

GALWAD

COMMUNICATING WITHOUT WORDS

**AN OUTDOOR ACTIVITY TO EXPLORE
HOW WE COMMUNICATE TAKING
INSPIRATION FROM NATURE**



Eco-Schools



Eco-Sgolon



cadwch keep
gymru'n wales
daclus tidy

bees to communicate complex information to each other regarding the direction and distance of a flower patch's location. See the [incredible Waggle Dance in this BBC video \(youtube.com\)](#)

Activity

Before starting the activity, discuss how we communicate with each other. Experts suggest that 60% of how we communicate is done without words, so in the tone of our voice, our body language and facial expressions.

With this in mind, is it possible to communicate effectively without words? Think about people who are D/deaf, or someone who is non-speaking or non-verbal; they can still communicate but in a different way.

Think about how we could communicate with someone who speaks a different language. How else could you communicate a welcoming message without using words?

Most species in nature have developed a way to effectively communicate without words. To explore this further we can take some inspiration from the honeybee:

- In a suitable outdoors space for moving around freely, set up a series of 10 beakers (or any similar container) around the playing space, a good distance apart. If some can be hidden from obvious view (e.g. behind a tree, in longer grass) that makes the game more interesting. These beakers are your flowers.
- In each flower pour some water – this represents the nectar of the flower. Add different amounts to each flower, including leaving some flowers dry.
- Split the pupils into equal teams along a start line. Ideally set the teams up so they are not facing the area where the flowers are – they cannot see where their team-mates are heading and instead need to communicate all the information needed. The pupils line up behind each other in their teams with a larger beaker at the front – this beaker is their collection pot (their hive). Each team also have a table spoon (or plastic pipette if you prefer).
- The challenge is for each team to send one person out at a time to collect water (the nectar) from the beakers (the flowers) using their spoons or pipettes. Once a team member has returned from collecting nectar and placed it into the collecting pot, the next team member heads out, relay style. The game runs for as long as you want, but around five minutes works well.

- The winning team is the team that has collected the most nectar in their collection pots (this can be measured with a measuring cylinder, or by measuring depth of water using a ruler).

Naturally team members who have been out collecting nectar will want to pass on information to their team members as to which flowers have the most water, which are dry etc so the team doesn't waste time visiting the flowers with low / no nectar.

This is where the communication challenge comes in – explain that the teams are not allowed to speak during the game, and instead have to come up with their own form of communication to explain to each other which flowers are best to visit. They will need movements for North/East/South/ West (or Forwards/Left/Right/Back), and to explain distance away.

An explanation of how bees communicate to each other through the Waggle Dance can be used as inspiration, but allow the pupils to come up with their own communication strategies.

You can initially start by allowing talking and then move on to the communication challenge or head straight to the no talking version, depending on your pupils. As well as the winning team being the one with the most nectar collected, teams can be congratulated on best communication skills, most interesting communication technique etc.

Variations on the game

Instead of the flower beakers holding water, they can hold different coloured cards (each flower holding a different colour and some with none) and teams have to collect the seven colours of the rainbow. They need to communicate to each other which flower to head to collect a particular colour without talking is the challenge. To increase the difficulty of the game, hide the flowers in trickier places.

Reflection

Once the game has finished, discuss with pupils which parts of communicating their messages were easy and which were more challenging. Was it more frustrating being the communicator or the person receiving the message?

What skills did the team need to use in order to make their communication effective?

Could we use what we have learnt to support people who may not speak English or Welsh as their first language or who may not speak at all?

Curriculum links

Purposes

- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world.
- Enterprising, creative contributors
- Healthy, confident individuals

AOLEs and What Matters statements

Humanities

- Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human action.
- Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs.

Languages, Literacy and Communication

- Languages connect us

Global Goals



Goal 5: Gender Equality

Goal 15: Life on Land

GALWAD

UNBOXED

CREATIVITY IN THE UK



Cymru Greadigol
Creative Wales

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