



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Erasmus+



---

## 5.4 AHA MOMENTS

---

# TEACHERS TESTIMONIALS AT THE CONFERENCE

2023-1-HU01-KA220-SCH-000156486  
POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN EUROPEAN SCHOOLS



### Content

<b>“Bad Boy”</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Homework</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Art Teacher</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Mistaken Goal</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Anxiety about going to school</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Positive Time out</b> .....	<b>5</b>

*Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Tempus Public Foundation. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.*

In order to ensure the complete anonymity of the individuals mentioned in the stories, we will not disclose the names of the teachers who told us about the following cases or the names of their schools.

---

## 5.4 AHA MOMENTS

---

---

### “Bad Boy”

---

During a session where we worked on appreciations, for the second time, I put two students next to each other and the girl had to say something good about the boy next to her, but he was a boy with whom she did not have a close relationship and who is usually seen as a bad boy, difficult, explosive and the cause of many problems in the class. She said something nice and good about him and, suddenly, he became emotional, started to cry and thanked her saying “thank you for seeing my good side, I am not always bad”. Suddenly, the whole class held a moment of silence, with a lot of emotion and many tears mixed in. I confess that I was also moved. This was a turning point for the group, because they realized that the boy they saw as bad had a good and sensitive side that they had never noticed before. They became more united and admitted to being more attentive to each other and to each other’s needs. They began to realize that it is good to be empathetic and that everyone wins if we know how to see the good in each person.

---

### Homework

---

As Lina’s teacher, I noticed early on that she was struggling with completing her homework assignments. She often appeared frustrated and overwhelmed, which sometimes led to resistance or avoidance rather than engagement. Initially, I considered imposing stricter rules and deadlines to ensure she stayed on track, but I hesitated because I wanted to support her in a way that would build her confidence and motivation rather than just compliance.

Instead, I decided to try a different approach—one grounded in positive discipline principles. I invited Lina to participate in setting her own learning goals and to choose which assignments she wanted to focus on each week, as long as she met the overall objectives of the curriculum. This shift was intentional; I wanted to give her a sense of control and ownership over her learning process.

The change was remarkable. With the freedom to decide, Lina began to manage her time more effectively. She prioritized tasks that interested her or that she felt more confident tackling first, which helped reduce her anxiety. I made sure to check in regularly, offering encouragement and support without micromanaging. I also celebrated her progress and effort, no matter how small, emphasizing growth and persistence rather than perfection.

Over time, Lina’s attitude towards homework transformed. She showed increased enthusiasm and engagement, and her frustration diminished significantly. This experience reinforced for me the power of empowering students through choice and responsibility. When students feel trusted and supported, they are more likely to rise to the occasion and take ownership of their learning journey.

---

## 5.4 AHA MOMENTS

---

---

### Art Teacher

---

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to speak to you today about the transformative power of **positive discipline** in educational settings. I would like to share a practical example from our school that illustrates how these methods can foster a constructive and respectful learning environment.

The students of class 7 reported challenges in their cooperation with the teacher. The main issues raised by the students included a lack of clarity regarding required materials, ambiguous grading criteria, and difficulties in communication about organizational matters.

Rather than approaching the situation with punitive measures, we chose to implement **positive discipline techniques**, which emphasize mutual respect, empathy, and shared responsibility.

We began with **active listening**. Students were given a safe space to voice their concerns and emotions constructively. This was followed by **empathetic communication**, where we acknowledged the students' perspectives while also recognizing the need to support the teacher in organizing classwork.

Next, we engaged in **collaborative problem-solving**. Students proposed specific solutions, which were openly discussed and thoughtfully implemented. To build a sense of ownership and responsibility, the class elected two student representatives to serve as liaisons with the teacher.

Concrete actions were taken:

- A **mediation meeting** was held between the class and the teacher, facilitated by a headteacher.
- A **clear schedule** for assignments, deadlines, and required materials was established and shared with students.
- A poster "**communication board**" was introduced in the classroom to post all current information related to art lessons.
- The class selected two student representatives to serve as liaisons with the teacher for organizational matters., improving the flow of communication.

The situation was resolved constructively. The classroom atmosphere improved significantly, and students expressed satisfaction with both the process and the changes implemented.

This experience reaffirmed our belief that **positive discipline is not just a theory—it is a powerful tool for building respectful, inclusive, and effective learning communities**. By listening, empathizing, and involving students in the resolution process, we not only solved a problem but also strengthened the fabric of our school culture.

Thank you for your attention.

---

## 5.4 AHA MOMENTS

---

---

### Mistaken Goal

---

Maria was in 3rd grade – quiet, withdrawn, often staring into space, rarely participating. When she had to read or speak in front of the class, she blushed and began to stutter. Sometimes she didn't turn in her **homework**, and when she was reprimanded, she simply bowed her head without saying a word.

At first, I used the typical approach: I reminded her to be more active, asked why she hadn't done her assignments, and even wrote a note in her notebook. But nothing changed. I felt powerless.

One day, during a Positive Discipline training, I learned something **that shifted my entire** perspective:

"Misbehavior is a form of mistaken behavior, not intentional defiance. Look for what's behind it."

That was my AHA moment.

The next day, I didn't ask Maria why she didn't have her homework again. Instead, during recess, I sat next to her and said quietly:

— "Maria, I've noticed it's been hard for you to participate lately. But I know you're smart and capable. I'm here if you need help. I want to understand you. Is everything okay?"

She looked at me for a moment, then lowered her gaze. After a long pause, she whispered:

— "My dad left two months ago. I don't want to talk about it."

At that moment, everything became clear. Maria wasn't lazy or apathetic – she was hurting.

From that day on, I gave her small tasks – handing out papers, helping me clean the board, working in pairs with a kind classmate. I didn't push for grades or performance, just connection and support.

A month later, Maria raised her hand on her own. We all looked surprised. She smiled slightly and gave her answer – softly, but with confidence.

---

## 5.4 AHA MOMENTS

---

---

### Anxiety about going to school

---

We welcomed Valentin at the beginning of the school year in the sixth form. Valentin is a rather shy and withdrawn pupil at first sight. He didn't immediately find his place in the class. He was chosen last in group work and showed general difficulties in his schooling. He had difficulty organising himself and it was clear that his arrival at collège was a trial for him.

A few days after the start of the new school year, on the bus journey from his home to the college, Valentin was seized by the urge to urinate. Unable to hold it in, he soiled himself and many of the pupils around him noticed, which was very humiliating.

After this event, Valentin began to develop major anxiety in class and about going to school. He was so afraid that it would happen again that he asked several times an hour to go to the toilet, something that is normally forbidden in secondary school.

The class's head teacher therefore tried to create a climate of trust with him in which he could freely express his emotions and which enabled him to realise that he had the right to make a mistake and that it was not serious.

However, the gaze of others was too much for Valentin to bear, and he began to develop deep-seated anxiety about going to school. So his mother tried to take him by car, thinking she was doing the right thing and saving him from having to face the gaze of those who had witnessed the scene. Unfortunately, this had the opposite effect, with Valentin throwing hysterical fits as he entered the school gates, even insulting the headmistress. As a result, he began to be absent on a regular basis.

Following this, the class teacher, taking advantage of Valentin's absence, organised a class discussion to talk about him to the others and to allow them to express their views on him. It emerged that the others rejected him, not because he had urinated on himself, but because he was unpleasant with them (this seemed to be his 'defence weapon' against potential criticism). A role-play was therefore organised so that the students could put themselves in his shoes and understand that the humiliation he had felt was influencing his general behaviour, and solutions were found together: not to stop the lesson when he asked to go to the toilet and for the students to make an effort to include him during group work so as not to exacerbate his feelings of rejection.

A meeting was also organised with all his teachers to explain the facts in more detail, and the conclusion was that his trips to the toilet were not seen as strange but rather as perfectly accepted and normal.

When Valentin returned to class, everyone acted as if everything was normal, even though the pupils knew that the rules forbade leaving the classroom during lessons. It was a collective effort to make him feel better.

After a few months, Valentin started to come to class more often and no longer felt that people were looking at him in class. As a result, his trips to the toilet became less frequent and almost non-existent. His behaviour changed and he became more friendly with his classmates, even making new friends.

Today, Valentin normally comes to school by bus. His anxieties seem to be behind him. He's flourishing and is proof that the collective effort (pupils + teachers) has enabled him to grow and accept that this unfortunate event at the beginning of the year no longer defines him.

## 5.4 AHA MOMENTS

### Positive Time out

There's a 6th grade boy - let's call him Peter, who has a hard time sitting still, is always talking to someone, shouting across the room, laughing out loud at everything... He is central in the class, many people want to please him. He is quite bright, but learning is not his priority. He is clearly not using his personal power constructively.

In one of my classes, there was a lot of loud talking, and it was extremely difficult for me to tolerate Peter's behaviour. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get things in order. I could feel myself getting more and more tense.

I knew I had to do something, this couldn't go on. I shouted at Peter, "Get out of the classroom! Stop in front of the door, I'm coming right after you." Peter went out, closing the door behind him. The others were obviously surprised, it's not my habit to send children out.

I told them I'd be right back, and I slowly made my way out. I remember that as I was going out I had no idea what to say when I got out. I hoped I would calm down before I had to speak. (I needed some **positive time out**.)

When I closed the door behind me, I saw Peter looking at me with wide eyes. He was obviously expecting me to yell at him or maybe punish him - he gets into conflicts with lots of teachers.

