

Promoting Well-being in the Primary ELT Classroom

Webinar handout

by Jane Ritter

Here are the activities we looked at in the webinar and links to the materials mentioned.

	Activity	What is it?	How and when do we use it?
1	Check-in	A routine activity when taking the class register to gauge learners' emotional state.	Prepare simple emojis to indicate happy, ok, sad, tired. Have them visible when you are taking the register. Greet the learners and ask them how they are feeling. As this becomes a routine at the start of the lesson, try and get them to say why. Knowing how they are feeling can help you understand why they may be behaving in a certain way and help you decide who to pair them with.
2	Traffic lights	A way to gauge whether learners are on task and a good way to check your instructions are clear.	Use red, yellow and green paper cups or round discs. Ask learners to keep them on their desks permanently. When you are setting up an activity and have demonstrated a task or given instructions, ask learners to let you know how ready they are. Learners who are ready to go hold up the green cup (or disc). Ask them to start. Tell learners who hold up the yellow cup (disc) to check what they know with the person sitting next to them and then go straight to the red cups (or discs). If the whole class is red you might need to repeat your instructions or demonstrate again.
3	My safe place	A strategy for learners to overcome anxiety or fear.	Ask your learners to brainstorm times and places they giggle, feel safe and feel strong. Get them to discuss them in groups, and then give feedback to you. Then, get them to draw their safe place and use the drawings to make a class display. If or when they are feeling anxious or frightened, direct them to their safe place by pointing at the

			picture and asking them to close their eyes for a few minutes and go there.
4	Spaghetti tower	A problem-solving/Team building activity to observe learner interaction.	Give your learners a bunch of spaghetti and some marshmallows (or coloured corn foam) and ask them to work in groups to build a tower. Award points for the tallest, most original, imaginative, etc. Use the time to observe how your learners interact.
5	Classroom plants	A long-term class project with intrinsic well-being for the class learning environment.	Growing plants in the classroom is a great way to teach responsibility. Their presence also provides cleaner air, which can improve learners' moods and help them concentrate better. Learners can track their growth by photographing the plants and building a class poster/padlet. If you have space for a variety of plants, plants can be assigned to individual groups to care for and design posters about them.
6	Snacks	A lesson to promote social and emotional health.	Watch a short video about healthy snacks (e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xlh_ulKSV3A). Invite the students to talk about why healthy snacks are important for our bodies and minds. Personalise the activity by asking learners to work in groups and discuss the snacks they like, are they healthy or unhealthy? Learners then present their group findings to the class.
7	Go outside or Chair Yoga	A lesson to build and promote further social and emotional health.	To follow on from the snacks lesson, learners discuss how important good food is and the energy it can bring. Depending on the teaching environment you are working in, focus on getting outside to exercise or do chair yoga. Ask students to think about how they feel before and after exercising.

Useful links

<https://www.thecontemplativescientists.com/episodes/episode-06-the-well-being-curriculum>

<https://podcast.app/tiny-voice-talks-education-p1476124/> Learn to FLIP thinking with Sarah Creegan.

Cowley, A. (2021). *The Wellbeing Curriculum: Embedding Wellbeing in Children's Primary Schools*. Bloomsbury Education.

- A recording of Jane's webinar for World Teachers' Day 2023 can be watched here:

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-events/world-teachers-day-2023/world-teachers-day-2023-saturday-7-october>