- Teacher's helper of the day
- 15 minutes of "Do what you want with English" time – I like to keep games, books and a dossier with extra activities. Students can pick what to do for 15 minutes.