

Well-being

Important – please read

This lesson has been created for teachers working in face-to-face classrooms where Covid-19 restrictions are in place. The guidance at the start of the lesson plan is designed to provide suggested ideas for managing pair work and group work in a physically distanced classroom environment. It is a general guide, and your situation may be different. You may need to adapt the lesson to the context you are working in.

There is also an online version of this lesson plan, which you could refer to if you are working in a 'hybrid' learning situation. Hybrid learning is the method of teaching remote and in-person students at the same time via virtual instruction.

Topic

Children's well-being and mental health in the context of Covid-19

Aims

- To provide learners with examples of experiences that children have had during lockdown with which they can identify
- To give learners an opportunity to reflect upon their feelings in situations which could arise with Covid-19 and lockdown
- To help learners find practical solutions to look after their well-being
- To develop critical-thinking skills
- To promote pair work and collaboration skills

Age/level

Primary (8–11 years)
CEFR Level A2 and above

Time

90 minutes

Materials

- Accompanying PDF (optional) and worksheets
- A box (e.g. a shoe box) with 8–10 everyday items to make the 'happy box'
- The learners will need a pen or pencil and paper or a notebook or a mini whiteboard and pen.

Introduction

This lesson focuses on well-being for primary children. Many children will have experienced feelings of worry, confusion, anger or sadness during lockdown, and feelings of anxiety may continue with the

return to school. This lesson gives learners an opportunity to express these emotions and explore ways of caring for their own well-being. They will think about what contributes to well-being and find practical ways to put this into practice by creating a 'happy box'. They will also explore ideas to help them complete a 'well-being journal' for homework.

Communicative activities in face-to-face, physically distanced classrooms

Make sure you are familiar with the rules for face-to-face teaching in your school

These lesson plans are designed to include opportunities for students to work in pairs or groups to develop their communication skills. This is likely to present a number of challenges, as there will be different physical-distancing rules you may need to follow in your classroom to protect the safety of students and teachers. These procedures and rules may involve some of the following:

- reduced class sizes so that desks can be placed up to two metres apart
- student 'bubbles', in which groups of up to ten pupils are able to work together safely
- clear plastic screens placed around students' desks to allow for safer interaction
- hybrid learning situations, where some students are physically present in the classroom and others join the lesson remotely
- policies on handouts and worksheets, where it is not possible to give learners a physical worksheet.

All of the issues above will bring new challenges and influence the way you teach, particularly in activities where you would normally ask students to talk to each other in pairs or groups. The ideas below are intended to help you manage your lessons effectively and ensure that students have sufficient opportunity to communicate as much as possible during the lesson.

Suggestions for communicative activities

The key purpose of using communicative activities, such as pair work and group work, is to ensure students have an opportunity to practise their speaking and listening skills at the same time as other students in the class. However, due to restrictions, this may not be possible in the normal way. To avoid your classes being too teacher-centred, we have suggested some ideas below that can replace more traditional group- and pair-work speaking activities:

- Use written dialogue in place of spoken dialogue for simple tasks.
 - Pen and paper. In low-resource environments, ask students who are physically in the classroom to communicate using pen and paper. For example, where students have been asked to give an opinion, they write this in larger than normal writing on a piece of paper and hold it up for their partner to read. Their partner then responds by writing on their own piece of paper.
 - Sticky notes. Ask students to write comments on sticky notes, or on small pieces of paper, and take turns to stick them to a board in the classroom, or on a 'post-it' wall. This gives students the opportunity to write their opinions, ideas or responses to a question and share them with the rest of the class. The teacher is then able to read comments and focus on any

follow-up language work, respond to the students' writing or extend the discussion as a whole class. If working in a hybrid situation, where some of the students are learning simultaneously in a remote environment, they could do the same activity using an online 'wall', such as [Padlet](#). Alternatively, they could write their comments and ideas into a shared online document, which could be displayed on a computer, via a data projector in the classroom, or read out by the teacher.

- Using messenger applications. In contexts where students have access to an internet connection, the above activity could be done using a messenger tool such as WhatsApp, with students writing messages to each other online. Again, with hybrid learning situations, this pair-work activity could be done between a student physically in the classroom and a partner learning remotely.
- Collaborative writing. An online solution, which may be particularly effective in a hybrid learning situation, might be to use an online messaging board such as [Padlet](#) or a shared document in [Google Docs](#). The teacher could ask a simple open-ended question, for example 'What are some of the advantages/disadvantages of learning from home?' Having shared the link with the students, the teacher gives a word limit and a time limit for students to add their comments to the messaging board. The teacher then follows up with whole-class feedback, responding to the comments and asking students to clarify orally.
- Use voice recording tools for spoken communication.
 - Recorded voice messages. If resources and connectivity make this possible, using voice recording tools can be an effective way to encourage dialogue between students for pair-work activities. Make sure all your students have access to a mobile phone before doing this type of activity to ensure everyone can participate. Ask students to record their turn and send via SMS or a messaging application to their partner to respond and build a recorded dialogue.

Alternatively, an online voice recording tool like [Vocaroo](#) is a simple way to create voice recordings and share via SMS or an online messaging application. Most basic mobile phones have a built-in voice recorder, so it might be possible to share one or more phones and for the teacher to pass it between pairs or small groups of students, who listen and respond or add their comments.

Both of the above activities could be done effectively in hybrid learning situations.

- If you are working in a low-connectivity context and have access to cassette recorders and blank cassettes in your school, using these to record students speaking might be a possible solution. Ensure there is a quiet space where they can do this. Divide students into two groups and invite them to record themselves individually. Play back the recordings as a whole class to evaluate communicative competence and focus on any common errors.

These ideas are a small selection that can encourage student-led communication in physically distanced, face-to-face classrooms or in hybrid learning contexts. It is recommended that, if possible, you work with colleagues in your institution to create a list of activities and ideas for your own context. We also recommend that you join the [British Council teacher community](#) on Facebook to share ideas.

Procedure	
Stage	Instructions
Before the lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download and make copies of the worksheets you need for the lesson. Prepare a 'happy box'. This CBBC video gives instructions on how to do so: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ulpKdmkr6E <p>Other online sources suggest including items which appeal to the five senses. Here are some examples of items you could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - touch – a soft toy; a squishy ball - smell – a soap; a scented candle - hearing – a playlist of songs that make you happy; a wind chime - taste – some dried fruits; some chocolate - sight – a photo of a pet; a colouring page; a positive message.
Warmer (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the learners to think of their favourite emoji and draw it on their paper or mini whiteboard. After two minutes, they hold them up. What is the most common? How many students have drawn a happy face?
Reviewing vocabulary for feelings (5–10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw emojis on the board for the emotions below or use slide 3 of the PDF. Ask learners what emotion each emoji makes them think of. Elicit synonyms where possible. Answers here could vary. Possible answers could be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> happy; smiling; glad; cheerful sad; unhappy; depressed; miserable scared; frightened; afraid excited; enthusiastic; eager calm; quiet; cool; peaceful worried; confused; unsure; anxious angry; annoyed; cross; furious tired; sleepy; bored; fed up
Miming game to reinforce vocabulary for feelings (5–10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the learners what they do when they feel these emotions, for example they smile/laugh when they're happy, they cry when they're sad, etc. Practise all together, showing the different emotions on your face or with your body. Tell the learners that you are going to show one of the feelings and they have to guess which it is.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play a miming game, where one learner shows an emotion and the others guess what it is.
Whole-group activity – reacting to Covid-19-related statements (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the learners that since the beginning of Covid-19 and during lockdown they may have felt lots of these emotions, and you are going to show them some statements and they are going to show how these statements make them feel. • If you are using the accompanying PDF, show slide 4, or alternatively read the statements one at a time or write them on the board. • Ask the learners to write or draw on a mini whiteboard or a piece of paper how the statement makes them feel. Alternatively, they could show the emotion with a facial expression. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have to stay at home and I can't go to school. - I have time to read, do art and play games at home. - I can FaceTime my friends. - My parents don't always have time to help me with my schoolwork. - I can't see my grandparents, my cousins and my aunts and uncles. - We can't go on school trips because of Covid-19. - I, or someone in my family, could get ill. - I don't know how things are going to be in the future.
Introducing the 'happy box' (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the learners that it's normal to feel anxious, confused, sad or angry sometimes. But if these feelings don't go away, it's important to talk to an adult, like your parents or a teacher. • Show the learners the box that you have previously prepared. Only show the outside of the box for the moment. Tell them that it's called a 'happy box' and it can help them to feel calm when they feel scared, sad or angry. Ask them to predict what's inside the box.
Making a 'happy box' (20 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elicit the five senses by miming sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch. Write these on the board. • Open your box and take out the items one by one. Ask the learners which sense you use for each item. For example, the soft toy is something you can touch. The photo is something you can look at. • Now tell the learners that they are going to decide what to put in their own 'happy box'. The learners will ideally work in pairs if your context allows. However, it could also be done as a whole-class activity or an activity that learners do individually. • Put the learners in their groups and give them each worksheet 1. • Tell the learners to think of as many different things as they can to put in their 'happy box' and then to choose their favourite items (approximately 8–10) and

	<p>write them on the worksheet in the correct place. If time allows, they can also draw the items and decorate the picture of the box.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite some of the students to share their ideas with the class, and suggest that if they wish, they could make the box at home.
Introducing the ways to well-being – critical thinking (10 mins)	<p>Background: The UK Children’s Society has explored the links between children’s everyday activities and their well-being, and developed a report, <i>Ways to well-being</i>.</p> <p>These activities fall into the following categories: Connect; Be active; Take notice; Keep learning; Be creative and play.</p> <p>The Children’s Society also explored activities in the category ‘Give’, which could include helping at home or looking after family members, and found these to be less important to children’s well-being.</p> <p>However, in the context of Covid-19 and particularly a lockdown situation, this sort of activity can be particularly relevant. This is why it has been included in this lesson as one of the ways to well-being. The category has been named ‘Help and give’ to make it easier for learners to understand.</p> <p>With social distancing, lockdown and other Covid-19-related situations, the type of activities that children can do may have changed (for example, seeing friends, doing team sports, etc.). This is why it is important to provide them with opportunities to reflect on the ways to well-being, and how they can achieve this in their everyday lives, whatever the context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to the learners that being happy and healthy is sometimes called ‘well-being’ and that they are going to look at some of the ways to well-being. Show slide 7 of the PDF if using it, or alternatively write each of the ways to well-being on the board. Elicit the meaning of these terms, possible activities and why it’s important to do these things. Answers will vary, but some suggestions could be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect: talk with your family; see your friends; share experiences 2. Be active: walk; cycle; run; do sports; feel energised; have a healthy body 3. Notice: use your five senses to notice things around you; notice how you feel 4. Learn: read for fun; teach yourself something new; watch a YouTube tutorial 5. Be creative and play: draw; paint; play games 6. Help and give: help at home with chores; give someone a present. <p>Each of these ways can help you feel good, make you happy and positive, give you confidence, reduce stress and worry.</p>
Pair-work activity – critical thinking and speaking (20 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activities in this task are intended to give children examples of what they can do for each of the ways to well-being. They are activities which would mostly be possible in a lockdown situation. It will help the learners complete the well-being journal at home.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learners will ideally work in pairs if your context allows. However, it could also be done as a whole-class activity or an activity that learners do individually. • Tell the learners that they are going to read some sentences and then match each activity to one of the ways to well-being. Sometimes the activity relates to more than one way to well-being. Give out worksheet 2 and read and discuss the example as a whole class. Answers can vary. Accept all reasonable suggestions. • Learners complete the worksheet and then work together to find another activity for each category. • Compare ideas in a whole-class discussion or, as a variation, the learners could write the additional activities on sticky notes, which are then used to make a class display, presented under headings of each of the six categories.
Setting homework (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the learners that they can write a journal every day to help them take care of their well-being. • Give the learners worksheet 3, the blank well-being journal, and ask them to complete it for homework for one of the days next week.
Further ideas and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Children's Society <i>Ways to Well-being</i> - https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/research/well-being/ways-well-being • Ways of Well-being: Connect https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9FAiTI0ck4 • Ways of Well-being: Take Notice https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ossVbMjWajc • Ways of Well-being: Learning https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlyXzJhbBsQ • Ways of Well-being: Be active https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EXe5UZ9CME • Ways of Well-being: Be creative and play https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lbPqZ-HmlSM

Lesson plan written by:

Jo Blackmore