So what are the skills that make a difference? Most of us will be familiar with the idea of soft skills, although different educational systems around the world will refer to them using different terminology. Soft skills are qualities associated with the way that we build relationships and collaborate with others. They are a critical part of our student’s future employability (employers always want team players), but are often under-represented at school, as they don’t fit smoothly into a centralised testing regime, and there is a fear that by concentrating on developing soft skills, there will be less time to concentrate on the knowledge and understanding which will be tested. The evidence suggests the opposite is in fact true – that when time is spent on the cultivation of soft skills and relationships between students, this has a positive impact on their academic attainment.

Different thinkers put forward different lists of possible skills that fit into this category, but we’ve identified a number that are cultivated by the activities in this pack. In practising dialogue, speaking and listening are critical. While these are skills that many education systems seek to cultivate, it is important to note that a dialogical approach offers many opportunities to dive more deeply into this, and to cultivate those skills in a more nuanced way.

SKILLS OF DIALOGUE

GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

It is important that students have the opportunity to practise speaking clearly and confidently, explaining their own point of view, beliefs or values. When we take part in dialogue it is important to remember that we are not just learning from others but that, at the same time, we are also responsible for teaching them. Within the context of the Essentials of Dialogue it is critical that we communicate our experiences and ideas to others (in our classrooms and globally) who may not share our backgrounds; our explanations must be clear so that everyone understands; free from jargon, slang or cultural assumptions.

When students encounter their global peers, many of them are using English as a second (or additional) language – so it is imperative that everyone remembers the importance of explaining their ideas with a focus upon simplicity and clarity.
Active Listening is not just paying attention but is a specific methodology that enables practitioners to deepen dialogue to improve communication and to address controversial and difficult issues. Listen carefully to what the other person is saying.

Some keys to Active Listening include:

1. Thinking about what your body language and posture are saying to them.
2. Not interrupting.
3. Using silence effectively, waiting for them to say what they need to say.
4. Paraphrasing or summarising the emotion and content of what you are hearing. You are not agreeing with the person, merely reiterating what they said.
5. Reflecting an emotion – “You are feeling angry.”
6. Reflecting content – “You feel angry because these things have happened to you.”
7. Refraining from judgement or evaluation, just reflecting what the other person is saying – “If I understand what you’re saying...”
8. Asking the person to say more about their experiences or feelings in a way that shows you are interested.
9. Affirming a person when you agree with what they are saying.

It might also help to contrast Active Listening with Defensive Listening. Active Listening demonstrates to the other person that you are really listening to them – this helps to reduce conflict. Defensive Listening does not demonstrate understanding or that you care about them. For example, a daughter says to her mother: “Mama you never have time for me! You are always working and doing things for other people”.

**ACTIVE REPLY**

“It sounds like you are really frustrated that I am so busy and you are missing me. When do you wish I was around the most? Let’s try to find a way to spend more time together.”

**DEFENSIVE REPLY**

“But I am working so that I can make money to send you to school, buy your clothes and your food!”

Sometimes this is remembered by the LISTEN mnemonic.

L - LOOK interested, get interested.
I - INVOLVE yourself by responding.
These activities give students the opportunity to develop the ability to become more aware of the processes and outcomes of globalisation. This will, in turn, help them to see themselves as individuals within a global community and to develop an appreciation of how they are not isolated but, in fact, valuable and valued citizens of the world. When we think about global awareness we want to encourage students to be proud of the things that make their communities unique while at the same time recognising the things that they share with their peers around the world. It is important that students are able to see the diversity of the world in which they live—not only being aware of things that are similar between different people, traditions and countries, but also being confident about exploring differences between them.

**Global Awareness**

These activities give students the opportunity to develop a full range of skills to do with information technology, so that they are confident using online tools, personal computers,smart phones, tablets, email, online communities, social media, digital cameras etc. It is important that students are able to use these tools appropriately to develop positive relationships with one another, and in an imaginative way that enables them to make positive contributions to the experiences of others. At the same time, students should be able to make well-informed and discriminating judgments about the material that they encounter online. They should be able to separate the trustworthy sources from the untrustworthy, and the informative from the manipulative.

**ICT & Global Citizenship**

These activities give students the opportunity to develop leadership skills. It is important to consider that leadership, in this context, should be understood as a skill that enables students to empower and support their classmates or global partners. Examples of such activities might include giving good thoughtful feedback to a partner, working in a pair to support a classmate develop understanding, working to engage one’s broader community with issues explored through these resources or working with partners in a school across the globe.

**Leadership**

These activities give students the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills that will allow them to find alternatives to conflict when they disagree. Essentials of Dialogue enables students to explore similarity with their global peers, but also (more importantly) to explore difference—being able to articulate proudly their own points of view, as well as being able to challenge one another, both confidently and respectfully, where they disagree. It is important to remember that we all encounter difference, not just in global dialogue but also in our own classrooms and sometimes that this can be a greater challenge.

**Living with Difference**

When teaching any new skill to students we are ultimately aiming to help them achieve mastery; that is to say they should be able to perform the skill at a high standard with ease. It is important to recognise that different people acquire skills at different speeds (and many of our students will be starting their journey towards such mastery at different points). It is always best to break the skill down into small chunks, model it for our students (so they know what it looks like) and then get them to practise it a number of times (so they are really able to develop mastery). Our resources have been designed to help students revisit these key skills frequently, so that they are able to master them. Experience suggests that this repeated practise is critical if students are to actually develop these skills; discussing them will not have the same impact. To use the analogy of another skill set—learning to play the piano—one can attend a detailed lecture on playing the piano and have a good intellectual understanding but, in order to actually be a good piano player, regular practise is the key to success. If we reflect on the way that we approach skills in the classroom, then this analogy is important.

**Religious Literacy**

Students will also have opportunities to develop the ability to become more aware of the significance of religious belief, faith and traditions as a force in contemporary global society. Students will also have opportunities to develop an understanding of diversity within traditions as well as exploring and understanding a spectrum of perspectives—including both those of a range of religious believers and those with secular worldviews.

**Practise Makes Perfect**

It is good to spend some time reflecting upon the way that your students work with some of these skills, and a useful way of doing this is by using the checklist below. You can also use the What is My Dialogue Score? questionnaire (see page 18) with students to identify the skills that they most need to develop.

**Dialogue Checklist**

Use this useful checklist to assess your students’ dialogue skills and to map their progress as they develop these skills.

**Attitude**

- My students are open to learning about the lives, values and beliefs of others
- My students have a healthy level of curiosity
- They are confident to share their own lives, values and beliefs with others
- They can suspend judgments in favour of listening with open hearts, minds, eyes and ears
- They are concerned to find solutions to shared problems.
- They are able to make others in the dialogue feel safe enough to share personal thoughts

**SPEAKING**
- My students speak for themselves and not on behalf of others in dialogue (using 'I' instead of 'we')
- My students can give good descriptions, details and explanations when speaking about their communities, cultures, faiths, beliefs and values
- They can speak from the heart and are not reliant on prepared statements and text
- They do not use 'them' and 'us' language or make unfair comments about those not represented in the dialogue.
- They can go beyond describing and explaining events and features to sharing 'meaning' and 'significance'
- They can frame questions within the context of their own experiences

**LISTENING**
- My students show respectful and attentive body language when in dialogue with others
- My students can process what they hear to ask questions that clarify, challenge and seek a deeper understanding
- They can focus on the 'other' in the dialogue without being distracted by the teacher, their peers or others
- My students listen carefully, process and reflect before speaking again in order to avoid spontaneous responses that might be ill-thought through

**RESPONDING**
- My students can ask questions that are open-ended and that seek meaning and significance
- My students can ask questions formed by what they hear from others to further their understanding
- They are able to ask questions that explore meaning and significance
- They can articulate how they feel on hearing something from someone else
- They can show that they value the ideas, experiences and beliefs of others even when they do not agree with them
- They are able to respond empathetically to others
- They can challenge others in the dialogue in a way that is respectful and open

**REFLECTING**
- My students are able to identify the major influences on their lives, behaviour, beliefs and thinking
- My students are able to place themselves in the local, national and global communities and understand how they contribute to these groups
- They can find differences as well as similarities between their own lives, values and beliefs and those of others
- They can articulate clearly what they have learned about the 'other' through their dialogue with them, focusing on specific points
- They are able to reflect on their own skills of dialogue (and those of others) and consider how these could be improved in the future
- They can explain how their learning through dialogue may impact their behaviour or choices in the future
OBJECTIVE

By the end of this lesson, your students should know how to identify the skills of dialogue, understand how to move to deeper dialogue by asking response questions and have experienced reflecting upon their own skills.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Students are familiar with and practising the use of a range of dialogue skills.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The worksheets that accompany the activities below can be found at the end of the lesson.

STARTER ACTIVITY 1

MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

PURPOSE

This activity encourages students to reflect upon and analyse what they already instinctively know – that there are different ways of speaking for different audiences. Taking part in dialogue is another of these distinct ways of speaking. This activity also gives all students the opportunity to practise speaking and listening. The purpose of this exercise is to practise the different ways that students adapt the way that they speak to different audiences, and then to reflect upon the differences (the key learning is that they adapt what they say, and how they say it to the appropriate audience).

RESOURCES

Worksheet 2.1: Mind Your Language role cards

STEP 1

Prepare for this activity by printing out the Mind Your Language role cards. The role cards detail a number of different social roles that students may sometimes relate to.

STEP 2

You will need to have a number of discussion topics up on the board; these could include:

- My day at school
- What I do for fun
- The place I would most like to visit
- My favourite book (or movie)
- What I believe happens when we die

STEP 3

Each student has one of the role cards. Ask students to partner up. Students tell each other what their assigned roles are (it doesn’t matter if they are the same).

STEP 4

Person A chooses one of the topics that you have written up on the board and is given one minute to explain it to person B – as though Person B were the person on their card. After one minute, the roles are reversed.

STEP 5

Then students do one WWW and one EBI (see page 13) for their partners, then swap cards, find new partners and repeat. We suggest allowing everyone to practise this two or three times.

STEP 6

Finish with class discussion to bring it together. What have they learned? The key idea is that there are different ways of speaking according to whom you are speaking. Therefore there are particular ways of speaking that are appropriate for video-conferences.

STARTER ACTIVITY 2

ROUND THE ROOM

PURPOSE

This is a very useful activity to help students to reflect upon how to build upon one another’s points without repeating. It also helps students to develop their listening and thinking skills.

STEP 1

Sit students in a circle around the room and select a topic. Some suggestions might include:

- Our town
- Our school
- Our community
- A festival that we celebrate

STEP 2

Each student has to make one point about the topic but nobody is allowed to repeat what anyone else has said. As the topic travels around the circle, it should be gaining new ideas.

NOTE

Encourage students to:

- Identify where someone repeats an idea
- Identify when contributors take understanding for granted, when someone from outside your community might not understand.
- Put forward alternative points of view (“so and so said this, but I think something different...”)
- Develop depth by adding personal perspectives (“this is important to me because...”)
MAIN ACTIVITY 1
OFFENSIVE OR OK?

PURPOSE
This activity expands the point made in the starter, and helps students to realise that the way they say things, tone of voice and body language, may also be critical in creating an impression amongst their hearers.

RESOURCES
Worksheet 2.2: Offensive or OK?
Worksheet 2.3: Rights Respecting Sentence Starters

STEP 1
Hand out copies of the Offensive or OK? worksheet, one for each pair of students (this resource may require re-working to make it optimally culturally relevant).

STEP 2
Ask students to work with their partner and have a general discussion about a random topic. For example, discuss favourite books, TV programmes, sports teams. During the course of this discussion they should try out as many of the phrases as they can. Emphasise that this is acting; they should be pretending that they disagree with one another, so they should try to be firm.

STEP 3
Then ask students to do some individual reflections: “Consider how these statements feel when they are used towards you...” Students can also include how it felt when someone used one of these terms to them in the past.

STEP 4
Students can then share their ideas using the Sharing Our Ideas activity (see page 11). You can also explore with some whole class feedback.

STEP 5
Then, working in pairs, students split the words/phrases on the worksheet Offensive or OK? into sets of phrases. Tick the ones that it would be appropriate to use, cross out the ones that would not and put question marks next to the ones about which you are not sure. Various points will certainly emerge from discussion, so listen out for them as you travel round the room but be prepared to ask questions to elicit these points.

The appropriateness of most of the statements depends upon:
• The context
• The tone of voice
• Body language

What could make the phrases take on a different meaning? Say a phrase with inappropriate body language, tone or phrasing. This is an exercise in tone and body language. Students should role-play some of the phrases experimenting with how they are sitting or standing when saying them or how they are making eye contact or what they are doing with their arms (paired/group or whole class activity). This would work best if the teacher models this with another member of staff or a volunteer from the class before students pair off. Then ask each pair of students to model one example for the rest of the class.

EXTENSION
When speaking to others about sensitive issues, what are the important things to remember? Two large sheets of paper, one for best words and one for words to avoid, are placed at opposite ends of the room with a student in charge of each of them. The class offers words/terms which are then listed on the appropriate poster. These posters can be typed up and used as a resource for the rest of the module. It may also be helpful to refer to the Rights Respecting Sentence Starters worksheet.

MAIN ACTIVITY 2
WE’RE ALL INTERVIEWEES

PURPOSE
This activity enables everyone to take part equally, limiting the enthusiastic (encouraging them to be focused) and encouraging those who would prefer to be quiet, while ensuring that all students play a full part in both speaking and listening. This activity can be used to:
• Improve questioning skills, particularly by developing students’ ability to ask response questions.
• Improve listening skills by adding subsequent questioning.
• Prepare for videoconferences. Use it to help students prepare for the introductory ice-breaker activity.

STEP 1
Get students working in groups, ideally of four. Within their groups students should know in which order they are going. This is most easily arranged by giving each person a number, depending upon where they are sitting.

STEP 2
Students are asked questions by their group on a topic selected by the teacher. This activity has two key roles:
• Interviewee: the person answering the questions. They should be standing up and should answer questions from the rest of their group for one minute.
• Interviewers: the rest of the group are interviewers. Their job is to keep the questions coming and ensure that the person being interviewed keeps going for the whole time.

The questions should be:
• Open: encouraging longer, imaginative and personal responses: “Can you tell me more about...?” “How do you feel about...?”
• rather than Closed: questions which can be answered with simple or short responses: “Is your name Robert?”
The questions could be:
- **Response questions**: Building upon what they have already heard from that person.

**STEP 3**
At the end of the minute the next person stands up to be interviewed, until everyone in the group has had a turn.

**STEP 4**
When the activity is over encourage students to:
- Reflect upon what they’ve discussed (write down your best 2/5 ideas)
- Share their ideas with a new partner
- Provide positive feedback to their group

**MAIN ACTIVITY 3**
**ASKING RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

**PURPOSE**
This is one of the critical skills of dialogue, and may seem self-evident, yet it is something that many students will need to practise regularly before they become really good at it. This is a simple activity which enables them to practise this core skill. This is a very important skill for students in any dialogue videoconference and can make the difference between a disconnected series of questions and a proper dialogue. This is an activity that students need to practise in order to build up their skills; it probably won’t just occur spontaneously.

**RESOURCES**
Worksheet 2.4: Response Questions
Worksheet 2.5: Thinking About the Video

**STEP 1**
Introduce by starting students off on the activity We’re All Interviewees (see previous activity). Group students into groups of four and get them to start the interview using a simple question like “Which celebrations are important to me?”

**STEP 2**
After two students in each group have had their turn introduce the idea of the second question to students by having them refer to the two diagrams on the Response Questions worksheet. Ask them which one is better in terms of generating information.

**STEP 3**
Get them to go back to the We’re All Interviewees exercise, but to practise the last two interviews making sure that they use this methodology.

**EXTENSION**
There are some excellent video resources to help students think about asking good questions and building dialogue with response questions. Why not get them to watch the videos for homework before discussing them in the lesson? Use the note taking sheet below to help students focus their viewing. You can find two helpful videos here:
- Asking response questions: youtu.be/lcDMB5sFCWc
- Using questions to build dialogue: youtu.be/idULdd2cEk

**MAIN ACTIVITY 4**
**ACTIVE LISTENING**

**PURPOSE**
Listening is probably the most central skill for good dialogue but it is something that many students think of as a passive activity; it’s important to get them thinking of it as something active.

**NOTE**
Be sure you introduce the methodology outlined in the theory section before getting students to practise the active listening exercises below. These three exercises require students to work together. One good way to approach this is to divide the class into groups of three, so every time an exercise is done, there is someone to WWW/EBI what has happened. Make sure that the observer role is changed round and that everyone has a go at each exercise.

**STEP 1**
REPEAT: Person A says one short paragraph, Person B repeats it word for word. If they can’t repeat it word for word, try doing the exercise with a shorter sentence until they can repeat it word for word. Take turns at doing the ‘repeat’ exercise. This is a warm up to prepare them for the next exercises.

**STEP 2**
PARAPHRASE: Sit face to face with someone else. Person A says a short sentence, Person B listens and then paraphrases using similar words and sentence structure. Rearrange the words or substitute words to give the message back to you partner. The observer should judge if the message is still the same – they need to get a balance between paraphrasing or repeating. If the observer tells you that you are just repeating, try to move words around and to replace them with synonyms until you can successfully paraphrase what your speaker has said. Take turns with your partner, practise this paraphrasing exercise until you both feel you are good at paraphrasing a message.

**STEP 3**
REFLECT: This exercise requires full concentration and attention. Sit face to face with a partner. First observe the facial expression, the mood, the gaze of the other person. Person A says something that Person B should then reflect back to them in their own words. Ask your partner if you reflected the message correctly. Ask him if you were in tune with his feelings and mood. If you successfully completed this exercise, your (reflective) listening will make your partner feel listened to and understood by you.

Keep doing these exercises, especially the reflective listening exercises for as many times as you think necessary to master this listening skill.
MAIN ACTIVITY 5

ASKer ANALYSIS 1

PURPOSE
To get students to reflect more deeply on the quality of their questions, and some of the baggage that they might be bringing to the process of asking questions.

ASSUMPTION: What are the assumptions ‘hidden’ in this question? What does it reveal about the way that the questioner thinks?

STATEMENT OR QUESTION: Is this really a question or is it a statement in disguise? Very often things that seem to be questions are actually statements about “What I think”, rather than trying to find out “What you think”!

KEY WORDS: Which words would you remove or replace? Which can be understood differently? Which could you use as a way into the answer?

REPHRASE: How can you rewrite this question?

This activity is not about getting the perfect question it is about getting students to think about asking better questions.

STEP 1
Ask students to prepare a number of questions that they would like to ask in the videoconference (this could be set as homework).

STEP 2
Introduce ASKeR methodology and get each student to work with a partner to identify their best question.

STEP 3
Write that question at the top of a piece of paper. Hand in sheets and distribute to another pair.

STEP 4
Each pair then spends five minutes doing an ASKeR analysis, writing down their best version of the question underneath.

STEP 5
Pass papers on and re-analyse (this step can be repeated several times).

STEP 6
Return sheets to point of origin. Students can then reflect upon how they could improve their question. You might like to ‘prime the pump’, using an example question like one of these:

• If God loves you, why is he always telling you what to do?
• How do you know how to act without a religion to show you the way?

REFLECTION ACTIVITY 1

KEEP IT UNDER YOUR HAT

PURPOSE
This activity is a light-hearted way to encourage students to remember the key skills that they have worked on in this session.

RESOURCES
Worksheet 2.6: Origami Hat Instructions

STEP 1
Using Origami Hat Instructions, each student makes a thinking cap to remind them of their responsibilities when speaking to people of different faiths or cultures. Students should work in pairs to encourage discussion (and informal peer assessment) while they are completing their hats.

STEP 2
They can use both words and symbols to decorate them. On the outside they write the words and phrases that they should use and reminders about tone and body language. On the inside, they write the things that they should try to avoid.

STEP 3
About half way through the activity get students to pair up (with a random partner) and do a two point WWW/EBI analysis of each other’s work.

STEP 4
Once most people have finished then encourage students to move freely about the room and talk to students they would not normally work with. Don’t worry about noise level. As you move, use prompts like:

• What do you like about…?
• Which is the best point/ phrase you have seen…?
• Have you seen anything you agree/ disagree with…?

Use the completed hats as display material.

1 Developed by the Three Faiths Forum, www.3ff.org.uk, used with permission.
WORKSHEET 2.1
MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

YOUR PRINCIPAL/HEAD TEACHER
A GRANDPARENT
A VISITING VIP

A YOUNGER BROTHER OR SISTER
YOUR MOTHER
YOUR CLASS TEACHER

YOUR BEST FRIEND
ONE OF YOUR GRANDMOTHER’S FRIENDS
AN EXCHANGE STUDENT FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY
THAT IS AN INTERESTING POINT

DO YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT?

I HATE...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR OPINION

CAN YOU SEE IT FROM MY POINT OF VIEW?

YOU MAKE AN INTERESTING POINT

I DISAGREE...

YOU'RE WRONG

THAT'S RUBBISH

CAN YOU EXPLAIN THAT TO ME AGAIN?

THAT JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

WE'LL HAVE TO AGREE TO DISAGREE

YOU MUST BE JOKING?

I SEE IT DIFFERENTLY

THAT IS SILLY

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE SAYING

WORKSHEET 2.2

OFFENSIVE OR OK?
WORKSHEET 2.3
RIGHTS RESPECTING SENTENCE STARTERS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR OPINION...

I AGREE WITH YOUR POINT ABOUT...

I CAN SEE THAT...

A STRENGTH IN THAT ARGUMENT IS...

I LIKE THAT IDEA BECAUSE...

ARE YOU SAYING THAT...

ANOTHER WAY OF LOOKING AT IT IS...

MY FAITH TEACHES ME THAT...

I'M NOT CONVINCED THAT...

WHAT MAKES YOU HAVE THE OPINION THAT...

WHAT BELIEFS UNDERPIN...

A WEAKNESS IN THAT ARGUMENT IS...

I DON’T THINK THAT WOULD WORK BECAUSE...
Response Questions are better because:

1. You have to listen carefully
2. Questions respond to what is being said
3. Dialogue flows – it is not ‘stop and start’
4. Dialogue can grow

**QUESTION**

Why did you become a volunteer?

**ANSWER**

I wanted to help people because of my faith as a Muslim.

**QUESTION**

Can you tell us about your experience in Africa?

**ANSWER**

I was amazed by it and found it really powerful.

**QUESTION**

As a Muslim why do you think it is important to work with people from other faiths?

**ANSWER**


All these questions can be asked by the original person or by someone else...

**QUESTION**

Why did you become a volunteer?

**ANSWER**

I wanted to help people because of my faith as a Muslim.

**QUESTION**

Can you tell us why it is important for you as a Muslim to help other people?

**ANSWER**
WORKSHEET 2.5
THINKING ABOUT THE VIDEO

Five things that I have learned from the video:

1
2
3
4
5

Three key questions that I want to discuss are:

1
2
3

A target I want to set myself is...
ORAGAMI HAT INSTRUCTIONS

For an origami pirate hat you will need:
• One largish piece of paper
• Sticky tape may be useful
• Black felt pen

**STEP 1**
Fold the piece of paper in half, so you have a rectangular piece of paper with the long folded edge at the top.

**STEP 2**
Fold in the corners as in the diagram so the edges meet to form two triangles.

**STEP 3**
Fold up the bottom edge of the paper so it meets the bottom edge of the two triangles.

**STEP 4**
Fold up the bottom edge again, with the fold line running along the bottom edge of the triangles.

**NOTE**
You may find it helpful to use a little tape to keep it together.