



Connectedness

Definition of the skill

Connectedness is the ability to recognize and engage with the broader community, both locally and globally. It goes beyond sociability and collegiality, embracing a sense of shared humanity and responsibility. This interconnectedness is shaped by relationships through communication, travel, migration, trade, and political systems. On a cognitive level, connectedness involves understanding global, regional, national, and local issues, while recognizing the interdependence of different countries and populations. Socio-emotionally, it involves empathy, solidarity, and respect for diversity. Behaviourally, it means taking actions that promote peace, sustainability, and social cohesion, fostering environments where people care for one another.

Importance of the skill for lifelong well-being

Connectedness is essential for adults to thrive in an interconnected world. As globalization increases, individuals who value connectedness are better equipped to contribute to social harmony, sustainability, and ethical leadership. Key benefits include:

- Promoting sustainability: Adults who recognize their interconnectedness will address global challenges like climate change by making sustainable choices, helping ensure a resilient future for communities and the planet.
- Strengthening social bonds: Connectedness enhances emotional intelligence, enabling individuals to form strong relationships, which benefit both their mental health and the well-being of others.
- Encouraging responsible citizenship: Adults with a sense of connectedness make decisions that promote equity and sustainability, leading by example to create a collective, better future.
- Fostering adaptability and problem-solving: Understanding the interconnectedness of global issues equips individuals with the skills needed to face complex challenges with creativity and critical thinking.
- Providing purpose and fulfilment: Those connected to a larger community find deeper meaning in their actions, aligning them with values that contribute to personal fulfilment.

Manifestation and development of this skill in ages 6-10

At ages 6-10, children are in an ideal stage to develop connectedness. Through hands-on experiences and guidance, they can cultivate the awareness, understanding, and behaviours that reflect interconnectedness:



- **Awareness and Curiosity:** Children begin to notice differences in people, cultures, and the environment. They grasp concepts of fairness, kindness, and responsibility toward others and nature.
- **Developing Respect:** Through activities like role-playing and group work, children learn to respect others' feelings, backgrounds, and the environment. This respect often shows in actions like sharing and helping.
- **Taking Responsibility:** Children practice responsibility in small ways, such as recycling or caring for pets or plants. These actions nurture a sense of duty toward their community and the environment.

Observation parameters for establishing class level:

Level 1: Children may show interest in people and the environment but need prompting to think about their impact. They require guidance to demonstrate kindness and responsibility, such as helping with recycling or taking care of classroom plants.

Level 2: Children actively engage with global and environmental issues and demonstrate empathy. They begin taking initiative in sustainability actions like sorting recyclables and helping care for class pets, though they may need occasional reminders.

Level 3: Children articulate the importance of valuing both people and nature. They consistently demonstrate empathy and responsibility, independently initiating pro-environmental actions and suggesting community improvement projects.

Interconnections with other skills

- **Teamwork & Collaboration:** Working together to solve problems and achieve common goals.
- **Empathy & Compassion:** Understanding and caring for others' feelings and well-being.
- **Communication Skills:** Effectively sharing ideas and building relationships.
- **Reasoned Decision Making:** Making informed choices based on understanding and analysis.
- **Reflective Thinking:** Analysing experiences to improve future actions.
- **Creativity:** Finding innovative solutions to challenges in a global context.



Didactical tips for teachers

- Promote global awareness: Use books, videos, and discussions that highlight different cultures, global issues, and environmental challenges.
- Encourage empathy: Create opportunities for children to practice empathy through group work, discussions, and helping others.
- Incorporate sustainability activities: Engage students in age-appropriate environmental activities like recycling, tree planting, or community service projects.
- Model connectedness: Teachers can demonstrate empathy, respect for diversity, and responsibility in their actions, serving as role models for students.
- Foster reflection: Use journals or class discussions to help students reflect on how their actions affect others and the environment.

