

FOR THE  
IB PYP

# Wellbeing

Teaching for Success

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 **HODDER**  
EDUCATION

# CHAPTER 2

## Wellbeing and the Learner Profile

### IN A NUTSHELL

- This chapter introduces and discusses the 10 learning behaviours at the heart of the PYP that can be utilized to encourage student wellbeing.
- Each of these learning behaviours can be encouraged in different ways by conscious teacher leadership.
- Each learning behaviour description is accompanied by detailed exercises to implement or inspire.

The IB Learner Profile includes 10 learning behaviours at the heart of the PYP. Each of these can be encouraged through activities designed to boost student wellbeing along with the specific learning behaviour. Through conscious leadership in the classroom, teachers can deliver beyond academic achievement, to include an overarching protective layer of student wellbeing to increase the fertility of the school community.

The learning behaviours or Learner Profile are commonly displayed in IB schools – along a pathway or in a garden for everyone to see. For teachers to encourage these attributes in students, a clear understanding of the characteristics related to each word is necessary. The following overview of the IB Learner Profile provides a foundation for the activities aligned with each attribute in this chapter.

## Overview of the IB Learner Profile

Learning behaviour	Symbol	Characteristic
<b>Inquirers</b>		We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.
<b>Knowledgeable</b>		We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.
<b>Thinkers</b>		We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.
<b>Communicators</b>		We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspective of other individuals and groups.
<b>Principled</b>		We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.
<b>Open-minded</b>		We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.
<b>Caring</b>		We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.
<b>Risk-takers</b>		We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.
<b>Balanced</b>		We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives – intellectual, physical, and emotional – to achieve wellbeing for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.
<b>Reflective</b>		We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

## Practical strategies to foster wellbeing and learning behaviours

How do we encourage students to become ‘Inquirers’ without increasing academic pressure? And what if the concept of being a ‘Risk-taker’ triggers anxiety in students? Teachers need to ensure their students put each IB learning behaviour into action without impacting their emotional wellbeing.

The activities in this chapter are designed to draw out the existing Learner Profile characteristics from within the student audience and to build on these. As students develop an awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses in terms of the IB Learner Profile, they are more able to play to the strengths.

For example, a student who understands the love of asking questions and verbal communication is likely to identify with being an Inquirer and a Communicator. They may select projects based on their strengths to gain better results. Conversely, certain attributes, such as Principled, may feel like a weakness or an unexplored attribute waiting to be developed.

Educators may wish to reflect on the IB attributes on a daily basis, with questions like, ‘Who worked on their ability to be Open-minded today, and how?’ or they may wish to choose an ‘Attribute of the week’ to explore new ways of strengthening and displaying this aspect of the IB Learner Profile, allowing students to strengthen each of these attributes step by step.

From the very first lesson about the attributes, students will respond to a clear and concise definition, a child-friendly example and opportunities to practise the new skill or attribute in the classroom, the playground and the community. Revisiting each attribute on a regular basis will cement the concept. Students will develop a personal connection to some attributes very quickly, and others will require more time and attention.

When students have the opportunity to use the IB Learner Profile in a sentence and to practise each attribute across different contexts, their depth of understanding will continue to evolve, along with their appreciation of the word and how it applies to them personally. This process will enhance each student’s self-awareness and their motivation to be more ‘Reflective’, ‘Balanced’ or ‘Knowledgeable’.

In this section, each attribute is listed along with a variety of activities for teachers to share with their students. You can find these activities as photocopiable worksheets at the back of the book.



## ■ Inquirers

Have you ever questioned a choice you made? Revisited a decision, or thought about what you could have done differently? That's good! Asking yourself and those around you questions is healthy. Considering your options and making informed decisions builds confidence and is likely to trigger more questions, ideas and topics to research.

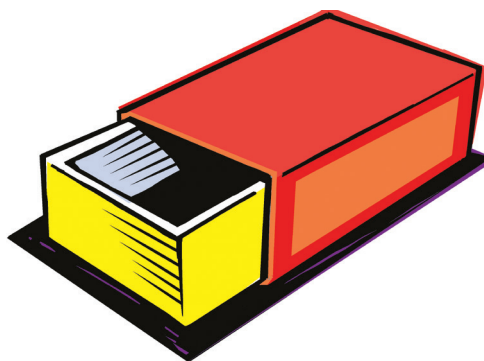
Educators and parents who are curious themselves are more likely to foster curiosity in children. By remaining conscious of the important role adults play as nurturers of inquiry, we are more likely to value the childlike quality of curiosity throughout our lives. Without this commitment to learning new things at every opportunity, children in our care would be at risk of becoming equally passive, uninspired to ask questions and limited by their role models.

Babies are born with an instinct for inquiry. A 1964 study found that infants as young as two months old showed a preference for unfamiliar patterns, suggesting new information is more appealing than content babies have seen before (Fantz, 1964). In 2007, a study recorded interactions between toddlers and their carers to reveal that children asked an average of 100 questions per hour and two-thirds of these were designed to elicit information (Chouinard, 2007).

## ■ How to inspire curiosity, independence and a love of lifelong learning

Nurturing children's curiosity requires parents and educators to feed their thirst for knowledge with more than just answers. We need to encourage their independence as Inquirers and praise their efforts to find answers to their questions. This starts by encouraging children to ask more questions and being motivated to find answers together. This provides an opportunity to role model a love of lifelong learning on an endless quest to inquire.

As the Nobel Prize-winning physicist Isidor Rabi explained when he collected his award, 'Every other mother in Brooklyn would ask her child after school: So? Did you learn anything today? But not my mother. "Izzy," she would say, "Did you ask a good question today?" That difference – asking good questions – made me a better scientist' (Rabi, 1960).



Thinking like an Inquirer

The following activity is designed to foster inquiry, inspire curiosity, trigger more questions and assemble new knowledge.

**Step 1:** Hold up a match box and ask your class to focus on the size of the box. You may wish to measure it and display the dimensions.

**Step 2:** Ask your class to go on a scavenger hunt to find five tiny items in the playground that will all fit in the box at the same time (think: seeds, stones or other interesting items).

**Step 3:** After returning to the classroom, ask the students to carefully line up all of their found items on their desk. Use magnifying glasses, if available, to closely study each item.

**Step 4:** Ask the students to choose one item and to then create a story about it, or draw it.

**Step 5:** Ask the class to walk carefully around the classroom and study all the items, slowly and closely, to be sure no items are lost, creating a sense of value and intrigue with everyday objects in familiar places.

### ■ Resource to foster inquiry

Smith, K. 2015. *Adventure Lab (Boxed Set): The Imaginary World of ..., How to Be an Explorer of the World and Finish This Book*. New York. Penguin Books.

### ■ Knowledgeable

Psychologists are trained to use cognitive tests to determine a person's intelligence quotient (IQ). Children can have their IQ assessed in early childhood as the required tasks are mostly visual puzzles and timed tasks. David Wechsler, the creator of the world's most widely used intelligence test for children (Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children), purposely excluded maths tasks and spelling lists to eliminate the influence of education on the results. The IQ test is designed to measure a child's natural-born intelligence, whether they have attended school or not.

Knowledge is factual information or skills acquired through experience or lessons learnt. Children who attend school have the advantage of gaining knowledge through experience *and* education. Educators are trained to engage with issues and ideas with local and global significance across a range of disciplines. Their guidance allows students to think more broadly about a topic and to consider all the factors involved.

From birth, children are actively participating, experimenting and observing peers and adults to acquire new skills. At school, knowledge is extended by encouraging children to test new skills in the classroom, and to gain competence and a sense of accomplishment, before applying the same principles in the community – locally and internationally.

Knowledgeable children typically have high self-esteem and are willing participants in class discussions. Others have the answers but may doubt themselves. Educators can protect the self-esteem of students with less knowledge by teaching research skills and the gathering of information before engaging in class discussions, in order to foster greater participation and confidence in the classroom.

Build your student's confidence by boosting their knowledge of the topic before a class discussion



### ■ How to engage with issues and ideas across a range of disciplines that have local and global significance

Applying an issue or idea to a range of disciplines – such as water absorption rates in science experiments, and asking students to write a story about water restrictions, for example, as a creative writing task – will facilitate a greater depth of understanding and allow children to apply their knowledge in different ways.

The following activity is designed to engage students with an issue or idea of local and global significance.

**Step 1:** Ask students to choose a topic, such as water use, recycling, animal rights, transport or food. The topic needs to be of relevance to your students and it also needs to be relevant to students of a similar age in a different part of the world. For example, fishing may be relevant to students in Alaska and in Sri Lanka for different reasons.

**Step 2:** Students should draw something from their local area that is related to their chosen topic. For example, if they chose food, they could draw what they eat at home.

**Step 3:** Students should then choose another part of the world as a different context in which to research their topic. For example, with food, they could draw popular dishes or foods from their chosen region, and place the picture on a map. This is an opportunity for students to practise research skills and to place images on a map, before sharing their findings in a class discussion.

**Step 4:** Ask the students to discuss these questions in groups:

- What do students around the world have in common?
- What differences did you discover in regard to your topic?
- What other questions did your research raise?

Discover the answers to your questions.

Share your new knowledge with your classmates.

## ■ Thinkers

We all feel frustrated when problems arise. Have you ever walked around an unfamiliar city when your phone is almost out of charge? Finding a shopkeeper who is willing to share a phone charger makes you feel like a problem-solver; a thinker; a genius! This is due to the dopamine reward rush triggered by problem-solving, also known as the 'Aha! moment' (Kounios and Beeman, 2009).

Children are natural problem-solvers. Most toddlers like to open cupboards, empty the contents and pull apart or taste any items of interest. Adults may feel tempted to give children solutions, but this only creates dependence and should be avoided. A problem-solver is a great asset to the classroom and the community. Giving children roles and responsibilities, such as raising the school flag or turning on the technology, will also enhance their capacity to work independently and overcome challenges.

With a growth mindset, students can develop skills and knowledge through effort, practice and persistence (Dweck, 2006). Educators can encourage students to tackle complex problems because our abilities can be improved upon with effort and the right strategies. This knowledge equates to an instant reduction in frustration, as we gain confidence in our problem-solving capacity. So, instead of walking around with a flat phone battery, feeling lost, we think ahead and problem-solve before an issue arises.

■ How to find solutions to solve complex problems

Finding solutions to complex problems



**Step 1:** Ask your students, ‘Have you ever noticed a problem that needs fixing? I bet you have plenty of ideas! Draw or write about the problem on your worksheet.’

**Step 2:** Ask your students to break the problem down into smaller pieces. This will help them to solve it in parts, one step at a time.

For example, a garbage bin that is overflowing may have three parts to it:

1 Too much garbage	2 No one to empty bin	3 Garbage blowing into a river or ocean
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**Step 3:** Ask the students to draw or write about three different parts of the problem they discovered.

Can they find a solution for each small part of the problem? For example:

1 Too much garbage	2 No one to empty bin	3 Garbage blowing into a river or ocean
Solution: Reduce the amount of waste or add an extra bin.	Solution: Volunteer to empty the bin more frequently or find someone who can.	Solution: Put a lid on the garbage bin and pull the waste from the water.



## ■ Communicators

Have you ever sat silently in a discussion and wished you had the confidence to contribute? Effective communication skills allow people to have a voice and to have their ideas acknowledged. Children are at a disadvantage when adults use verbal communication to engage them. Talking may come easily for some, but there are many other ways to express thoughts and feelings.

Behavioural issues often arise when children cannot adequately express themselves using verbal communication. Lashing out physically or throwing an object may replace phrases like, 'I am frustrated and I need some space.' At other times, children may withdraw or disengage when verbal communication is too heavily relied upon by educators as a medium by which to exchange ideas. Children who lack confidence in their communication skills often thrive when given other mediums to help them express themselves, such as visual arts, voice recording software, creative writing or drama.

Play-based activities that use tactile mediums, such as sand play, also help children to express themselves. By first asking the young person to run their fingers through sand in a tray, and giving options, such as, 'Is it cold or warm?', 'Smooth or rough?', most are drawn to the texture of the sand. To learn more about the young person, I often invite them to create a scene in the sand about home or school using miniature people and animals to represent the characters in the story. Based on the work of Dr Eliana Gil (Christensen & Thorngren, 2000), the sand tray is spun around after the scene is complete to give the child an opportunity to look at their story from different perspectives, and to consider other points of view.

## ■ How to express ourselves, listen and collaborate with others

Is it easier to listen/  
talk to someone  
if they are facing  
towards you or  
away from you?



**Step 1:** Ask students to find a partner, move to an open space and sit back to back.

**Step 2:** Students should take turns to talk and listen for 30 seconds each. One person talks, the other listens, and then they should switch roles. Both students will have a turn to talk and listen.

**Step 3:** Students should then turn around and face each other and try the same thing again. This time the listener can see the talker's eyes, hands and facial expressions. Swap over after 30 seconds.

**Step 4:** Ask the students to answer these questions together:

- Was it easier for you to listen when you were facing away from each other or sitting face to face? Why do you think this was the case?
- Was it easier to talk when you were facing away from each other or sitting face to face? Why do you think this was the case?

**Step 5:** Take a vote and see how many students preferred facing away and how many preferred sitting face to face when communicating. Discuss the outcomes with your class.

### ■ Principled

Listening to great leaders should be inspiring. Principled leaders act with integrity, honesty and fairness. We can all be principled by respecting the dignity and rights of people everywhere, and by taking responsibility for our actions and the consequences of those actions (IBO, 2017). Giving students access to the voices of Greta Thunberg and Malala Yousafzai, for example, demonstrates how young people with strong principles have attracted a supportive global audience.

Similarly, students are drawn to educators with principles, particularly when their principles are displayed every day in the classroom. When educators refuse to let students *put down*, *humiliate* or *speak negatively about others*, they are modelling strong principles. In addition to this, educators who choose to represent the voices of those who are underrepresented in the school community are creating space for minorities. Giving power to the powerless to bring about fairness and justice for all is part of being a positive role model for students and future generations.

Students, too, can be role models for each other by striving for greatness and bringing out the best in themselves and others. Consistently treating others with respect is an important aspect of being principled. During many classroom observations, I have noticed how educators can change their voice tone depending on who they are speaking to. These inconsistencies are often

more evident to the students than to the educator themselves. For this reason, self-awareness is an important first step for everyone on the journey towards great leadership.

Educators who represent the voices of the underrepresented are creating space for minorities



### ■ How to practise integrity, fairness and justice

**Step 1:** Ask students to consider the phrase:

‘Be the change you want to see in the world.’

Mahatma Gandhi

**Step 2:** Students should imagine they have been selected to lead their country. As a leader with a strong sense of fairness, what changes would they like to implement? Ask them to make a list and to think about how these changes might affect the rights of people everywhere.

**Step 3:** How would students put these changes into practice? Ask them to write about, or draw a picture showing how they could be the change they want to see in the world.

### ■ Open-minded

To be open-minded is to embrace ideas that are different from your own, and to appreciate the concept, even if you disagree with it. Being interested in learning about different cultures, traditions and values for the sake of understanding an equally important viewpoint makes a person well-informed. A closed-minded person may challenge ideas that differ from their own, or they may resist opportunities to learn new ways of interpreting the same information.

Children interpret the value of another person by observing the adults in their life. If a parent shuts down a diverse point of view, or avoids a particular demographic, children learn to do the same. At school, students may feel conflicted when educators are open-minded about topics their parents may be less inclined to discuss. Exploring different viewpoints is part of being an open-minded educator in every internationally-minded IB classroom. This allows children to be more informed and to value the benefits of an open mind.

Research shows that children can shift their opinions and the influence of their parents through education and the friendships they form. For example, having friends of different races as a toddler and beyond reduces racism and increases intergroup warmth (Barlow *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, educators who intentionally affirmed children's racial identities as part of the curriculum reported increases in students' learning across many domains of development (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Wright *et al.*, 2015).

### ■ How to seek, evaluate and appreciate different points of view

Appreciating  
different points  
of view



**Step 1:** Ask students to design a survey and gather different perspectives from other students at your school. Students should choose a topic which is likely to stimulate different points of view, and they should use a Likert scale for each question, such as the one shown on the next page.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

**Step 2:** Encourage your students to survey as many other students as possible within a set time period.

**Step 3:** Ask students to identify the one question in their survey with the most diverse range of responses, ie a mix of 5s and 1s.

**Step 4:** Ask students to consider the different points of view on this particular question. Why were the responses so diverse? Students should share their ideas with the class.

### ■ Caring

Educators can influence the amount of empathy, compassion and respect students show for themselves and others in the classroom, even if they cannot change a student's circumstances at home. Without strong and consistent leadership, social issues in a community can infiltrate the boundaries of a school. One school principal I spoke to led a team of committed educators who turned around a school's reputation after a stolen car was driven into the playground and set alight. It sounds like an extreme case, but when students are at risk in their communities, educators are often the most influential and life-changing role models.

Teaching empathy, compassion and respect starts with an emotional investment in each individual student and the time required to foster a connection. This will vary depending on the student and their own personal circumstances. Trust is a key component in any teacher–student relationship. As an educator, you will influence young people, even if they keep their distance. Your actions will be observed by those around you, and being consistently caring will help others to learn how to apply empathy, compassion and respect.

Many schools offer their students the opportunity to raise awareness for a cause, such as youth homelessness, animal cruelty or the impact of climate change on humanity. Educators can also share their own experiences of volunteering, at a soup kitchen, for example, or they can use YouTube to show students how 'random acts of kindness', or opportunities to 'pay-it-forward' are happening in our society ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdYJr03eJJE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdYJr03eJJE)). This shifts a student's focus from their own situation, and allows them to consider how they can positively impact the world with empathy, compassion and respect for others.



Building empathy,  
compassion and  
respect

### ■ How to build empathy, compassion and respect



**Step 1:** Ask students to list ideas that would be helpful to, or appreciated by others.

**Step 2:** Create a marble jar in your classroom to reward random acts of kindness. (Note: a marble jar reward system involves placing an empty jar in a prominent position. When a student participates in a random act of kindness, a marble will go into the jar. Once the jar is full, students have reached their reward. Base the size of the jar depending on the reward or the needs of your class – a smaller jar could mean a smaller, simpler reward as it will be quicker to fill, while a large jar could mean a big reward.)

**Step 3:** Brainstorm a new list each week with a different focus. Start with your classroom and broaden your reach to include the playground, the staff room, the canteen and then move out into the community.

### ■ Resources to teach empathy and compassion

How to show empathy: [www.wikihow.com/Show-Empathy](http://www.wikihow.com/Show-Empathy)

Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=13\\_rJVvxx\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13_rJVvxx_g)

Find guest speakers from organizations supporting asylum seekers or the elderly in your community. Invite parents to attend to build empathy, compassion and respect within your school community.

## ■ Risk-takers

Children take risks in their play, such as balancing building blocks



Risk-taking allows humans to test their own boundaries to find out what they can and can't do. Risk-takers can appreciate the excitement of uncertainty. Children take risks in their play as part of learning. Balancing a block at the highest point of a tower may cause it to topple over, but if the tower stays in place, there is a sense of exhilaration. According to research, children who are risk-takers have better risk management skills, resilience and self-confidence (Brussoni *et al.*, 2015).

No one learns without making mistakes (Guzman Ingram, 2017). Educators who reward perseverance in their students are acknowledging the challenges of failure and the energy required to push through uncertainty. Sharing your own mistakes and the failures of other role models on a regular basis can help students adopt terms such as 'the power of yet' – that is, 'I can't do it yet' as opposed to 'I can't do it'.

Normalizing mistakes and suggesting a 'retake', as though every failure is part of a movie that can be edited, empowers young people to get used to setbacks. Working towards a shared goal for the whole class, such as a Perseverance Party, gives educators an opportunity to highlight the effort and patience that learning requires. Giving students the responsibility of pushing outside their own comfort zones will ensure that students with perfectionist traits feel in control of their own incremental challenges.

### ■ How to foster resourceful, resilient risk-takers

**Step 1:** Explain the power of ‘yet’ – use the phrase ‘I can’t do this yet’ rather than ‘I can’t do this’.

**Step 2:** Set your students a challenge that is slightly more difficult than their regular classwork.

**Step 3:** Listen to how your students respond. While some may say, ‘This looks challenging’, others may push the work aside and complain, ‘This is too hard!’ Record their responses for all to see.

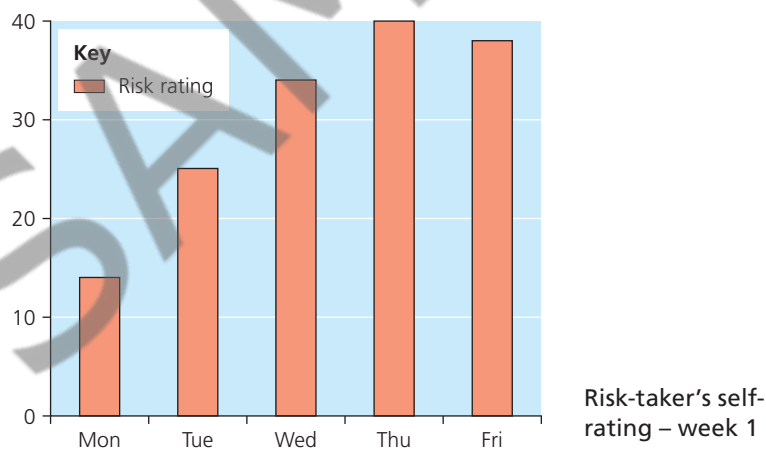
**Step 4:** Set a timer for two minutes and ask students to engage with the material, to *persevere*. Reward sustained effort over time. Ask them to self-reflect on how they found the challenge and any barriers they encountered while trying to persevere.

**Step 5:** Set a daily or weekly challenge to encourage risk-taking using the timer to reward slight extensions in sustained effort. Ask students to rate their own risk-taking as learners during one set task:

✓ 40 = ‘I can’t do this yet’

✓ 0 = ‘I can’t do this’

Ask students to make a graph of their own risk-taking based on their self-ratings at the end of the challenging set task. See the example below.



**Step 6:** Praise perseverance and being courageous enough to make mistakes. Host a Perseverance Party to celebrate your progress as a class.

### ■ Resource to foster perseverance

The power of believing that you can improve: [www.ted.com/talks/carol\\_dweck\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_believing\\_that\\_you\\_can\\_improve/transcript?language=en#t-324080](https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve/transcript?language=en#t-324080)

## ■ Balanced

Have you ever felt like you need to do more exercise? Maybe you have had times when you have felt more emotional and less inclined to socialize. Emotional connectivity remains a core part of being human (Cacioppo *et al.*, 2015). Finding balance will help, and teaching children how to achieve balance is the role of parents and educators.

Being balanced is about seeking out cognitive stimulation, selecting healthy food options, prioritizing social opportunities and scheduling daily exercise. Putting these values into practice throughout the life span is the key to maintaining physical and mental health.

Children are influenced by the choices made by the adults who care for them. Daily decisions around how much screen time a child is allowed, the types of food provided and a willingness to arrange social opportunities with school friends or neighbours all have a significant impact on a child's balance – socially, physically and emotionally. Children are more likely to adopt a balanced lifestyle when educators and parents promote similar values.

## ■ How to recognize our interdependence and our own social, emotional and physical needs

**Step 1:** Explain interdependence. Discuss your understanding of the word with a partner.

*Interdependence* means individuals, communities and nations who can rely on each other. With interdependence, humans have different roles – farming the land, building houses, delivering products to supermarkets. One human needs to depend on another to make our society work. That is interdependence.

**Step 2:** Ask students to study the image below.



This is a family of hunters and gatherers. At night, the fire was a place to keep warm and listen to stories. By day, some hunted and others gathered food to survive. The children collected firewood, and helped to carry water and keep the babies safe

Ask students: Why do you think hunters and gatherers did not live alone?  
They should list three ideas.



**Step 3:** Ask students to study the image below.



This is a modern community. There are many different jobs in today's human society, compared to the hunters and gatherers. There are teachers, firefighters, shop assistants – all kinds of jobs! In many households, children help to cook dinner, keep the house tidy and go to school

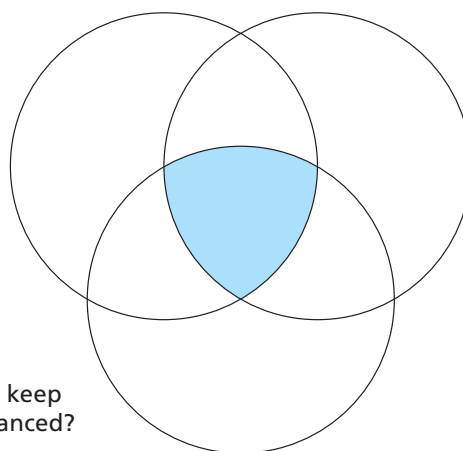
Ask students: Do you think we still need to live together in today's society? Why or why not?

**Step 4:** Ask students to study the image below.



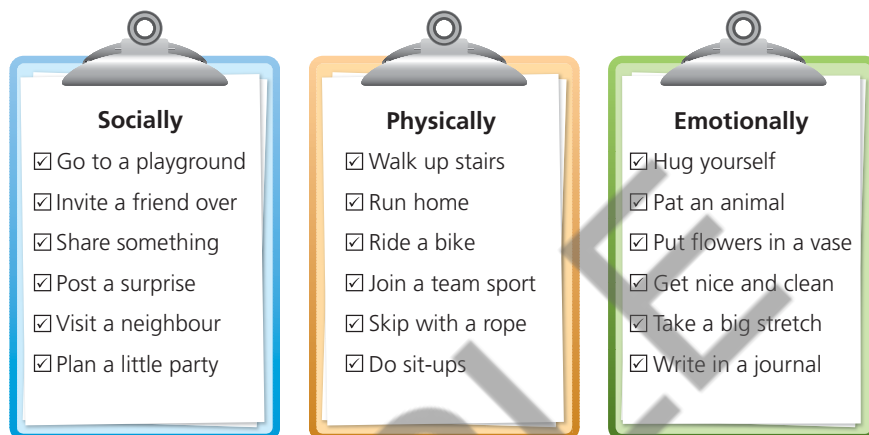
This is an image of a woman who is dressed up and her hair is neat, suggesting she may be going to meet someone (socially). She is doing exercise by riding her scooter to take care of herself (physically) and her facial expression appears calm (emotionally). She appears *balanced* – socially, emotionally and physically

**Step 5:** Students should draw three circles (see diagram on the right) and write 'socially', 'emotionally' and 'physically' in each circle. They should think about their routine and draw or write, in each circle, what they do to keep themselves balanced and how they take care of themselves – socially, emotionally and physically.



How do you keep yourself balanced?

**Step 6:** Ask students to share their ideas in small groups and to discuss the ideas below.



How to take care of yourself

## ■ Reflective

To reflect is to think about what we have learned and what we can do with our new knowledge. Sometimes it can be difficult to think about what we have learned but it helps to think about the lesson or activity by drawing on all your senses, including what you saw, tasted, smelled and felt at the time of experiencing the new information.

Children are often asked to reflect on their weekend, or what they did in the holidays. It is easy to start with a list of events and then to dig deeper to better understand the lessons learnt. To be reflective, we must process the information and evaluate it. Being reflective is about considering our own strengths and weaknesses. This helps us to know where we need to improve and how we can better contribute in the future.

For example, children who love to learn facts will often memorize information and share it with others. Reciting the facts aloud helps them to process the data, while the responses they receive from others help them to evaluate this skill. Most people can listen to a few facts and may respond with, 'That's interesting', but after listening to a very long list of facts the response may be, 'Okay, that's enough now'.

Reflecting on these different responses with the child is an opportunity to consider what worked and what didn't. With reflection, the child might start to focus on reading social cues, such as a sigh or a fast nod, suggesting it is time to 'hurry up'. As an outcome of reflection, the child may set themselves a limit on how many facts to recite before asking the listener a question. Without reflection, lessons take longer to learn.

### ■ How to thoughtfully consider the world, our own strengths and our weaknesses

**Step 1:** Think about all the textures in the world around you. Give examples and allow students to touch soft, rough, jagged or fluffy textures found in your classroom.

**Step 2:** Encourage your students to explore the school grounds to seek out different textures. Ask them to collect a diverse range of samples of textures to stick in a journal.

Here is an example:



Photograph of journal item courtesy of Olivia Rocker (aged 12)

**Step 3:** Ask students to consider their own strengths and weaknesses as textures. Some parts of ourselves may be solid and strong. These are our strengths. Other parts may be soft and fragile. These are our weaknesses. Using the different textures found in the playground, ask students to craft a sculpture or symbol of themselves.

Give students two options:

- a** Stick the textures in a journal in the form of yourself, labelling your own strengths and weaknesses.
- b** Create a sculpture of yourself using the textures and write a sentence about how it is like you.

Here is an example:

*'I am balanced most of the time, but if I tip over I'm still learning how to fix things myself.'*

Creating a sculpture using different textures



**Step 4:** Reflect on this activity in a class discussion:

- How did it feel to collect the different textures? Discuss.
- How did it feel to consider your own strengths and weaknesses? Discuss.
- How did you feel about creating an image of yourself with the textures? Discuss.



### ■ Recommended resources

- Levy, J. 2012. *How to Be a World Explorer: Your All-Terrain Training Manual*. London. Lonely Planet Publications
- Smith, K. 2013. *The Pocket Scavenger*. London. Penguin Random House

SAMPLE

# CHAPTER 5

## ATL skills: Communication skills

### IN A NUTSHELL

- Communicating is much bigger than speaking. This chapter highlights the importance of effective listening, interpreting and speaking.
- This chapter provides case studies illustrating the difficulties children often encounter with limited communication skills.
- Dr Kimberley's Top 5 Tips give teachers practical tools for avoiding common communication pitfalls and improving their own listening, interpreting and speaking skills in the classroom, as well as serving as effective models to students.
- Activities to boost listening, interpreting and speaking skills are explained to assist educators in bringing out these new skills in students.

Communication skills go beyond our vocabulary and confidence as a speaker. By tuning into non-verbal cues, body language and the dynamics between people, we are able to articulate the nuances and emotions that make for interesting discussion and greater understanding. This chapter will explore three aspects of communication: listening, interpreting and speaking.

In the school context, regular and respectful communication between parents and educators is essential for students to maintain loyalty and a sense of belonging at home and school. Without consistency between parents and educators, children often feel conflicted, particularly if parents or educators speak negatively about the other.

A solid relationship with the parent community will often foster a faster connection with students. Children who trust your intentions will tell you what they are thinking and feeling. Being present, calm and kind can be done silently. Giving young people the space to think and the time to put their thoughts together will often result in a short burst of powerful words with much emotion, or questions for you to slowly ponder together.

### Listening

Listening allows us to focus on the retention of new information and gives us the chance to form skilful questions. Good listening sends a powerful message to those who are speaking. It is the basis of a meaningful connection and allows us to establish deeper personal relationships.

## CASE STUDY

### Ben (12): Fast worker

Ben is a high achiever. He always does well in exams and has the certificates to prove it. In class, Ben likes to participate, but he finds it difficult to listen to his peers. Ben would like to have a direct line to his educator without any distractions, but there are 22 other students in the room.

Ben feels hurt when he is asked to wait. He also feels stuck, frustrated and unable to move forward. He told his parents and they have arranged a meeting with his teacher. Ben is not sure if this is a good thing.

Now Ben is worried about the meeting and he is not feeling happy in class. He has stopped listening to the class discussion and he rarely participates or bothers to answer questions. Ben wants his teacher to like him, and staying quiet seems to make it easier for her.

### How to help Ben

- 1 Ben's educator may have noticed a decline in his class participation and would do well to share this observation with Ben to gain his feedback. Reassuring Ben that his contributions are very important and helpful from an educator's perspective may help to boost his self-esteem and class participation.
- 2 Give Ben a role or responsibility, such as collecting, analysing and interpreting data or information gathered during class discussions to feed back to the class. Teaching Ben how to do this may require an investment of time but the results will be long term.
- 3 Ben is likely to excel in an extension class or similar academic opportunity. If these are not available at your school, research options in the community, such as Gifted and Talented school holiday programs or similar short courses at local universities or online. For additional resources to share with Ben's parents, go to: <http://www.mensaforkids.org/>
- 4 Ben would do well to have a Challenge Box or Challenge File filled with more advanced academic worksheets for him to access after completing the core curriculum activities. This will give him a plan and motivation to continue working at his own pace.
- 5 Suggest Ben uses a Question Book to record any questions he may have while his educator is working with other students. This will ensure the questions are valued and can be answered in one discussion when the educator is available.
- 6 A recommended children's book for high achievers:
  - *Terrific Ways to Stretch Your Brain* by Evelyn B Christensen

### DR KIMBERLEY'S TOP 5 TIPS

#### To boost listening skills

- 1 Find value in every student's contribution and articulate extra depth or real-life examples to their responses where possible. This will keep the class engaged.
- 2 Use sound bites or parts of podcasts to immerse students in diverse audio context.
- 3 Ensure there are regular periods of silence to give children a break from stimulation. Aim for a minimum of three minutes every half hour.
- 4 Encourage quiet students to write their suggestions on paper for you to articulate on their behalf, or use an online survey, email responses or similar.
- 5 If students are talking over or interrupting others, point it out *every single time*. If a student talks over you, cease what you are saying immediately and freeze. Raising your voice will not solve this issue, only silence and non-verbal cues will draw attention to this behavioural issue. Praise patience.

#### ■ Activity 1: How to host a Listening Tour

**Step 1:** Divide students into groups of 4–5 and ask each group to think of a question that impacts everybody at school, including all the staff, parents and students. Some examples include,

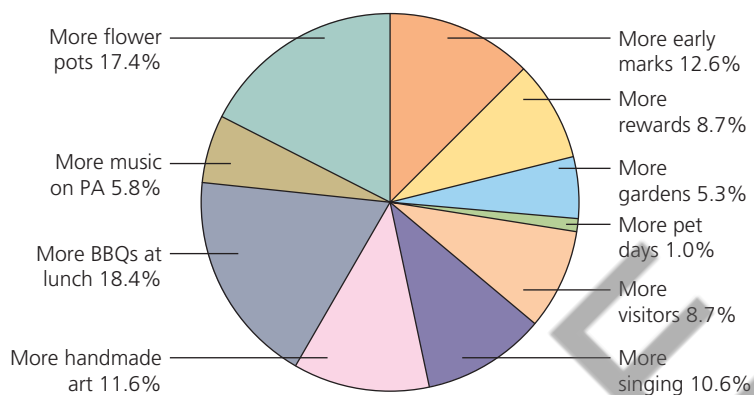
- How could we make our school more peaceful?
- How could we make every school bathroom even better?
- How could our school community be even more supportive?

**Step 2:** Ask students to go on a Listening Tour by asking as many students, parents and staff from all parts of the school their question. Students should record all suggestions in writing or as part of an audio recording.

**Step 3:** In their original groups, students should share all the diverse responses and find themes by placing similar suggestions in the same pile. Each group should create a visual display to share the outcome of their Listening Tour with the rest of the class.

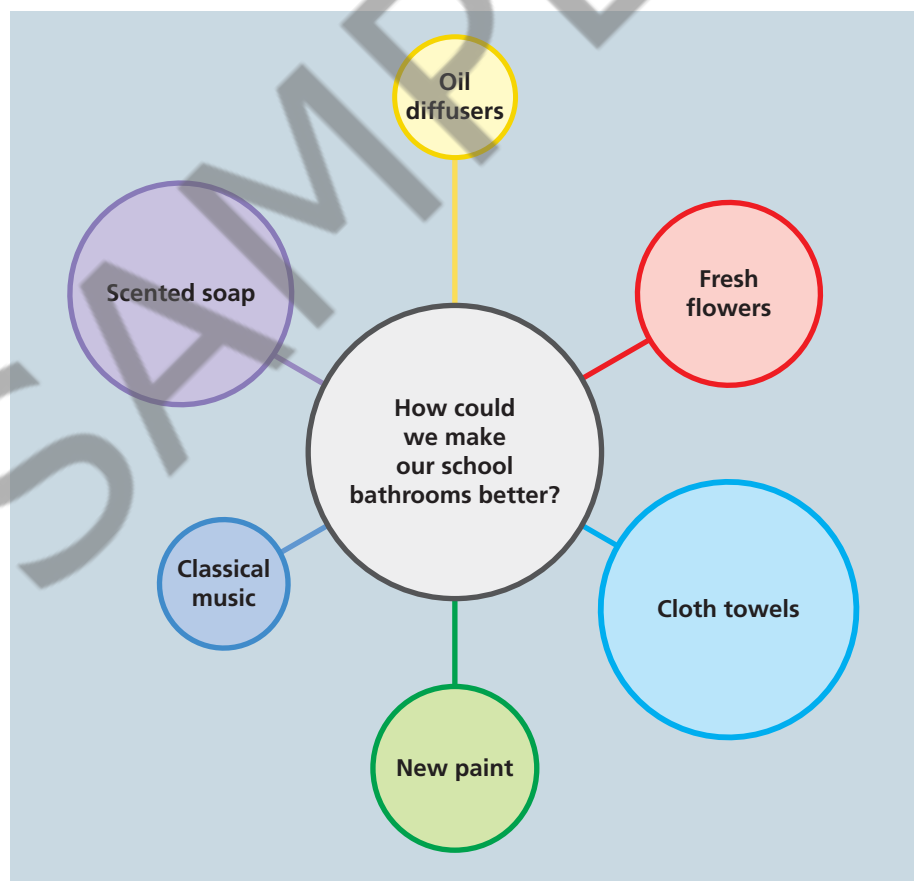
Here is an example of an infographic for the results of a Listening Tour:

How to make  
our school more  
peaceful



This is another example of an infographic that students could use to present findings from their Listening Tour:

Result from  
a student's  
Listening Tour





## Interpreting

Most students require local knowledge to derive meaning from what they see and hear in their learning environment. Being familiar with a school includes knowing the educators and other students well enough to recognize their voices, and to have a fairly good understanding of their personalities. Local knowledge also extends to being able to identify bird sounds and background noises, such as aeroplanes, freight trains and buses idling at the bus stop. All these sights and sounds inform our senses. Being able to interpret visual, audio and oral communication is essential as we become comfortable and able to retain new information.

### CASE STUDY

#### Oliver (8): Lost in translation

Oliver is new to the school. He moved from Singapore with his family and settling in has been harder than expected. Not only do the other students look different, they also sound and act differently from his friends back home.

To Oliver, it seems like the teachers at his new school have different expectations too. Some make jokes and others watch and wait for silence. Oliver does his best to copy the other students but he feels like his personality has been lost in translation.

Oliver used to be a great communicator and he was good at interpreting what was going on around him. Now, Oliver is overwhelmed.

#### How to help Oliver

- 1 Oliver would do well with more structure to fill in the blanks where he feels confused or overwhelmed. Try to create more predictability and less choice for Oliver in his daily schedule. Use auditory clues, such as a bell or music, to signify a change in routine, rather than expecting students to know what comes next.
- 2 Oliver, like most new students, will take time to develop close friendships. This can be helped with more opportunities to partner with random classmates. Try drawing names out of a basket to allocate pairs, rather than allowing the students to choose the same partner as usual. This will help Oliver to meet new people.
- 3 Ask the class to research 'Five Fun Things to Do in Singapore' and ask Oliver to share his recommendations for children visiting Singapore. Create brochures with pictures and suggested activities for families, or pretend to be tour guides and explain the most interesting aspects of Singapore.
- 4 Weekly emails with Oliver's parents are encouraged to boost communication between home and school. A new role for each parent in Oliver's school is also likely to be appreciated.
- 5 A recommended website for choosing, starting and settling into a new school:
  - [raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/school-learning/school-choosing-starting-moving/starting-school](https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/school-learning/school-choosing-starting-moving/starting-school)

**DR KIMBERLEY'S TOP 5 TIPS****To interpret visual, audio and oral communication**

- 1** Break communication down into three different streams of information:
  - visual (eg: body language, non-verbal cues and hand gestures)
  - audio (eg: school bells, footsteps, furniture moving and garden sprinklers)
  - oral (eg: voice tone, volume, pitch, sighing, throat clearing and the spoken content)
- 2** Take time to listen and decipher the different noises with your students. A tour upstairs, downstairs and around the building to explain the sources of every sound is always a settling experience for newcomers.
- 3** Ask about differences in cultures. Jokes from a teacher may not be culturally appropriate in some settings. Explore other differences, such as hand gestures, with curiosity and let the students lead the discussion.
- 4** Think about the influence of movement and body language on communication. Some teachers move rapidly, others are virtually still. Ask the students for their opinion on your body language. You may be surprised how it makes them feel. Feedback is power!
- 5** Experiment with using only one type of communication at a time. For example, make all your lessons visual by using demonstrations rather than verbal explanations. Ask your students to vote on their favourite way to interpret information – visual, audio or oral.

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Stand up straight</li> <li>✓ Use the whole classroom</li> <li>✓ Indicate approval with a nod</li> <li>✓ Smile to convey happiness and encouragement</li> <li>✓ Make eye contact</li> <li>✓ Raise your hand to speak</li> <li>✓ Put your hand on your chin when asking students to think</li> <li>✓ Use open palms and wait for more than 10 seconds before taking the first response to a question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Fold your arms</li> <li>✗ Stand behind a desk or barrier</li> <li>✗ Look at your watch when a child is speaking</li> <li>✗ Frown</li> <li>✗ Rush students</li> <li>✗ Stand over students</li> <li>✗ Sit on the desk of a student</li> <li>✗ Ignore a waiting student</li> <li>✗ Intimidate</li> <li>✗ Encroach on personal space</li> <li>✗ Insist on eye contact</li> <li>✗ Put your back to students</li> </ul>

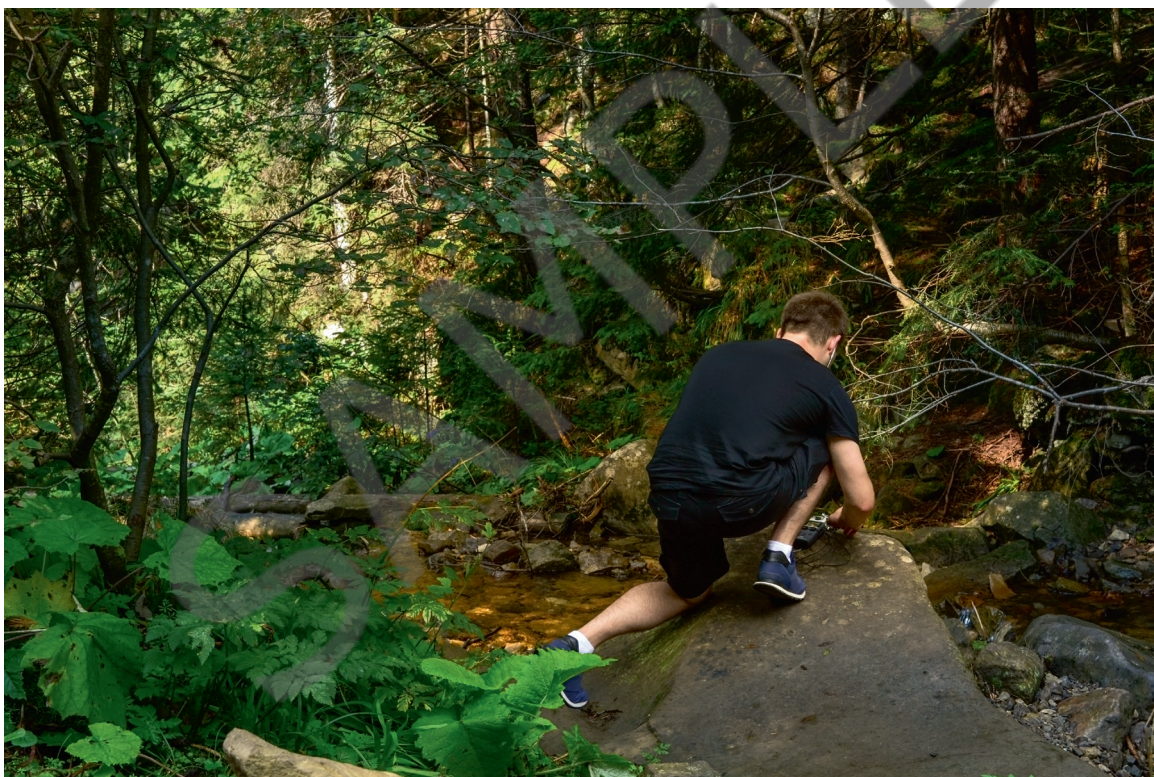
Body language for educators

## ■ Activity 2: How to record a soundscape

**Step 1:** The educator and students will require a sound recorder, such as a voice memo app on a mobile phone or a small audio recording device.

**Step 2:** Walk around the school collecting a range of different noises. Students could also do this at weekends or after school for a more diverse collection of sounds.

**Step 3:** Return to the classroom, amplify the recording devices (eg, use a Bluetooth speaker or similar) and take turns sharing the sounds. Ask students to guess what each sound is and where it was recorded.



A student collecting sounds using an audio recorder

## CASE STUDY

### Taj (5): Tongue tied

Taj is very articulate and he tends to speak more when he is anxious or excited. Taj often interrupts his mother when she starts a conversation with someone new, and then he has trouble expressing himself clearly and logically.

The same thing happens when Taj is in class. He cannot seem to untangle all of his ideas when he is under pressure, such as when he is called on to answer a question or share news in front of the class.

Taj's parents and educators know he is intelligent but his ability to state his opinions, speak about his ideas and negotiate effectively do not reflect his true potential. To top it all off, Taj's self-esteem is being impacted and he has no idea how to fix it.

### How to help Taj

- 1 Encourage more one-to-one conversations with Taj to build a trusting teacher–student relationship.
- 2 Help Taj to create a mind map to help him visualize the contents of the speech or news item he plans to share with the class. Encourage Taj to use the map as a prop while he is talking so he keeps on track with his plan.
- 3 Praise his efforts to continue trying.
- 4 Ask Taj to record his ideas on an audio file to see if he is more articulate without an audience. Help Taj to transcribe the audio recording into notes and suggest he refers to this script during his speech for added confidence.
- 5 Practise relaxation strategies as a class to help manage Taj's anxiety. See Chapter 7 in this book for ideas, or refer to Hodder Education's *PYP ATL Skills Workbook: Mindfulness* resource for children, available at [www.hoddereducation.com/ib-pyp](http://www.hoddereducation.com/ib-pyp)

### DR KIMBERLEY'S TOP 5 TIPS

#### To speak and express ideas clearly

- 1 Decide on one idea you would like to express.
- 2 Brainstorm all of your thoughts regarding this idea. Record each thought in a bubble around the central idea. This is called a mind map.
- 3 Sequence each thought along a timeline to make some sense of them.
- 4 Cross out any thoughts which do not add to the story or central idea.
- 5 Practise and memorize each point on the timeline. Use a picture or word to symbolize each thought. Now you are ready to add hand gestures, pauses and some emphasis. Have fun!

### ■ Activity 3: A train of thought

**Step 1:** Use a stimulus picture to spark some thoughts without giving any verbal explanation of the image.

Example of a stimulus picture



**Step 2:** Ask students to brainstorm and record all their ideas that are triggered by the image.

**Step 3:** Put the ideas in a sequence to create a story or speech. Delete or edit any thoughts that detract or move in a different direction from the other ideas. Practise expressing the thoughts clearly and logically. Present when ready!



## Inquirers

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

Complete this activity to think like an Inquirer!



**Step 1:** Look at the matchbox your teacher is holding up.

**Step 2:** Go on a scavenger hunt and find **five** tiny items in the playground that will all fit into the matchbox. It could be seeds, stones or other interesting items.

**Step 3:** In the classroom, line up your items and study each one closely. Use a magnifying glass if you have one.

**Step 4:** Choose one item and draw it, or create a story about it.

**Step 5:** Walk carefully around your classroom and study all the items, slowly and closely. Think about everyday objects in familiar places and how valuable and intriguing they might be!

## Communicators

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspective of other individuals and groups.

Is it easier to listen/talk to someone if they are facing towards you or away from you?



**Step 1:** Find a partner, move to an open space and sit back to back.

**Step 2:** Take turns to talk and listen for 30 seconds each. One person talks, the other listens, and then you should switch roles. You should both have a turn to talk and listen.

**Step 3:** Turn around and face each other and try the same thing again. This time the listener can see the talker's eyes, hands and facial expressions. Swap over after 30 seconds so you both have a turn to talk and listen again.

**Step 4:** Answer these questions together:

- Was it easier for you to listen when you were facing away from each other or sitting face to face? Why do you think this was the case?
- Was it easier to talk when you were facing away from each other or sitting face to face? Why do you think this was the case?

**Step 5:** Take a class vote and see how many of your classmates preferred facing away and how many preferred sitting face to face when communicating. Together, discuss the reasons why.

## Open-minded

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

**Step 1:** Design a survey to find out different perspectives from other students at your school. Choose a topic that will likely have different points of view, and use a scale for each question, such as the one shown below.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

**Step 2:** Try to survey as many students as possible! Your teacher will tell you how long you have to complete your surveys.

**Step 3:** When your surveys are complete, have a look at the responses. Find the question in the survey that has the most diverse range of responses, ie a mix of 5s and 1s.

**Step 4:** Consider the different points of view on this particular question. Why do you think the responses were so diverse? Share your question and thoughts with the rest of the class.



## Caring

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

**Step 1:** List ideas that would be helpful to, or appreciated by others.



**Step 2:** Your teacher will set up a reward system for your class, like a marble jar. Each time you or somebody in your class completes a random act of kindness, you will be one step closer to your class reward!

**Step 3:** Once you have reached your reward for random acts of kindness, brainstorm places where you should focus your next set of random acts of kindness – for example, in the classroom, in the playground or in the canteen.

## Balanced

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives – intellectual, physical and emotional – to achieve wellbeing for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

**Step 1:** Your teacher will explain *interdependence* to you. Discuss your understanding of the word with a partner.

**Step 2:** Study the image below.



This is a family of hunters and gatherers. At night, the fire was a place to keep warm and listen to stories. By day, some hunted and others gathered food to survive. The children collected firewood, and helped to carry water and keep the babies safe.

Why do you think hunters and gatherers did not live alone?  
List three ideas.

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....

**Step 3:** Study the image below.



This is a modern community. There are many different jobs in today's human society, compared to the hunter gatherers. There are teachers, firefighters, shop assistants – all kinds of jobs! In many households, children help to cook dinner, keep the house tidy and go to school.

Do you think we still need to live together in today's society?  
Why or why not?

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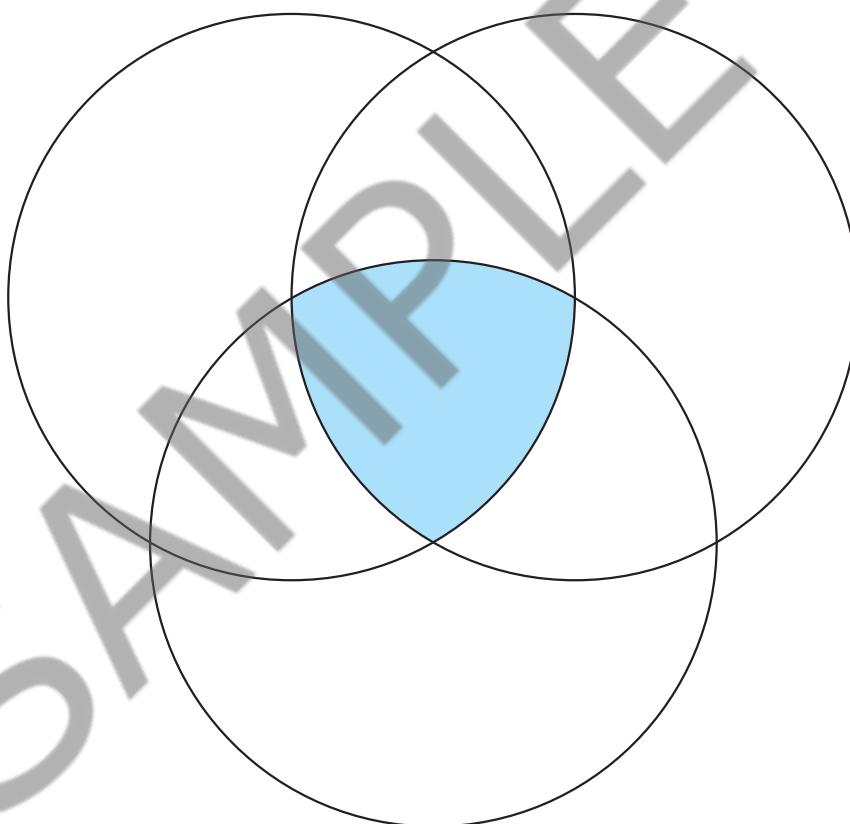
**Step 4:** Study the image below.



This is an image of a woman who is dressed up and her hair is neat, suggesting she may be going to meet someone (socially). She is doing exercise by riding her scooter to take care of herself (physically) and her facial expression appears calm (emotionally). She appears *balanced* – socially, emotionally and physically.



**Step 5:** On each circle below, write 'socially', 'emotionally' and 'physically' in each circle. Think about your routine and draw or write, in each circle, what you do to keep yourself balanced and how you take care of yourself – socially, emotionally and physically.



How do you keep yourself balanced?

**Step 6:** Share your ideas in a small group and discuss the ideas below.

**Socially**

- ☒ Go to a playground
- ☒ Invite a friend over
- ☒ Share something
- ☒ Post a surprise
- ☒ Visit a neighbour
- ☒ Plan a little party

**Physically**

- ☒ Walk up stairs
- ☒ Run home
- ☒ Ride a bike
- ☒ Join a team sport
- ☒ Skip with a rope
- ☒ Do sit-ups

**Emotionally**

- ☒ Hug yourself
- ☒ Pat an animal
- ☒ Put flowers in a vase
- ☒ Get nice and clean
- ☒ Take a big stretch
- ☒ Write in a journal

How to take care of yourself

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# Wellbeing

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- Provides a collaborative approach to wellbeing with storybooks (*PYP Friends*) and workbooks (*PYP ATL Skills Workbooks*) that can be used alongside this resource to develop your students social and emotional wellbeing.

*About the author*

**Dr Kimberley O' Brien** set up the first Quirky Kid Clinic in 2007 in Sydney, Australia. Kimberley provides consultancy to parents, school leaders and brands such as Lego®, Pilot Pen® and Cartoon Network® on child development and student wellbeing.

As the host of Impressive, a podcast for parents and educators, Kimberley tackles topics based on the clinical issues arising at Quirky Kid. She also plays an active role in the media with her knack for solving problems from the child's perspective.

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