

## Session 7 Valuing Children / High Expectations (60 min session)

**Aims:** To demonstrate the relevance of a positive learning environment.  
To explore ways of promoting this.

**Materials:** 'Happy fish' – fish-shaped cut outs on coloured paper  
Michael Rosen poem *I'm Not Going Places With Them Again*  
Theory handout  
IWB and handout of situations  
Photos of children's activities  
Watermelon Story from *In Your Hands* by Jane Revell, Susan Norman and Mal Peet, Saffire Press

### 1. Happy fish

**Aims:** To promote a positive learning environment

Tell trainees they have to write three 'happy fish' messages, each one to a different person. The messages should include a positive comment about the person who will receive it. They do this while you monitor and assist as needed. Then collect them in and deliver them to the recipients, who read their messages.

Follow-up:

- How it felt
- What happens and what to do when someone gets none
- Rationale and effect on the class

5 mins

### 2. Michael Rosen poem

**Aims:** To get trainees thinking about how a teacher's words can be interpreted in many different ways. To show how you can tell a story.

Get trainees in a semi-circle. Tell them you are going to read them a story about a trip to the zoo. You could do it like you'd do with a class of 10 year olds and ask lead-in questions:

- Have you been to a zoo?
- What animals can you see at a zoo?
- What food did you eat at the zoo?

Read the story and then follow up with these questions:

1. How did the boy feel? Why?
2. How did the other children feel? Why?
3. The message received is the message given. Discuss.

20 mins

### 3. Theory input

**Aims:** To provide an overview of the key elements of child psychology.

Give the priorities of teaching English to children info either as a mini-lecture or as a reading text. Trainees then work in pairs to summarise the info. Clarify any points they are unsure of.

35 mins

### 4. Rewriting the classroom situations

**Aims:** To enable trainees to put the theory into practice, to develop an awareness of alternative teacher responses.

Give out the handout with the classroom situations. Do the first as an example. Feedback – ask trainees to justify what they wrote. You can do this on the IWB.

1. Praise the attempt and help with the difficult answer(s). Allow time to check these in class.
2. Avoid unfair treatment – children have a strong sense of what fairness is.
3. Hear the child, not just the language. Accept that children don't always want to tell you things, especially in front of the class.
4. Recognise content over accuracy. Reformulation is sometimes enough.
5. Allow a realistic amount of time for tasks. Plan so there are stages for ideas, first draft, correction and producing the display copy.
6. Demonstration helps children join in and participate.
7. Children know a lot. Praise what they do know.
8. Encourage a collaborative learning atmosphere in your classes.

50 mins

### 5. Displaying work in the classroom

**Aims:** To generate ideas for displaying the children's work

Show some photos of classroom displays or the children showing some things that they have made. Displays don't have to be on A4 paper. They can be a poster, a collage, or an object e.g. an island. They can also be sound and video files that the children have made.

55 – 60 minutes

### 6. Optional extra - story

**Aims:** To generate ideas for displaying the children's work

Read the story of the Watermelon from *In Your Hands*. Ask trainees what the 'moral' of the story is. = It takes time to work towards having and creating a different way of seeing things.

I'm Not Going Places With Them Again, by Michael Rosen

**NB PERMISSION IS NEEDED TO REPRODUCE THIS**

from *Smacking My Lips* by Michael Rosen

## **Priorities for Teaching English to Children from Teaching Children English, David Vale and Anne Feunteun**

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## Valuing children and their work

Read the following exchanges and say whether what the teacher says has a positive or a negative effect on the child. For the negative ones, write **what you would say** to the child in that situation to make it more positive.

1. T: Have you got your homework?  
Michele: Yes, here is.  
T: OK, but where is answer 9?  
Michele: But I no understand number 9!
2. T: Let me see what you have written. (marking work). Good, Agata, you can swim. That's very nice. Now, Piotr, what's that letter?
3. T: How was your weekend?  
Hiroko: Bad, very bad.  
T: Oh dear. Why's that?  
Hiroko: Errr .... ummmm ...  
T: What did you say? Come on, don't be shy!
4. T: What did you do in the holiday?  
Anna: I was in my granny.  
T: You went to see your granny. That's nice. Where does she live?  
Anna: In the mountains.
5. T: OK, now you all have ten minutes to write some rules for your bedroom. Here's some coloured paper.  
*10 minutes later*  
T: Stop. Stop. Stop! Who's ready?  
Saleh: I'm finished!  
T: This is terrible! Look at the spelling! This can't go on the wall.  
Saleh: But why not?
6. T: Now, let's sing the song and do the actions.  
*Children mumble song and are a bit shy.*  
T: That's good. Let's do it again louder. Follow me [*demonstrates actions*].
7. T: Open your books and write the date.  
Ali: Teacher, what is day?  
T: You don't know the date? I suppose I'll have to tell you.
8. Samia: Teacher, how is you spell 'butterfly'?  
T: How do you spell 'butterfly'? Can anyone tell me?  
Rasheed: I know! B – U – T – T – E – R – F – L – Y.  
T: That's right. Samia, can you spell it for me again?

## The monster and the watermelon

[Permission has been given to reproduce this material.]

Once upon a time a traveller rode his horse down a hill into a village. He saw a large group of villagers up ahead looking into a field and shouting and waving their arms. As the traveller came closer some of the villagers ran up to him shouting: 'Help! Help! There's a monster in there!'

The traveller looked into the field. The only thing he could see was a watermelon. 'Don't be silly,' he said. 'It's not a monster. It's a watermelon.' The villagers didn't like to be told this. 'It's a monster!' they shouted. 'No, it isn't,' said the traveller. The villagers were getting angry. 'It's a monster!' they shrieked. 'No, it isn't,' shouted the exasperated traveller. 'Anyone can see it's a watermelon!' The villagers were incensed. They dragged the traveller off his horse and threw him into the duck pond.

Later that day – long after the first traveller had crawled out of the duck pond and ridden away dripping and squelching – another traveller rode down the same hill. The group of villagers was still up ahead, looking into the same field and shouting and waving their arms. As the traveller came closer some of the villagers ran up to him shouting: 'Help! Help! There's a monster in there!' The traveller looked into the field.

'So there is!' he yelled. He drew his sword, spurred his horse, jumped over the gate and galloped across the field, slashing away in all directions. There were bits of watermelon everywhere. As he cantered back again the villagers cheered with relief and delight. They were so pleased, that they invited the traveller to stay with them for a while. So he did.

He learned a lot from them about their way of life and how they did things in that part of the world. And he listened to their stories with great interest and attention. And in turn, he told them stories too. And he taught them things he knew about. One of the things he taught them – little by little – was the difference between a monster and a watermelon.

The day came for the traveller to leave and the villagers accompanied him to the edge of the village. As they passed the watermelon field, the villagers pointed into the field and laughed as they said: 'There's a watermelon in there!'

'Yes, there is,' said the traveller. 'And there's sometimes a monster in there too!'

And he winked and went on his way.

From *In Your Hands – NLP in ELT*, by Jane Revell, Susan Norman and Mal Peet, Saffire Books, 1997

