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## The power of social and emotional learning

June 2, 2016 in Thought Leadership

Continuing the 'mindfulness and well-being' discussion from *IB World* magazine's **March 2016** issue, and the recent **social and emotional well-being research**, Jenny Mosley – former teacher, now trainer and author – talks about the power of social and emotional learning, and how her 'Golden Model' can promote self-esteem and self-confidence in PYP students.

Students who feel valued and respected for their social, emotional, creative and academic qualities are at the heart of happy, calm and successful schools.

Enhancing social and emotional competencies includes improving self-esteem and developing empathy and respect for each other, supporting the PYP's aim of preparing students to have the capacity to participate in the world around them. Group activities, which encourage genuine listening, nurture social, negotiation and teamwork skills, helping students find their own voice and develop self-confidence.

**Quality Circle Time (QCT)** is a specially-structured circle time (also known as group time) session and listening system, which is part of the Golden Model. During a session, students practice speaking, listening and negotiation skills, and work in teams to have varied discussions and play games – great for promoting self-esteem and self-confidence, and focusing on the development of the whole child, another essential aim of the PYP.

The circle is a fun and friendly place to be. To laugh, play, be creative and imaginative are basic human needs, but some of our classrooms are not emotionally warm enough. Every child can be heard in circle time and any successes are celebrated.

Self-esteem and self-confidence can grow and develop through good experiential opportunities such as circle time.



## Positive behaviour for learning

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others. Setting goals, managing change, self-discovery and learning about self-regulation and behaviour are important skills for effective classroom learning.

Living by a set of moral values helps build emotional resilience in students, enabling them to cope with or adapt to stressful situations if or when they arise. You can work with your students to decide which moral values you all wish to adopt to keep your classroom physically and emotionally safe. I call these 'golden rules' and they are part of the Golden Model.

Once decided, the rules – which usually focus upon respect, kindness, honesty, trust and hard work – are written on gold paper and proudly displayed. The rules can be promoted through circle time discussions, games, assemblies, stories, and can also be used to motivate and provide positive feedback to students. Most importantly, introducing and embedding the golden rules helps to create positive behaviour for learning. This is central to inspiring active, caring, lifelong learners, which the PYP prepares students to become.

Developing emotional resilience can also take place outside of the classroom. Lunchtimes and playtimes are important breaks in a child's day. It's where enjoyment and exercise are available, friendships are made or broken and there is so much more freedom. Implementing fun lunchtime games where students use and develop their social skills can make all the difference between a student who returns from break-time feeling upbeat and ready to learn and another who feels demotivated and less willing to participate in class.

## Golden moments for you

It's important for educators to lead by example and model positive behaviour. To promote self-esteem in others, we need to develop a strong sense of our own self, which links to the IB Learner Profile attribute, 'balanced'. I encourage staff to work in circles with each other, too, and experience the support and help of colleagues.

All too often teachers put others first but in doing so can quickly burn out. Tired teachers are less inspiring. To release excellence in others we also need self-knowledge and oceans of energy. We need to tap into the wellsprings of our own humanity.

The 'Five Wells of Wellbeing' is also part of the Golden Model. It focuses on replenishing emotional, creative, physical, spiritual and cognitive energy. I encourage educators to create their own personal care plan based on balance and perspective.

Taking golden moments for yourself to recharge the batteries, and become more grounded, can help you stay resilient and feel valued within a busy environment.

*Tell us about your classroom activities that promote social emotional learning: email [editor@ibo.org](mailto:editor@ibo.org)*



Jenny Mosley



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