Geography and well-being: Experiences that really matter!

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Aim and objectives

This workshop will explore the contribution that high-quality geographical learning experiences can make to nurturing children’s wellbeing.

It will

• identify meaningful links between geography and the New Economic Foundation’s five ways to wellbeing: connect, be active, take notice, keep learning, give.
• include case studies from three schools.
• provide some ‘take away’ ideas and useful resources.
Over to you

What have you done for your well-being this week?

In groups:
- Say hello, how are you...
- Discuss 'just one action' you have done for you this week
Five ways to wellbeing:

• Connect
• Be active
• Take notice
• Keep learning
• Give

www.mindingyourhead.info
5 WtW: Connect

- Connect with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community.
- Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them.
- Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.
5 WtW: Be Active

- Exercising makes you feel good.
- Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.
5 WtW: Take notice

- Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons.
- Savour the moment, whether you are eating lunch or talking to friends.
- Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling.
- Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.
5 WtW: Keep learning

• Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Fix a bike.
• Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food.
• Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving.
• As well as being fun, learning new things will make you more confident
5 WtW: Give

- Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger.
- Thank someone. Smile.
- Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in.
- Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.
Canal Way Educate Together National School
What is amazing in our school grounds?
St James' National School
How can we make our lane safer?
Authentic learning activities

Calverley School case study

https://tinyurl.com/tjlulqc
Reflection

In groups, discuss how one of these examples contributed the 5 WtW:

- Connect
- Be active
- Take notice
- Keep learning
- Give
Enquiry and teachers

Although enquiry is all about children’s learning, we must remember that the most important person in the room (or outside) when it comes to enabling learning through enquiry is, in fact, the teacher. Teachers shape children’s learning to ensure they:

- ask questions, and know what to do with the questions next;
- source and analyse geographical data, including considering different views;
- develop, with the aid of their teacher, geographical frameworks;
- gain new knowledge and understanding about the world;
- develop attitudes and values beyond their immediate experiences, and become able to critically view information they use;
- apply their learning to new learning.

Enquiry and authentic learning

‘Geographical enquiries involve finding answers to geographical questions… The best enquiries engage and motivate pupils by addressing real-world issues and concerns. They do not have pre-determined answers, results or conclusions. Rather, they offer authentic learning activities with real purposes, audiences and outcomes and engage pupils in active experiential learning. The most powerful enquiries enable pupils to take action that makes a positive difference and generates change’

Enquiry Skills

Use a mix of given and pupils’ own questions as a starting point.

Decide what, how, when and WHERE.

How will we collect, analyse and present information?

What have we found out?

What have we learnt?
How do we know? Has it changed our thinking and if so, how?

What do we do with this knowledge? Who can we share it with? And how?

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Possible real audiences

- Peers - other children in class
- Other children in school
- Children in twinned/other schools
- Adults in school (Headteacher, Cook, Governors)
- Parents, carers and wider family
- Local/national politicians or public servants
- Local/national media
- Local community/campaign groups
- Local businesses or voluntary organisations

Simulated audiences can sometimes work very well!
Possible outcomes

Pupils can communicate their findings by
• Making verbal/digital presentations
• Creating models, drawings or diagrams
• Annotating maps, plans or photographs
• Writing reports, letters, emails, letters, etc.
• Designing posters, brochures, leaflets
• Creating videos
• Curating an exhibition of artefacts
• Developing quizzes or trails
• Writing formal proposals or action plans
• Organising a campaign or direct action
• Performing dances, plays or puppet shows
• Building webpages or a website
5 WtW and geography

- Connect
- Be active
- Take notice
- Keep learning
- Give
5 WtW and geography: connect

Geographical learning activities which

• nurture interpersonal connections through pair or small group work

• explore children’s connections to their ‘special places’

• promote understanding of the complex web of connections between people and places at local and global scales
‘This rock is my special place because I spend lots of time with my friends and doing cartwheels.’ (Anna, Y4)

‘This is a special place for having fun with my friends’ (Jay, Y4)
5 WtW and geography: be active

- Geographical learning activities which promote active exploration of the school grounds and local area, especially more ‘natural’ or wild’ places, e.g. woodland, nature reserves, National Parks
- Geographical enquiries which investigate features of the local area which encourage or discourage healthy active lifestyles, e.g. safety for pedestrians and cyclists, access to parks and sport facilities
5 WtW and geography: take notice

Geographical learning which inspires children to pay attention to the wonders of the natural and built world, through activities which:

- encourage immersion
- promote imaginative exploration & play
- stimulate creative responses
- necessitate careful observation
- nurture curiosity
- foster awe and wonder
5 WtW and geography: give

Geographical projects which have positive real-world impact:

- investigating and reducing school energy, plastic or water consumption
- practical local environmental improvement projects
- campaigns on local, national or global issues
- designing a local heritage trail or ‘walk for health’ [www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/)
5 WtW and geography: keep learning

‘Inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world and its people that will remain with them for the rest of their lives.’

(National Curriculum, DfE, 2013, p214).
# Great geographical learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses enquiry-based learning approaches</th>
<th>Involves authentic learning activities: purpose and motivation</th>
<th>Incorporates practical, active learning: ‘doing’ geography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Builds on what children already know, and their interests</td>
<td>Makes links between children’s own lives and the wider world</td>
<td>Uses the local area and community as a context/ resource for geographical learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrates learning about places with physical and human geography</td>
<td>Provides a meaningful context for developing and using geographical skills</td>
<td>Uses cross-curricular approaches to enrich and deepen learning</td>
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References and resources


• Mentally Healthy Schools [www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk](http://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/)


Take Away Reflections

• What really resonated with you?

• What are you taking way from this workshop?

• What are you going to do?
  - to look after yourself?
  - to look after those close to you?
  - when you get back to school?
My contention is, first, that we should want more from our educational efforts than adequate academic achievement and, second, that we will not achieve even that meager success unless our children believe that they themselves are cared for and learn to care for others.

Neil Noddings