Finding Our Voice
Activity pack

Gina Mullarkey, Cumbria Development Education Centre

Funded by the Sir John Fisher Foundation, Hadfield Trust, and the European Union

Led by Cumbria Development Education Centre in partnership with George Hastwell School, Walney Island and Sandside Lodge School, Ulverston.
Contents

Background 3-5
Key aims 3
Reflections 3
How to use this Activity Pack 4
Acknowledgements 5

Introduction to Philosophy for Children 6-8

Theme 1: Developing Philosophical thinking skills 10
Section 1: Community building activities 11-18
Section 2: Setting targets 19-20
Section 3: Target review techniques 21-25

Theme 2: Exploring localities – Africa and England 26
Section 1: What do we already know? 27-31
Section 2: A balanced view 33-34

Theme 3: Going beyond Needs and Wants 35
Section 1: Introducing our survival needs 36-39
Section 2: Outdoor activity day 40-51
Section 3: Maslow’s hierarchy of needs 52-64

Case Study – P4C and Autism, George Hastwell School 65
Background

The activities contained in this pack are the result of trials in George Hastwell School; Walney Island and Sandside Lodge School; Ulverston working with 9-14 year olds. The project focused on ways to adapt the core Philosophy for Children (P4C) methodology for work with children with Special Educational Needs (further information on P4C can be found on pages 6-8). Many of the activities took place in the outdoors, recognising the value of outdoor learning and included work on studying other localities and a focus on the theme of ‘needs and wants’.

The key aims of the project were to:

♦ Involve young people with Special Education Needs in a thinking skills project that engages them in real/relevant life issues

♦ Nurture skills and confidence – including specific aims decided by the teachers involved of:
  ‘Pupils gaining confidence in speaking who wouldn’t normally take part’
  ‘Improved listening skills’
  ‘Encouraging the pupils to think more for themselves’
  ‘Team work’
  ‘Pupils cooperating well with each other as part of a collaborative group’

♦ Take action to support local and global development

Reflections from the schools involved included:

Comments made by staff involved:
‘This is hard – but the kids are learning that they can do difficult things’

‘Made a difference to them in other lessons, sit and listen to each other’.

‘Enjoy doing difficult stuff... building challenges into their lives... our kids deserve that feeling of challenge’

‘That was great’

‘No right or wrong answers empower children to have a voice’

‘Takes time for adults to be comfortable with approach’

‘All of my students have experienced a boost in self esteem – they have grown in stature’

‘The change in staff was most impressive... to start with didn’t get it... expected ‘right’ answers and tried to persuade them (pupils) to get right answer... staff more willing to facilitate responses towards the end’

‘Now part of every lesson’

‘Always asking big questions now... for example ‘Why is space dark?’ and ‘Is death real?’
Comments made by pupils:

‘I liked everything’

‘I don’t like people living in boxes’

‘I liked putting your hand up and waiting your turn’

‘There was nothing that I didn’t like’

‘I enjoyed making the dens’

‘Loved it all’

‘I liked the parachute games and the wool web’

‘I didn’t like going inside when the houses were built’

‘I liked the happy and sad activities’

‘I liked the day at Ford Park (outdoor activity day) and discussions’

How to use this Activity Pack

Most of the activities in this pack are based on ‘Philosophy for Children’, which is a structured approach to learning through enquiry and dialogue. P4C is an approach to teaching and learning that is motivating and challenging for pupils and teachers. It has developed over 35 years, and is practised in approximately 60 countries. Research has established that it improves behaviour, motivation, and learning, as well as achievement for pupils of all ages, abilities, and through any subject. There is an Introduction to P4C included on pages 6-8 which is designed to give you the confidence to facilitate a philosophical enquiry with your learners.

Through the course of working with two schools in Cumbria, traditional P4C approaches were modified and improved to make them relevant and accessible for children with special educational needs. We learned a lot in the process, and here are some hints and tips that will help you to use these activities:

✓ Use the ‘community builders’ to help develop skills for P4C, not just as ice-breakers. Strategies which children developed for succeeding in the games worked well, and with time these skills could then be transferred in to the enquiry.

✓ Dialogues work better in small groups, maximum 6, if you can manage that in your classroom. Some thinking was lost when brought to the bigger group. Try to enable and encourage smaller groups to record their thinking.

✓ The ‘Red Card’ activity was a favourite. Children enjoyed the sense of being empowered to challenge, with justification, others’ statements, including their teachers.
Persevere! The process of supporting any group of children to use enquiry and dialogue to think and learn together grows with time, and given the opportunity, children of all abilities can build the confidence to contribute: “This is hard – but the kids are learning that they can do difficult things”. Gradually, teachers began to see the effects of this way of working in other lessons, e.g. children listening to each other better

When working with a larger group, ‘Concept Lines’ (page 24) works well to gain whole group involvement and contributions

P4C can be used to address ‘big ideas’ and concepts, and often children need to be helped to relate the issues to themselves and their lives

Movement, involvement and activity are really important, otherwise children can disengage from the process

One of the most powerful aspects of P4C is the fact that, during the dialogue, there are no right or wrong answers. The opportunity to share and explore ideas and opinions can be empowering for children, and enable them to develop their own ‘voice’.

Acknowledgements
The Finding our voice activity pack has been developed by CDEC (Cumbria Development Education Centre) with funding from the Sir John Fisher foundation, Hadfield Trust, and the European Union. The activities were trialled by teachers, teaching assistants and pupils in two Cumbrian primary schools: George Hastwell School and Sandside Lodge School.
Philosophy for Children

“Philosophy can be used to improve teaching and learning, for the lasting benefit of individuals and communities”

SAPERE (Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education)

Philosophy for Children is a way of learning and teaching, where children become more thoughtful and reflective and go beyond information to seek understanding. Children learn how to participate in meaningful discussions, where their ideas and those of others are valued and listened to. Children ask and discuss philosophical questions in a structured context.

**Philosophy for Children Session Outline**

What follows is a brief outline of a basic P4C session. During the project elements of the approach were used and the full typical structure.

**Community building activity (5-15 mins)**

Sessions start with a community building activity.

**Stimulus (15-30 mins)**

This can be a story, case study, photograph, artefact or anything else that will engage the children in philosophical questioning.

**Thinking as individuals, discussion in pairs (5 mins)**

The pupils are asked to take 30 seconds to think individually about what the stimulus made them think and feel – which might lead them to think of a question they would like to ask. You might ask them to close their eyes.

They should then turn to the person next to them and swap their initial thoughts – for about 2-3 minutes. This should be a noisy time!

It is important to give pupils time to think as individuals, before they hear from others. Speaking in pairs gives even the quietest pupil the chance to express their thoughts.

**Question setting in groups (5 mins)**

Pupils are then asked to form groups (say of 4). The teacher should ensure that there is a competent writer in each group. In their groups, they discuss and agree on a question arising from the stimulus that the whole group (class) might discuss together. **It is to be a philosophical question** – one that is interesting and will lead to deep thinking (and perhaps other questions).
Over time (and with additional activities) pupils learn what is a philosophical question (as opposed to a closed question or one that requires factual research).

**Voting for one question (5 mins)**

Each group is asked to read out their question and to clarify it where needed.

Pupils (as individuals) now have to vote for one question. Some dialogue can take place – pupils can be asked to volunteer reasons for their choices – differing views (with reasons) can be sought. Sometimes similar questions can be merged (with agreement).

If there is a tie (or almost a tie), pupils can “sell” their favoured question and see if others will vote for it. One question is chosen. There are lots of ways of voting.

**Dialogue (30 mins)**

Everyone sits in a circle. To start the dialogue, the chosen question is read out and the group that wrote it is asked to provide some of the thinking behind it. Then the job of the facilitator is to encourage all the pupils to contribute thoughts (voluntarily) and seek other ways of looking at the issues, probing for reasons and seeking meaning. Thinking can be stimulated by the development of ‘effective questions’. Some of these are provided at the end of this section.

Sometimes an interim summary of the dialogue will be useful (and, of course, a summary is useful at the end, with a reflection on how far the question has been answered).

A facilitator will try to anticipate where the stimulus might lead, but is also flexible as it might lead into unanticipated areas.

**Reflection/debrief (5 mins)**

Again there are many debrief techniques. For example; each pupil is encouraged to give a few words about their impressions of the dialogue – for example something that surprised them, or they learned, or if they changed their mind about something during the session. If struggling, they can say “Pass”.

The pupils and facilitator might discuss concepts that need further exploration, perhaps during the following session.

Any concepts, ideas or questions should be ‘stored’ for follow-up work by writing them down and putting them on the wall as part of a display. This will help keep the questions fresh in the mind and will allow other thoughts and ideas to flow and be discussed outside of the philosophy session.

---

**WANT TO FIND OUT MORE!**

Contact Cumbria Development Education Centre for Continuing Professional Development Opportunities, resources to buy and free resources to loan.

Visit the SAPERE website (Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education) [www.sapere.org.uk](http://www.sapere.org.uk)
P4C - Questions to aid facilitation

Clarifying
What reasons do you have for saying that? Probing The Superficial
What do you mean by that? Why do you think that?
Can you explain more about that? What is the cause of that?
Have you an example of that? What makes you say that?
What makes you so sure of that? Why...Why...Why...?

Exploring Alternative Views
Is there another point of view? What is the difference between your view and..?
Can you put it another way?
Are you and s/he contradicting each other?

Scaffolding
What do you think about...? If .... then what do you think about..?
What is the reason for...? You said... but what about...?

Seeking Evidence
How do you know that? Testing Implications
What makes you say that? Is that consistent with...?
What is your evidence? What would be the consequences of...?
What are your reasons? How would we know if that is true?
What makes you so sure? How can we test that in practice?

Evaluating
Who can summarise the main points for us? If...why...?
Can anyone say where our thinking has taken us?
What new ideas have developed?
Theme 1: Developing Philosophical thinking skills

Section 1: Community building activities

Community building activities are primarily important in philosophy for children to establish a risk free environment. A number of community building activities were used for different purposes in the SEN sessions. Activities were used to focus the group on key skills required for the session (such as listening to each other), to introduce themes (such as happiness), to get to know the group (in the early days), to review progress in relation to specific targets and to encourage the group to refocus.

Section 2: Setting targets

It is important to engage students in setting targets for their own work. This section focuses on encouraging students to explore for themselves the skills that you need for a good conversation/dialogue. Through this activity the students are then able to generate group (and individual targets for speaking and listening).

Section 3: Target review techniques

This section includes activities to evaluate the targets, both through teacher evaluation and pupil evaluation.
Section 1: Community building activities

Let’s celebrate! (10 mins)

Learning objective(s)
To get to know the group
To celebrate what is special about the group
Listening skills

What to do/Stimulus
Students stand up if they agree with statements called by either the teacher or the students. Example statements include:

‘Stand up if you like football’ ‘Stand up if you have a brother’

As individuals stand up the group is encouraged to celebrate what is special about this individual by joining in with a round of applause.

Variations on this activity can include a more active session through the use of a parachute. The children can be encouraged to change places underneath the parachute if the statement applies to them, before the parachute falls on them.

In addition this activity can also be used as a review activity, with students being encouraged to call out a series of statements that apply to an individual in the group, until others in the group are able to guess who the statements apply to. Those who have correctly guessed the person on this occasion could change places under the parachute in addition to the caller.

Resources
Parachute
Community bingo (15 mins)

Learning objective(s)
To get to know the group
To celebrate what is special about the group

Listening skills

What to do/Stimulus
The group can be presented with a pre-prepared community bingo sheet, or the group can devise their own. Within the project, both approaches were used (see pages 13 and 14 for examples). When the schools met on a joint activity day, each school devised their own, so that they included a list of things they would like to find out about their peers. Students are encouraged to move around the room (or outdoor environment) and find someone who meets each of the statements on the sheet, recording a different name against each statement. When this is completed- they shout ‘bingo’! They can be encouraged to support others to complete their bingo sheets.

Resources
Community bingo sheet
Example community bingo sheet

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>likes</td>
<td>football</td>
<td>likes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>likes</td>
<td>school</td>
<td>likes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>pet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For use of symbols Widgit Literacy Symbols © Widgit Software 2012 [www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)
Community bingo sheet produced by Sandside Lodge School pupils.

For use of symbols Widgit Literacy Symbols © Widgit Software 2012 [www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)
Passing the Globe (15 mins)

Learning objective(s)
To get to know the group
To establish the range of knowledge the students have about the world

What to do/Stimulus
A simple community building activity where an inflatable globe is passed, thrown or rolled across a circle. The students are asked to name somewhere they have heard of, visited or would like to go to on the globe and explain why they have named it.

Resources
Inflatable globe

Evidence of children's work
This illustrated the range of knowledge the students had, with approximately 50% focusing on naming locations within the UK (and in fact the Northwest). The remainder had a much greater knowledge of the wider world.
Stand up, sit down.

Learning objective(s)
To encourage the group to work together
To develop communication skills
To explore how we can ‘take turns’ more effectively

What to do/Stimulus
The students through non verbal communication have to take it in turns to stand up. If they stand up at the same time as someone else in the room, the whole group has to sit down and re-start the task. This activity works best in a circle. To aid the students can verbally count up in numbers as they stand up, or this activity can be done in silence.

This activity as a community building activity is in itself very good fun and goes down well with students, but it can be taken further to support the development of communication skills. When they don’t succeed the first time they can be asked to come up with a list of strategies to enable them to complete the task, focusing on the target of taking turns. It is important to scribe these. On each failed attempt encourage the students to add to their list of strategies or point out from the scribed list what they did wrong. Keep referring back to their list of strategies.

Resources
None

Evidence of children’s work
Through work at both Sandside Lodge School and George Hastwell School, students developed very similar strategies including;

Slow down
Watch everybody
Be steady
Listen
You don’t always have to be first
Think about others (to make sure they have a go)

All great strategies to support an effective dialogue/conversation.
Happiness

Learning objective(s)
To develop communication skills
To understand your own and other’s emotions.

What to do/Stimulus
This activity works well in a circle. Ask the pupils to:

* Lie on the floor if you are very sad today
* Sit on the chair if you are feeling ok
* Stand up if you are a little bit happy
* Stretch up high if you are really happy and raring to go

Encourage those students who are comfortable to share their reasons.

Resources
None
Emotions

Learning objective(s)
To understand your own and other’s emotions.

What to do/Stimulus
Provide the students with a copy of the emotions sheet to stimulate dialogue in relation to how they are feeling. This can be a self reflective activity so that the students have an opportunity to consider how their emotions impact upon themselves and others, or a shared activity to understand how others are feeling.

Resources
Emotions sheet

Emotions sheet

For use of symbols Widgit Literacy Symbols © Widgit Software 2012 [www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)
Section 2: Setting targets

It is important to engage students in setting targets for their own work. This session focuses on encouraging students to explore for themselves the skills that you need for a good conversation. Through this activity the students are then able to generate group (and individual targets for speaking and listening)

Learning objective(s)
Students set their own targets to ensure a good dialogue
Students are able to recognise negative inputs to a conversation

What to do/Stimulus
Examples of bad conversations are role played by the class teacher and classroom assistant – example role plays are provided on page 20. The Students are given red cards (like referees in football). They are encouraged to hold up their red card if they hear or see something in the conversation that means it isn’t a ‘good’ conversation. They are then asked to justify their responses – options can be provided if students are struggling and answers should be recorded.

The students then turn the negative statements into positive to great their targets for a ‘good’ conversation/dialogue.

‘Ok, so if we are going to be great at speaking and listening to each other – what should we do – let’s turn the things I did wrong into positives’

This can be linked into other work in SEN schools, such as work on restorative questions– how can we be ‘fair, respect others, engage others and be honest’.

The number of targets should be manageable to review on future sessions, so if there are too many, the group can vote on those they wish to take forward. The group can then take ownership of the targets further, through working together to produce a display which can be revisited during future sessions. On completion the community can sign the targets entering into a contract.

Resources
Role play text
Red cards

Evidence of Children’s work
Targets generated by the project schools included;

Let other people finish talking Take turns Give people time Think before you speak
Think about what people say Listen Control your anger
Think about how other people feel Say how you feel Talk clearly Give people your attention
Setting targets - Role Play sheet

Scenario 1: (listening to each other)
A (general hello) What did you do at the weekend?

B  Respond and try to continue – but emphasise through body language that you have to give up

A Interrupt before full answer is given and start talking about self

Scenario 2: (respecting each other’s ideas, level of voice, controlling emotions – revisit interrupting)
A (general hello) What’s your favourite sport

B Football, I usually go every week to see my team play

A Oh, what team do you support?

B Manchester (start to say United)..

A Oh, Manchester City me too (talks over A)

B No Manchester United!

A Oh you don’t – they are terrible. You are wrong to support them… Manchester City are so much better

B Don’t be silly Man United, Man United (getting more animated!)

A Man City, Man city, Man city every time. Your team play like babies.
(last bit said very quietly and looking away)

B Don’t talk such nonsense

A. I’m not – gives B a shove
Section 3: Target review techniques

P4C Dartboard
This review activity can be undertaken as a self evaluation technique by the pupils, a joint review between the teachers and the pupils, a teacher evaluation of the pupils or an evaluation of the whole class.

Learning objective(s)
To evaluate progress against targets
To gain further understanding of the targets

What to do/Stimulus
A dartboard similar to that shown on page 21 can be used to review targets. This can be used at different stages of the students work. The dartboard can be presented to the students in a number of ways; including as a worksheet, flipchart sheet or chalk/rope outline on the floor so that students can show their evaluation through active review by standing on the dartboard.

Resources
P4C dartboard – an example is shown on page 21. This can be adapted to include a scale of 1-10, so that pupils can score the class or themselves.

Evidence of children’s work
Within the project the pupils self evaluation compared closely to the teacher evaluation. Skills evaluated included:

Taking turns  Listening  Letting other people finish  Saying how you feel  Thinking about others.

Of the 16 pupils evaluated in these areas as part of the project all had progressed in relation to the skills of taking turns and listening. 12 had progressed in relation to letting others finish. Only 8 children were evaluated against the skill of thinking about others, 4 considered to have progressed. Of course it is important to note that philosophy for children sessions were not the only areas of work taking places in these schools contributing to skill development in these areas.

Through the pupil evaluation the students were also able to provide good definitions of the targets themselves – for example;

Good turn taking – this needed better waiting, sharing and respect
Listening – so we know what to do. It’s good (nice) to listen to others. Need to be quiet, not taking. Listen to everyone
Say how you feel – still important to be nice to others, happy to share
Taking turns – recognised that it can be hard (can make you angry), sharing.

In the end of project evaluation one students favourite thing was ‘putting your hand up and waiting your turn’
Thinking about other people – can be hard (easier to think about happy rather than sad), shows you care
Target Review Techniques - P4C Dartboard

P4C Dartboard

1= No – not at all
2= A little
3= Yes – a lot

Listening
Taking turns
Letting other people finish
Saying how you feel
World Jigsaws

Learning objective(s)
To measure students enjoyment of the sessions

What to do/Stimulus
Students are given two pieces of a world jigsaw puzzle to record one thing they like and one thing they dislike about the activities. The puzzles can be printed on different coloured sheets, so that they first need to find their colour coded classmates to complete the puzzle with.

Resources
World Jigsaw puzzles

Evidence of children’s work
‘I liked everything’
‘I don’t like people living in boxes’
‘I liked putting your hand up and waiting your turn’
‘There was nothing that I didn’t like’
‘I enjoyed making the dens’
‘Loved it all’
Concept Line

Learning objective(s)
To review core targets at the class and individual level

What to do/Stimulus
The students are reminded of their self generated targets and asked to place themselves on the line according to whether they believed that as a group they had got ‘better’ or ‘worse’ at these. They are encouraged to justify their responses and of course to be honest in their responses. They are also reminded of the workings of the concept line – so that there are not just two answers; that is better or worse, but it is rather a continuum.

Resources
Rope
Better and worse labels
Targets on cards

Evidence of children’s work
The pupils who took part in this activity as part of the project were able to justify their reasons for their placement on the line.
Hot Seat

Learning objective(s)
To review students learning on a variety of themes
Listening to each other
Taking turns

What to do/Stimulus
This technique was used to review the outdoor activity day. The students were invited to come up into the hot seat at the front and contribute to a story that revisited all the different things we did on the outdoor activity day. The students were reminded that one of their targets is listening to each other. Encourage the students to develop a strategy for this activity, so if we are listening well to each other, what would it look like.

Resources
Chair (hot seat)

Evidence of children’s work
This review activity was introduced to encourage the students to give full attention to the speaker and also to slow the pace of dialogue in the room to ensure good listening. The students were able to develop good strategies for the activity, including avoiding repetition and taking it in turns.
Theme 2: Exploring localities – Africa and England
In this topic children have the opportunity to explore their understanding of Africa and England.

Section 1: What do we already know?
These activities focused on uncovering students preconceptions about Africa. It is important to explore student’s previous knowledge before starting on locality based work, enabling effective challenging of misconceptions through follow up work.

The audit activities in themselves provide a taster for the staff to the ethos behind philosophy for children, introducing the fact that all answers are valued. This encourages students to share their thinking and not be concerned initially whether their answers are right or wrong – empowering them to speak out. This was commented on by the teachers at the school recognising that staff initially struggled to allow the children to give their answers, rather guiding the students to what they considered to be the ‘right’ answer.

CDEC have now developed a topic box, which contains an assortment of audit activities. Subscribing schools can borrow this resource for free. For a copy of our audit handbook please visit:


Section 2: A balanced view

The whole staff team at George Hastwell School attended CDEC’s ‘Introduction to School Linking Inset’. As a result the school now have a link with a school in Ghana. To date the school as a staff team have developed their core aims for the link which are:

‘One of the most important aims of a link for us, which is to promote a better understanding and greater respect for other cultures, values and beliefs. This will play a large role in anti-racist education in the school, and hopefully extend into the wider community.’

The school have now begun to exchange information about their own school and locality which has engaged the students in presenting a balanced view of their own locality. This section includes two example activities. Please contact CDEC for further information and support on School Linking,
Section 1: What do we already know?

Mapping Africa

Learning objective(s)
To uncover student’s perceptions of Africa
To encourage students to share their thinking.

What to do/Stimulus
The students can complete this activity individually or in groups. The students are asked to write or draw everything they know about the people, places and climate in Africa. It is important during this activity to avoid giving them ideas (and politely prevent colleagues from giving them ideas!)

Resources
A3 size blank maps of Africa
Pen for each group

Evidence of children’s work

Students primarily focused on the animals and the climate of Africa, uncovering stereotypes which could be challenged through later work.
Where in the World? A picture puzzle

Learning objective(s)
To uncover students perceptions of Africa and England
To encourage students to share their thinking and justify their responses

What to do/Stimulus
Explain that they will look at photos from different places and decide, in each case, whether the photo was taken in England or Africa. They can record their choices by using coloured dots or letters. Children visit one photo at a time, spending just 2 minutes at each photo. They start by discussing what is in the photo, what might be outside the photo (that can’t be seen) and what might be going on. Each pupil should decide (as an individual). If time and resources allow encourage the pupils to justify their choices as they make them,

To review the activity choose one or two pictures for discussion, either a photo with lots of disagreement, or one where the majority got it wrong. Hold up the chosen picture, and ask an open question such as, “I wonder why so many people thought this couldn’t be in Africa”; or “I wonder why there were so many different ideas about this picture”, and support some discussion around the pupils’ ideas in response. Continue with further pictures, as time allows

Reveal the place these pictures were taken. Ask whether anyone is surprised (and generate further discussion, as time allows)

Resources
Photos of England and Africa - including some that do not conform to national stereotypes (some example photographs are included on the following pages – a full set is available to loan through CDEC)
Sticky dots
List of the numbered photos that identifies where each was taken for use by facilitator

Evidence of children’s work
‘They have small houses in Africa not tall buildings’
‘We don’t have wrecked houses’
‘It’s written in English, so can’t be Africa’
‘They don’t have computers in Africa’
‘Africa doesn’t have buses or trucks’
Where in the World? – Example photographs

This photo represents a modern road near Nairobi. This activity was carried out with over 700 students from the UK, Poland and the Czech Republic. Only 20% of the pupils in the UK thought it was taken in Africa, 24% of the Polish pupils shared this opinion, whereas nearly half of the Czech pupils (47%) guessed it was taken in Africa. The pupils usually pointed to red soil, typical of African countries, as a clue and many thought Africa would not have roads like this.
Where in the World? – Example photographs

All the pupils had most difficulty guessing that the picture of a well-heeled neighbourhood was taken in Africa (Kenya, Nairobi). This activity was carried out with over 700 students from the UK, Poland and the Czech Republic – none of the Polish pupils (0%) guessed it, for the Czech Republic it was 8% of the pupils and for the UK – 6%.
Images of Africa (activity devised by Sandside Lodge School)

This activity was designed as a follow on from the audit activities devised by CDEC. It is important that this type of activity is followed by an activity to re-enforce positive images of Africa. The activity on ‘happiness’ contained in theme 3 ‘Going Beyond Needs and Wants’ aims to do just this as does the potential of a school link. In addition it is important to highlight that the problems of hunger are not just confined to Africa. The school highlighted this by using an image of a homeless person in the UK the following week.

Learning objective(s)
Finding information on the computer
Using the computer to copy and paste
Constructing sentences to describe images and their reactions to them.
To uncover perceptions of Africa

What to do/Stimulus
Students use the computer to find images depicting hunger in Africa. ICT techniques to model by the teacher include; search engines and copy and paste.

Resources
ICT

Evidence of children’s work
The activity allowed further misconceptions from children to be uncovered, which should be challenged through later work, such as:
‘You only starve if you are black’
‘There is no water, food and there is war, this must be a sad place to live’

Also, an appreciation of true hunger, for example:
‘The girl must feel sad because she is hungry. I would not like to feel this hungry’
‘This makes me feel very sad. Next time I say that I am starving I will try to remember this picture and realise I am not that hungry.’
‘This picture makes me want to cry because the poor boy is starving. It makes me scared. I wish I could do more to help them.’
Section 2: A Balanced View

All about our School

Learning objective(s)
To challenge assumptions about other people and cultures
To present a balanced view of their own locality

What to do/Stimulus
The class is asked to plan and produce a presentation about their school community. The target audience for the schools involved in the project were other schools in the UK, Poland, Ghana and the Czech Republic. The other classes in schools in the 4 countries were also asked to produce presentations. The brief for the presentation was as follows:

Your class’s presentation should:
• be in the form of a video and/or PowerPoint,
• last about 3 to 4 minutes in total

First steps …
• You can use a story board to plan your presentation.
• You will need to discuss and agree who will do what task and by when, and
• meet together to review how the work is progressing and to comment on each other’s work.

Questions to ask:
• Who is this presentation for?
• What do we want to say about ourselves?
• What makes our school special?
• What is the best thing about school?
• What do we find difficult or challenging?
• Who do we learn from?
• How do we learn?
• What impression are we giving to other people?
• What have we left out and why?
• Might we surprise our partners with what we put into our presentation or box?
• What is a stereotype?
• Might it be a good idea to ask someone else for their thoughts on our draft work?
• What is important to us?
• Shall we ask anyone else what they think?

Your class’s presentation should:
• show others what you think and feel about learning, and about your school, and
• include the results of a special task called “Our school in a box”, which is explained next.

Resources
ICT

Evidence of children’s work
Examples of UK school presentations can be viewed on the following site. The site also includes videos and PowerPoint presentations from the Czech Republic, Ghana and Poland.


We are George Hastwell School

We are a school of over 80 pupils and 40 staff
Our School in a Box

Learning objective(s)
To challenge assumptions about other people and cultures
To present a balanced view of our own locality

What to do/Stimulus
Ask students to choose 10 objects to present a picture of your school to other schools – to fit into a shoe box. What would you choose to go into the box? Which items would you keep (and which discard) if you had to narrow the choice down to 5? Which objects would show what goes on at your school, you might encourage students to explore/complate the following:
- What it feels like to be a pupil here
- What you think is most important about school life and learning?
- Don’t just decide for yourself – ask others in your school and wider community what they would like to put in the box. This could lead onto the students devising a letter introducing the task and seeking other views on what the 10 things could be.
- Make a display and include captions to say why the 5 objects were chosen.

Resources
ICT

Evidence of children’s work
Examples of UK school presentations can be viewed on the following site. The site also includes videos and PowerPoint presentations from the Czech Republic, Ghana and Poland.


When we made our box we put in things that we like. We love different things to touch, feel and smell.

Some of class 4 and some parents chose 5 things that represent Sandside Lodge School.

These are:
Timetable, Photo album, Pencils, Newsletter, & our school logo.

Sandside Lodge School, Ulverston
Theme 3: Going beyond Needs and Wants

Section 1: Introducing our survival needs
A series of activities designed to introduce the children to the difference between things we need in life and things we want. This included a focus on the 3 key things we need to survive; food, water and shelter.

Section 2: Outdoor activity day
George Hastwell School and Sandside Lodge School came together on a joint outdoor activity day at a local community Park – Ford Park, Ulverston. During the day the students took part in activities to further explore our basic needs of food, water and shelter – extending these to exploring access globally. The students generated philosophical questions to take back and explore at school.

Section 3: Maslow’s hierarchy of needs
The project recognised the need to go further than focusing on our 3 core needs for survival and the final section in this theme encouraged the students to explore other factors that are important in life, through an exploration of an adapted version of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.
Section 1: Introducing our Survival Needs

Each session started with a linked community building activity. Much of this section is designed to take place in the school grounds – the section can be broken down into 2 or 3 sessions.

Learning objective(s)
To introduce our 3 basic needs for survival; food, water and shelter.
To explore the difference between needs and wants

Teamwork
Listening skills

What to do/Stimulus

Community builder:
A working together game, which could include any of the following parachute games:

Waves, Washing machine/carousel or make a mushroom.

The parachute games can then be adapted to introduce the theme for the session by introducing the students to familiar examples of needs and wants. Students or the teacher can ask the following and if students agree with the responses given, they change places under the parachute.

- Ask the pupils to name things that we have at home that we really like – for example chocolate, daughter, dogs, toys.
- What can’t you do without (that is things we need)
- Name things that you would like to have at home – anything that you would like! Re-iterate these are things that we want.

Stimulus

Survival treasure hunt - The students then take part in a Survival treasure hunt in the school grounds, giving them the opportunity to collect some things from the school grounds that they might find really useful if they were left stranded on a desert island. Introduce orientating the map, keys etc. The session works well following the star orienteering model, so pupils are put into groups and sent off to a numbered hidden item. Each item is numbered on the map and in real life. They must leave the item there and return to describe what it is, then if correct they will be sent to get another item. (Pupils might just find a couple or all). Encourage to visit bag like a feely bag – so try to guess object through touch – before looking. When start to get tired/lose interest, get them to collect an item to bring back. Encourage the groups to stay together as a team.
**Think pieces – a chance for reflection.** Put an item still inside the bag on each participant’s chair. Ask the students individually to consider - what is it and what it could be used for. The students are then encouraged to introduce their object to a partner – paired talk. Finally the group reviews around the circle so that each individual introduces their object. Remind that they have collected some items that they might find useful if they were stranded on a desert island.

Tell them that you now want them to imagine that they are on that desert island and all they have with them are these things. Do they think they would be ok with just these things? Record any reactions for later questions.

Introduce that they can’t now have all these things – the boat to get to the island is too small. What do they think they can manage without? Ask them to sort into just 12 things that they really need (so losing 5). Then down to 8 and finally to 4 items. This activity works best in smaller groups. Review their choices and their reasons for their choices. Draw out the 3 core things we need for survival – have they met these needs?

Ask the students to close their eyes and imagine they only had these – share and record any words that this makes you think of.

**Philosophical question generation.** If the students are new to philosophy, the students can be provided with pre-written statements, closed questions and open questions linked to the stimulus – which they can then sort. The students can be encouraged to develop further open/philosophical questions prior to the vote. A good definition of a philosophical question for students new to the approach can also be shared. ‘A questions that has lots and lots of different answers (an open question), but most importantly is something that you would be interested to talk further about’. There are many activities available to develop pupil’s philosophical questioning skills.
Air questions and vote (standing on the question they like).

Dialogue

During the project we found sessions worked best if the full class was broken into smaller groups for the dialogue and key responses fed back to the full group. During the dialogue the students can also be encouraged to focus on a relevant target. During this enquiry with the schools the pupils were encouraged to focus on taking turns and were also asked to look out for people who did this well.

Debrief

Review, who did the target well, self evaluation first on dartboard and then group decision. Individual scores were quite high – but we managed to revisit and re-evaluate against things like – did everyone get to speak. The score then lowered from 9 to 7.

If breaking the session into 2 or 3 sessions. The sessions can be refocused using the following:

To re-open the session the teacher could read an extract from a text such as Michael Morpurgo’s ‘Kensuke’s Kingdom’ which tells the story of Michael, a 12 year old boy who is sailing round the world with his parents on their boat, The Peggy Sue. His mum is taken ill and Michael and his dog, Stella Atois are swept overboard during a storm and end up stranded on a beach.

To close or re-open the session a community building activity works well. Ask the students to complete the following sentence to establish if the students can recall the wise choices they made last time and the reasons for their choices.

‘When I am stranded on a desert island I will take....’

So what items did they decide to take (useful to have the real objects to hand as these can be placed on the floor as a visual recall) .It is useful to engage all students in completion of the sentence when all items are on the floor and have been recalled and explored individually. So the facilitator holds up each object and these are added to make a list of items they would like to take with them, with all children chanting the responses. ‘When I am stranded on a desert island I will take water, a plastic sheet ...etc.'
This can be extended as a memory game, with some of the items from the line being removed and the children being encouraged to remember what is missing.

**Resources**

Items to find on the survival treasure hunt could include:

- Water bottle, 1st aid kit, egg box (with eggs and chickens in), matches, seeds, cooking pan, blanket, toilet roll, mobile phone, washing up brush, spanner/tool, plastic sheet, rope, torch, candle, apple, chocolate bar.

- Map of the school grounds

**Evidence of children’s work**

Philosophical Question chosen by the group was ‘Do we need to share?’

The pupils were new to developing a philosophical question so this was treated as a closed question to begin with by asking the pupils to vote yes or no in response to the question. The majority thought yes, sharing was important – so the session opened with a focus on the following:

‘People should share what they have got.’ The dialogue moved onto explore why sharing was important – reasons included- ‘Fair, caring, lovely, makes you feel good’

Pupils gave examples of things they would share. We then moved onto things we wouldn’t share and the reasons why – for example precious or special to me. The dialogue closed with the enquiry refocusing on the question – Do we need to share? - which ended the session with a dialogue focusing on the core things that all people need that we should share; food, water and shelter. Other items were also identified as important, such as music.
Section 2: Outdoor Activity Day

The day started with a community bingo activity devised by the pupils, which worked well to break the ice and enabled the schools to get to know each other. The introduction to the day encouraged the students to think about the things that we need in life and revisit these.

Needs and wants treasure hunt

Learning objective(s)
To revisit items needed for survival

Orientation of the map

Teamwork

What to do/Stimulus
The children in mixed school groups collected items which reflected things they would need to support their survival during the second activity – shelter building. The treasure hunt was designed as a basic 8 point orienteering course.

Resources
Suggested items to collect for the orienteering:

1. Tokens (to use later in the shop to purchase further items that they might need in their shelter to support survival)
2. Rope
3. Cups
4. Egg boxes (containing chickens and eggs)
5. Pan
6. Plastic sheet
7. Blanket
8. Water

Evidence of children’s work
Shelter and Shopping

Learning objective(s)
To experience living in a temporary home with limited resources
Working as a team
To make wise choices to support survival
To consider other types of home around the world

What to do/Stimulus
The session will need to include a health and safety briefing, including a focus on safe transport of materials, awareness of others and boundaries. The site should include a range of natural and manmade resources for the pupils to collect to build their shelter. Existing structures, such as trees and walls also make a good starting point. The students will also have the items collected on the survival treasure hunt.

During the shelter building time the students visit a shop, where they are encouraged to make wise choices in the purchase of additional items to support their survival. The facilitator should encourage dialogue focusing on needs and wants and group decisions. The currency for the shop is the tokens collected in the treasure hunt.

Once the shelters are completed the students are provided with a selection of images of other homes around the world. They are asked to list things that are the same and different to the shelter they have just built. Sample pictures are provide on the following pages.

Finally the students generate a philosophical question.

Resources
Natural and manmade materials
Items from 8 point orienteering
Suggested shop items include: Further plastic sheets, string, matches, cuddly toy, books, kettle (no electricity!), mobile phone.
Images of homes around the world (Sample photographs available on the following pages – CDEC’s Survival Pack for Future Citizens also includes many images)
Same/Different words and symbol sheet to annotate – available on the following pages.
Evidence of children’s work

Examples of questions generated by the students:

Is it fair that some people can live in a nice house or in a box?

Why do you have a home?

Why do we have different types of shelter?

Would you like to live in a temporary shelter?

This activity had a great impact on the students. In the end of project evaluation, one student recorded their dislike of the project as:

‘I disliked people living in boxes’

The thought of living in the shelters was initially seen as an exciting experience, but again through the end of project evaluations the students could see how this type of experience is real for some people. When the buses were late collecting and the students were introduced to the notion of staying the night in the shelter, this concerned quite a number.

‘I can remember when you said if the bus was not here in time we would be sleeping in the shelter’

This activity was revisited in the classroom, with the students building shelters out of cardboard.
Example homes image

From CDEC’s Survival Pack for Future Citizens.
Same and Different sheets

same

different

For use of symbols Widgit Literacy Symbols © Widgit Software 2012 [www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)
**Food**

**Learning objective(s)**
To consider access to food globally.

**What to do/Stimulus**
During lunch time the students are asked to consider if they would swap their lunch for either an empty lunch box or for one with rice in. The students are encouraged to justify the reasons for their responses. The facilitator can deepen the dialogue through continuing the role play, using phrases such as ‘but you have so much’, ‘I am hungry too’.

After lunch is finished the activity is reviewed:

Did anyone want to swap lunch? Why, why not?

Images were then given out to the group depicting the contents of food cupboards from different parts of the world. These images are available in the following publication.

![Image](What_I_eat_by_Peter_Menzel)

**Resources**
Packed lunch
Empty lunch box
Lunch box with rice in
Images of food from different countries

**Evidence of children’s work**
Examples of philosophical questions:

*Why do the poor have less food?*
*Why do we have so much food?*
*Does having lots of food make you happy?*
*Why are the Ayme family happy?*
Why do the English family have different food? (not as healthy)

Why are the family cha poor, it’s upsetting?

Why do they not have a lot of food?

A couple of weeks later in class George Hastwell School continued work on this theme. They summarised the activity and discussed what they could see in the pictures, for example the types of food and how much each family had. The class voted for the question they wanted to discuss, and joined together the questions: Does having lots of food make you happy? And Why are the Ayme family happy?

They talked about the fact that the Ayme family had quite a lot of food, unlike the Aboubaker family who did not have much. They said that the Ayme family would not go hungry, which would help them to be happy. They thought that the Aboubaker family would not be very happy as they did not have much food.

They recognised that the Ayme family’s food was mainly fresh produce, in comparison to the Bainton family who had a lot of processed food. They decided that although they all liked eating chocolates, biscuits and other types of processed food, the Ayme family’s diet was clearly much healthier. From then on the discussion largely turned towards healthy eating.

In conclusion to the discussion, the class said that although too little food could make them unhappy, they only needed enough food to make them happy. From looking at the pictures and discussing the questions, they decided that too much food would not help to make them feel happier than if they had enough food. They also thought that although eating food they liked could make them feel happy, being healthy was a very important factor in feeling good.
Water Relay

Learning objective(s)
Consider access to water around the world and water conservation
Listening to others

What to do/Stimulus
Community builder: Describe your favourite drink for others to guess

Stimulus: The students took part in a water relay activity. The aim of the game to get all of the water from one 5L container to another 5L container by passing the water from cup to cup along a line. The pupils were divided into groups and the very layout of the challenge with groups set up next to each other created the feeling of a race. However the winning team was not designed to be the team to finish first, rather as re-iterated through the aim of the game, not to waste water and to work together as a team to get all of the water from one end to the other. Of course a lot of water is wasted.

Once the relay is completed the students see for themselves who has won by comparing the amount of water in the end containers.

This activity can then move into introducing global links and water conservation through a true and false game. Some sample statements are provided on the following pages.

Resources
5 litre water containers
Cups
Water
True and False statements (examples are included)
True and False Signs

Evidence of children’s work
Example questions from the students:
Why do we need water for the environment?
Can we make sure we don’t spoil the water?
Why do we waste water?
How can we help people in Kenya with water instead of thinking about ourselves?
How can we make people care?
Why do we let people die?
Water relay - True and False sheets

false
true
**Water Relay – Example True/False Statements**

Based on 5L container

1. We need about 2 litres of water a day **TRUE**

2. On average each person in the UK uses 150 litres of water (Env Agency) **TRUE**

3. A masai person in Kenya uses 50L, **FALSE 10L**

4. It takes 5 Litres just to flush an average toilet in the UK (wateraid) **FALSE 10L**

5. About 1.2 billion of us go without clean water near to home Oxfam **TRUE**

6. Half the world has a tap in their home **FALSE 15%**

7. Water is the biggest killer of children under the age of 5 **TRUE**
Making Pledges

Learning objective(s)
To make pledges

What to do/Stimulus
The outdoor activity day ended with the students making pledges in relation to things they would do to make the world a better place. The pledges were signed by the students making a mud fingerprint. Other ways to record pledges include recording them on footprints, encouraging the students to focus on their impact on the world, or formalising their pledges in a certificate format presented to them in front of their school/parents in an assembly.

Resources
Mud and paper
Or
Certificates
Outlines of footprints

Evidence of children’s work
Examples of student’s pledges included:

- Be helpful
- Be thoughtful about other people and the world
- Smile more
- Be nice
- Put things in the bin
- Be healthy
- Be kind
- Behave
- Be happy
- Don’t waste things
Section 3: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs
Moving Beyond Survival Needs

Learning objective(s)
To encourage students to explore that there are other things that we need in life – beyond our survival needs.

What to do/Stimulus

Introduction Introduce the students to a simplified version of Maslow’s hierarchy (pyramid is available on page 54).
1. Staying alive
2. Keeping safe
3. Feeling love
4. Having respect
5. Special me.

Ask the students if they can identify which one we have already covered so far through our sessions. Ask them to give examples in staying alive.

Community Builder- Focusing on the top level - special me. Ask them to think about things that make them special – use as our game today. Name a thing that makes you special – if others share this thing change seats.

Stimulus and dialogue – Read ‘Colour of Home’ by Mary Hoffman

Hassan feels out of place in a new cold, grey country. He paints a picture of his colourful Somali home, which he was forced to leave because of war. But things change and Hassan’s next picture contains a maroon prayer mat, a green cushion and his sister’s pink dress - the new colours of home

After reading the story encourage the students to focus on Feeling safe and whether Hassan felt safe in the story. What happened to him? What did he do to feel safe? Other levels of Maslow’s hierarchy can also be visited through the story – for example ‘What made Hassan feel happy/special?’
**Personal Reflection** – Students in small groups are encouraged to explore Maslow’s hierarchy further by matching key words to different levels on the pyramid. An example pyramid is show on page 55 and sample cards to place on the appropriate levels follows this. The students are encouraged to give reasons for their placement of the cards and with good reasons it is likely that not all will match with the example pyramid. The students may also generate their own examples. The following questions could be asked during the activity.

- Do you have everything you need to survive? (staying alive)
- Do you feel safe? (keeping safe)
- Do you feel loved/liked? (feeling)
- Do you love/like yourself?

**Debrief** – Ask the students to record on a slip something they like about someone else in the room, - so something that makes them special. The students should not record the name of the student that the statement applies to. These are posted into a box and the students take one out to read and share with the rest of the group. This activity therefore focuses the students on the many things that make their class special.

**Resources**
Levels in Maslow’s pyramid
Example pyramid
Cards to place in the different levels
Colour of Home, by Mary Hoffman

**Evidence of children’s work**
Community builder – Special me examples included, my best friend, my dog and play football.
Debrief – responses included ‘because he is my friend’ ‘I like to play football with them’ ‘helpful’. ‘makes me laugh’, ‘kind’ and ‘nice’.
Moving beyond survival need - Levels in Maslow’s pyramid with examples
Moving beyond survival needs – Maslow’s Pyramid – activity sheet

For use of symbols Widgit Literacy Symbols © Widgit Software 2012 www.widgit.com
Moving beyond survival need – Examples for students to place in each level

- proud
- confident
- capable
- true
- kind
- contented
- intelligent
- appreciated

For use of symbols Widgit Literacy Symbols © Widgit Software 2012 [www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)
Moving beyond survival need – Examples for students to place in each level

- wanted
- smart
- accepted
- prized
- worth
- it
- family
- friends
- pets

For use of symbols Widgit Literacy Symbols © Widgit Software 2012 [www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)
Moving beyond survival need – Examples for students to place in each level

- clubs
- country
- I
- belong
- doctor
- parents
- home
- laws

For use of symbols Widgit Literacy Symbols © Widgit Software 2012 [www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)
Moving beyond survival need – Examples for students to place in each level

- **Protection**
- **Weapons**
- **Food**
- **Drink**
- **Shelter**
- **Clothing**
- **Rules**

For use of symbols Widgit Literacy Symbols © Widgit Software 2012 [www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)
Happiness

Learning objective(s)
To further explore higher level needs
To think about how other people feel
Challenging assumptions

What to do/Stimulus

Community builder – What makes you happy? Pupils are asked to think of things that make them happy. Ask for a contribution, with supporting reason and pass a ball of wall to that person (ensuring that you keep hold of the end). Ask if others in the group also think that this example makes them happy too – if so ask them to put their hand up. The person with the ball of wall then passes the ball to a person of their choosing - again keeping hold of some. This should begin to make a web like pattern showing the links between people in the room. The activity continues till all who want to contribute have. In a small group they can be encouraged to reverse the web and wind the wool back in – attempting to work together to untangle and recall the things that made their peers happy.

This activity can be followed with a concept line – labelled with happy and sad. The concept line can be used to measure how happy they are at the start and end of the session. It can also be used to gauge happiness against a series of statements, such as ‘Someone I know is ill’ – how does that make me feel or ‘the sun is shining’.

Stimulus – Revisit Maslow’s pyramid as referred to in the previous session.

Review from activity - What do you think you need to be happy – can they link examples to Maslow’s hierarchy. Record key ideas.

Can anyone remember the story we read last time?

Was Hassan Happy in the story?

Why?

Provide a set of pictures to small groups of students. Some examples are available on the following pages. The images have been chosen to challenge the perception that everyone in Africa is sad (following on from an earlier activity looking for images of hunger in Africa). Through the trials we used a mixture of images from the UK and Africa - ensuring that they enabled discussion around possible reasons for happiness and sadness both in the UK and Africa. The students are asked to look carefully at the images and consider whether the people in the picture are happy – so do they have all the things in Maslow or sad? As prompts provide the questions- Why might they be happy? Why might they be sad? The dialogue that follows this is important, with many opportunities for the facilitator and peers to draw in other perspectives.
By providing a set of images from both Africa and England, this activity also provides a further opportunity to follow up the earlier baseline activities (picture puzzle and Mapping Africa) to see if their perceptions have changed. Ask the pupils if it is possible to sort the pictures into Africa and England and encourage dialogue.

**Resources**

Wool

Why might they be happy or why might they be sad cards.

Images – examples can be found on pages 60 and 61. Another source of useful images can be found in Material World, by Peter Menzel.

![Material World](image_url)

**Evidence of children’s work**

Playing Football image – happy as they are smiling, well cared for, love each other. Sad because they might not have parents, not all wearing shoes.

Mother and child – happy as they are smiling, and it is sunny. Sad – because there are only 2 of them, they don’t have parents,

This kind of activity provides lots of opportunity to encourage the students to consider alternative perspectives through further dialogue. In this activity many of the children were able to show that they are able to consider other perspectives. Phrases were included like ‘it could be of Africa, but it might be...’ and the students were actively looking for clues in the images to justify that they could be of either locality and justifying reasons why the people in the images might be happy/sad. The students also had an excellent dialogue focused on whether possessions could make us happy leading on from images used from Material World. This related back well to examples given by the students in the community building activity and Maslow’s hierarchy with the students confirming their earlier thinking that other people are more important for happiness than possessions.

A possible follow on or introductory activity could include the use of music – considering the question ‘Why does it make me feel happy/sad?’
Happiness – Sample image

Source: Images of Tanzania by CDEC
Happiness – Sample image

Source: Images of Tanzania by CDEC
Happiness – Questions

Why might they be happy?

Why might they be sad?
P4C and Autism – Case Study – P4C and Autism, George Hastwell School, Cumbria

I have recently taken part in a project led by Gina Mullarkey of CDEC that introduced Philosophy for Children to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 attending George Hastwell School, a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties. Of the 15 pupils who participated in the project, ten were on the autistic spectrum. This presented particular difficulties. Autism is characterized in part by black and white thinking and difficulty in taking another’s point of view. Because of their additional cognitive impairments my pupils also struggle with abstract concepts like justice. Although they do have a keen sense of right and wrong that is rule based and often non-negotiable.

Gina tackled this with a range of practical activities that encouraged pupils to co-operate, to listen to each other and to modify their opinions in order to experience directly the benefits of cooperation and accepting another’s point of view. She cleverly exploited their existing interests to challenge preconceptions about cultures beyond their experience. One example was providing evidence for the use of computers by children in Africa.

The pupils were involved in formulating rules and they were encouraged to quantify their skill levels in competencies that helped them to keep to the rules – good listening, turn taking, sharing etc. The beauty of these rules was that they were not intended to restrict pupils. Instead the rules enabled them to work together and make discoveries about themselves, their friends and the world around them.

This helped to support my own work on Wise Choices. Many autistic children have challenging behaviour. Phoebe Caldwell refers to this as distressed behaviour. They are upset by their inability to predict and control their lives. Traditional methods have emphasized using behaviourist principles to teach compliance. Rather than trying to manage their behaviour, I prefer to teach my pupils strategies to manage their own response. They learn that in every situation there are choices. These choices have consequences. And without breaching our duty of care we have to honour their choices sometimes even if we think they are unwise.

Ben was best described as oppositional. If you tried to enforce compliance he would tantrum and rage. So we let Ben choose.

“This afternoon we are going for a walk.”

“I don’t do walks.”

“OK Ben you can stay behind but we will have to switch all the computers off when we go because it is the class rule – No computers when the teacher’s not there. So you will have to do your writing instead. You choose, Ben.”

More often than not Ben would choose to come with us. But if he chose to stay we had to honour that choice. And he had to accept the consequences of his choice.
Gina’s work built on that with the important addition that our choices impact upon other people and we are sometimes affected by other people’s choices. Understanding that we all have points of view, while learning that it is OK to modify your own opinions and possible to influence other people’s ideas represents an enormous cognitive leap for autistic children. I am very excited at the prospect of Gina and her CDEC team pursuing similar aims using Philosophy for Children with people on the autistic spectrum and would welcome the opportunity to develop that work with my pupils.

*Mike Stanton – George Hastwell School, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria*