

Open Mind

ADDITIONAL LIFESKILLS LESSON

ADVANCED

Unit 1 Study & Learning: building communities

Objective: to provide further practice of building communities, this time within the context of **Study & Learning**.

The three-step strategy for developing this soft skill is:

Step 1: Consider the type of community you wish to create. (Ex. A, Ex. B, Ex. C)

Step 2: Decide on the community's goals and how they will be organised. (Ex. C)

Step 3: Advertise your community so interested people can join. (Ex. D)

You may decide to highlight this strategy at the beginning of the lesson, and to conduct a short discussion to check that the students understand the skill and why it is useful. However, if you prefer to teach this lesson without discussing the underlying soft skill, this is also possible. The lesson is designed to be engaging and successful either way.

For more information about teaching life skills and ideas for highlighting the soft skill, please refer to p. xi and pp. 8–9 of the Teacher's Book.

MATERIALS:

- board and markers
- large pieces of paper
- poster tack

Lead-in

Books closed. Write the word *community* on the board. Put the students in pairs or small groups to recall the definitions from p. 16 of the Student's Book. Elicit the definitions and write them on the board (*the people who live in an area; a group of people in a larger society who are the same in some way*).

Focus the students on the second part of the definition and remind them that in the Student's Book lesson they looked at different kinds of communities. Ask them if they can recall some of these communities and encourage them to call them out. Then ask the students to stand up and mingle with other students. They should take turns describing the different communities they belong to, and try to find communities they have in common with other students.

If necessary, demonstrate with a student first, e.g.:

T: I belong to a book club and also several online communities, such as LinkedIn.

S: Oh really? I also belong to a book club, but not LinkedIn, although I am on Facebook.

Give the students about five minutes for this and then ask them to sit down. If you wish, you could briefly discuss some of the communities the students belong to.

A

- Erase the board. Explain to the students that in this lesson they are going to look at building communities in a **Study & Learning** context. Explain that these kinds of communities can exist in a formal institution of learning, such as a school, college or university, or can be related to more general learning situations.
- Put the students in groups and give them about five minutes to brainstorm some examples of study and learning communities. If necessary, brainstorm one or two ideas as a class first. Then elicit ideas and write them on the left-hand side of the board.

Possible answers

Study groups

Language conversation clubs

Online learning support groups or forums

Hobby clubs (groups that form to learn a new hobby, e.g. music, theatre, art, knitting, jewellery-making, etc)

Adult education groups (groups that form to learn essential skills, e.g. computing, cookery, DIY, etc)

B

- Now write this list of reasons on the right-hand side of the board:
 - *provide support to others*
 - *find help and support*
 - *make friends*
 - *self-improvement*
 - *for fun/recreation*
 - *expand knowledge*
- Ask the students to work in the same groups and match the reasons for forming communities with the specific communities they brainstormed in Ex. A. When you check answers, encourage the students to give any other reasons for forming these communities that they can think of.

Possible answers

Study groups: provide support to others; find help and support; expand knowledge

Language conversation clubs: expand knowledge; make friends

Online learning support groups or forums: provide support to others; find help and support; expand knowledge

Hobby clubs: make friends; for fun/recreation; self-improvement

Adult education groups: make friends; self-improvement

Reflect

- Write the following questions on the board:
Which of the communities covered in today's lesson exist at your place of learning? Do you belong to any already? Which ones would you like to join?
- Give the students time to think about the questions. Then put them in small groups to discuss their answers. Elicit some ideas briefly as a class.

EXTRA: HOMEWORK

Ask the students to research online English-language learning communities. Encourage them to find out what they do and how they operate. Ask them to report back at the next class.

C

- Ask the students to stay in their groups and explain that they are now going to choose a specific community to create from the list on the board. If they decide to choose a hobby or adult education community, they should specify what it is that they intend to learn.
Write the following headings on the board:
Name of community:
Aims/Goals:
When and where community meets:
Who can join:
Other details (e.g. cost, any requirements needed in order to join, limit on number of members, etc):
- Read the headings aloud and explain that the students should complete these with details about their community. Ask each group to assign one person to make notes under each heading. Point out that not all the headings may be relevant to their specific community, and explain that they can add any other headings that may be relevant.

D

- When the students finish, ask them to think about the best way to advertise their community. Point out or elicit that this could be in the form of a webpage, newspaper or magazine advert, a poster or an email. The way they choose will depend on the kind of community they have decided to build, and what kind of person their community is aimed at.
- Give each group a large piece of paper and ask them to create their advert, webpage, poster, email, etc. Encourage them to make it as appealing as possible to the other students.
- When they finish, ask each group to post their advert on the wall. Ask all the students to circulate and read about each community. Encourage them to make a note of any communities that they would be interested in joining. At the end, have a class feedback session, encouraging the students to say which communities they would like to join and why.