

TeachingEnglish

# Managing the classroom: modern approaches

**Stella Lawson, Charlotte Kujane, Khadija  
Suleiman and Bougna Koné**

Saturday 7 February 2026

[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)



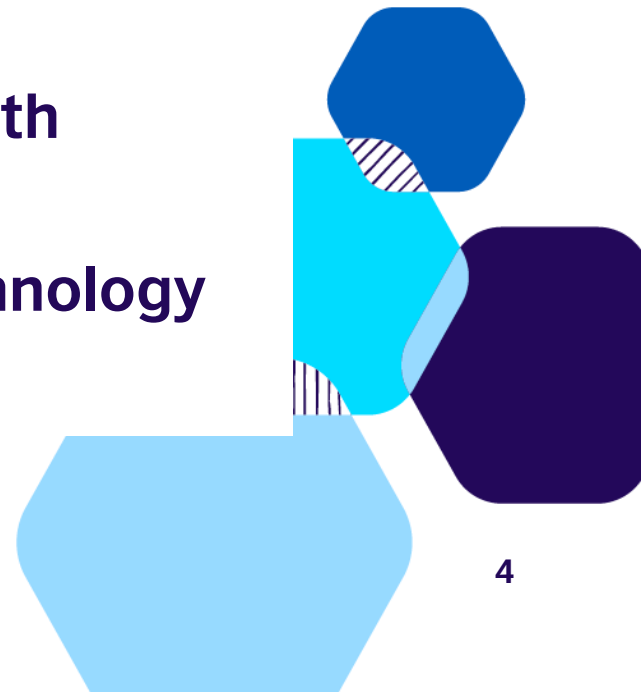
# Pre-webinar polls:

1/What most influences behaviour and lesson flow in your classroom?

- A. Learners' emotions (stress, motivation, confidence) **48%**
- B. Clarity of routines and leadership roles **24%**
- C. Classroom rules and discipline approaches **19%**
- D. Technology and device distractions **9%**

2/ Which approach do you use most often to manage learning and behaviour?

- A. Rules, consequences, positive discipline and dialogue **56%**
- B. Co-created classroom expectations **28%**
- C. Structured routines with leadership roles **12%**
- D. Intentional use of technology for learning **4%**



## About the speakers

**Stella Lawson** is an English teacher and educator from Nigeria. She teaches at the Federal University of Education, Zaria, and specializes in inclusive teaching and low-resource classrooms. She is also a UNESCO Digital Teacher and a British Council Master Trainer.



**Charlotte Kubjane** is an English teacher and departmental head from South Africa. She is passionate about improving literacy, engaging learners through interactive teaching, and developing soft skills in the classroom.

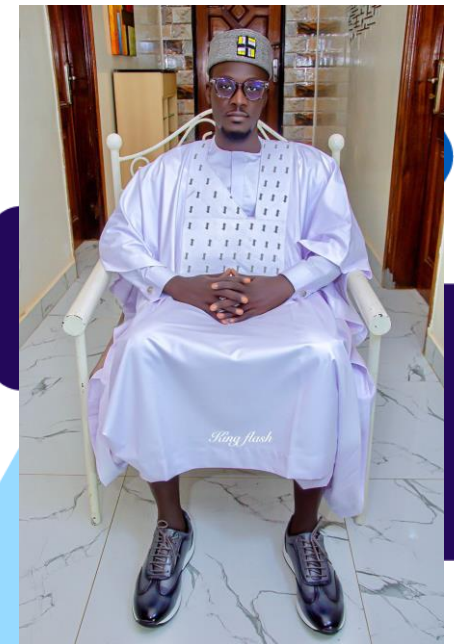


## About the speakers

**Khadija Suleiman**, Kenyan teacher and SDG champion, empowers learners by integrating English teaching with climate action and sustainable school initiatives.



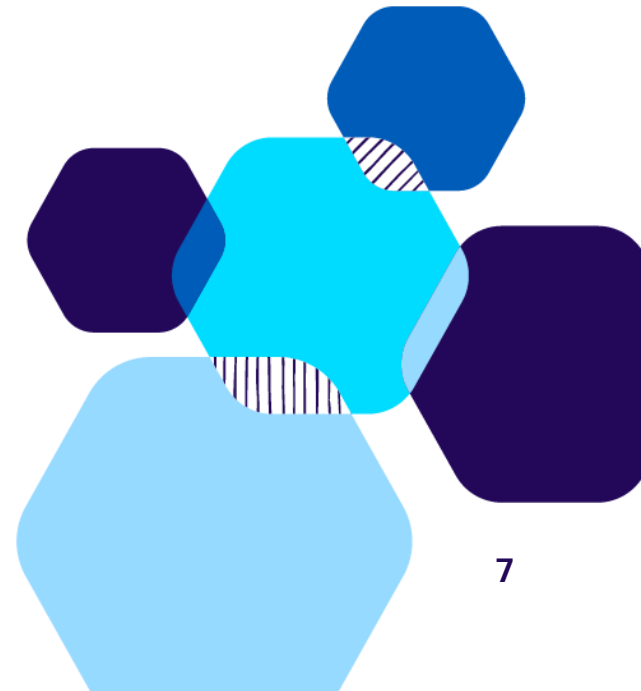
**Bougna Koné** is a Senegalese teacher and member of ATES. He has a degree, and is defending his Master thesis soon on socio-historical construction of gender in Senegal.



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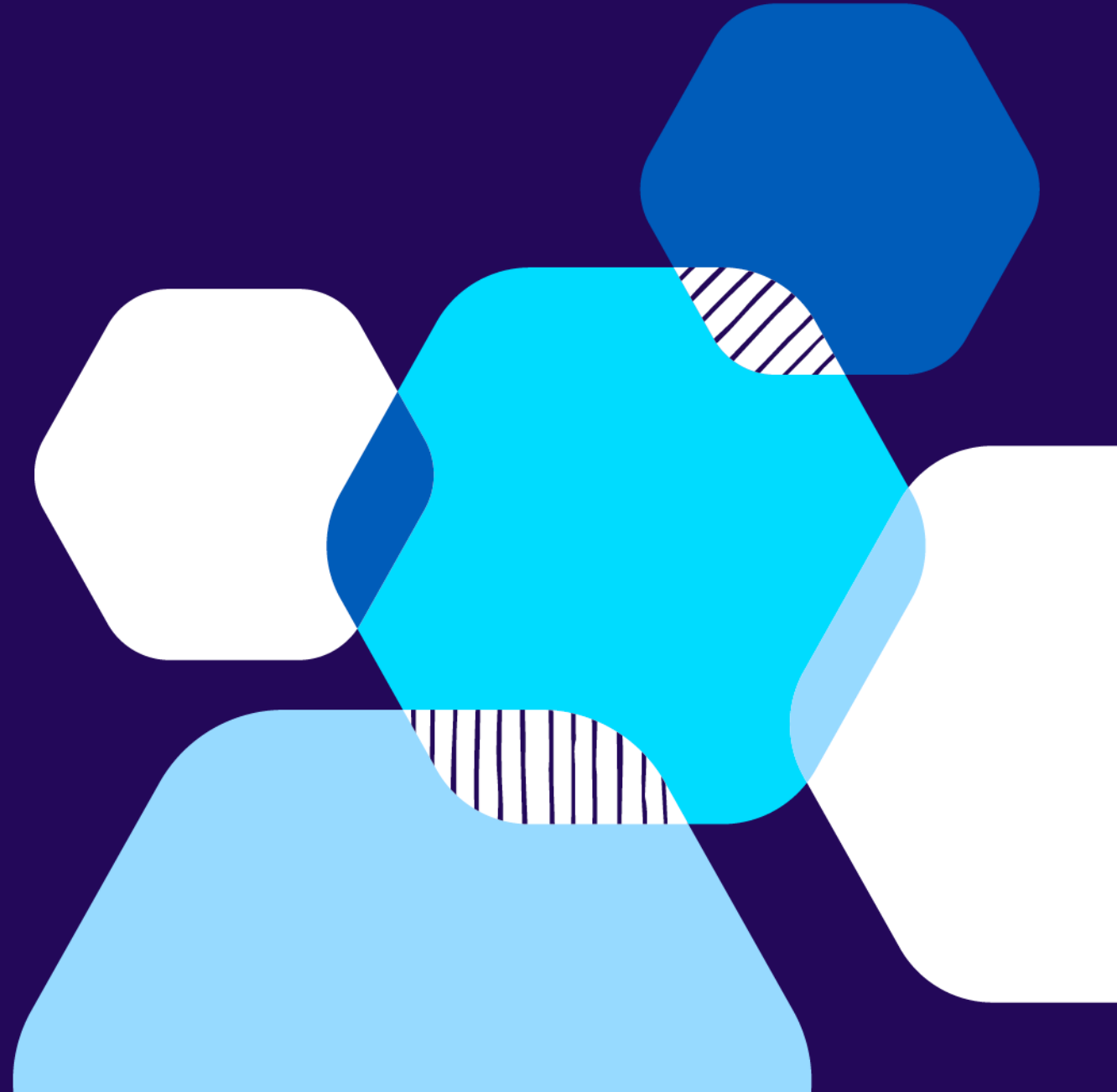
# Objectives

1. Understand the role of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in creating safe, inclusive and well-managed classrooms
2. Develop practical strategies to foster positive teacher–learner relationships that support effective learning



# Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) for Classroom Management

**Stella Lawson**



# A practical tool for effective classroom management

**Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) helps people understand and manage emotions, build positive relationships, show empathy, and make responsible decisions**



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# Why Social & Emotional Learning Matters in Classroom Management

Behaviour is communication

Behind behaviour are emotions:

Stress/Frustration/Fear

Boredom/Feeling unheard.

Emotionally safe classrooms  
= better behaviour



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# Simple SEL strategies teachers can use daily



Emotional  
check-in



Breathing /  
calm routine



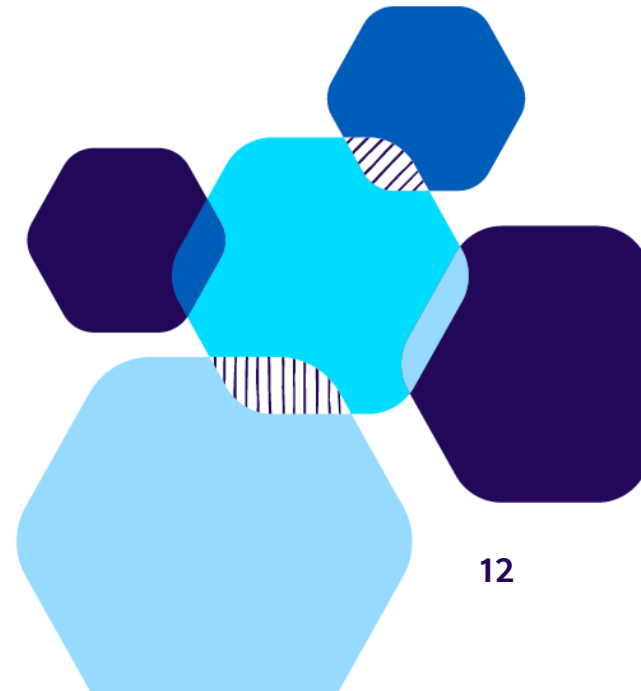
Community-  
Building  
Practices

Prevent problems before they escalate

## How SEL improve behaviour

### What teachers notice:

- Fewer emotional outbursts
- Smoother transitions
- Better focus and participation
- Less time correcting behaviour



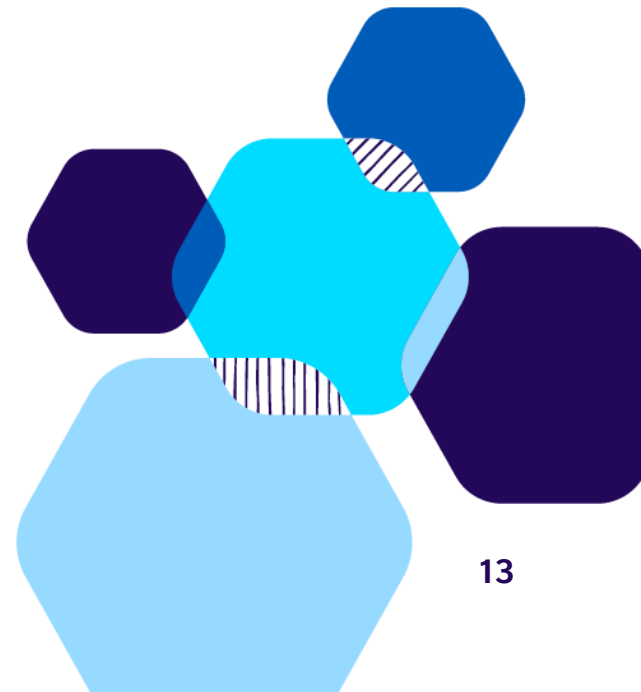
## Key point

**SEL is classroom management.**

**Managing emotions → Managing  
behaviour**

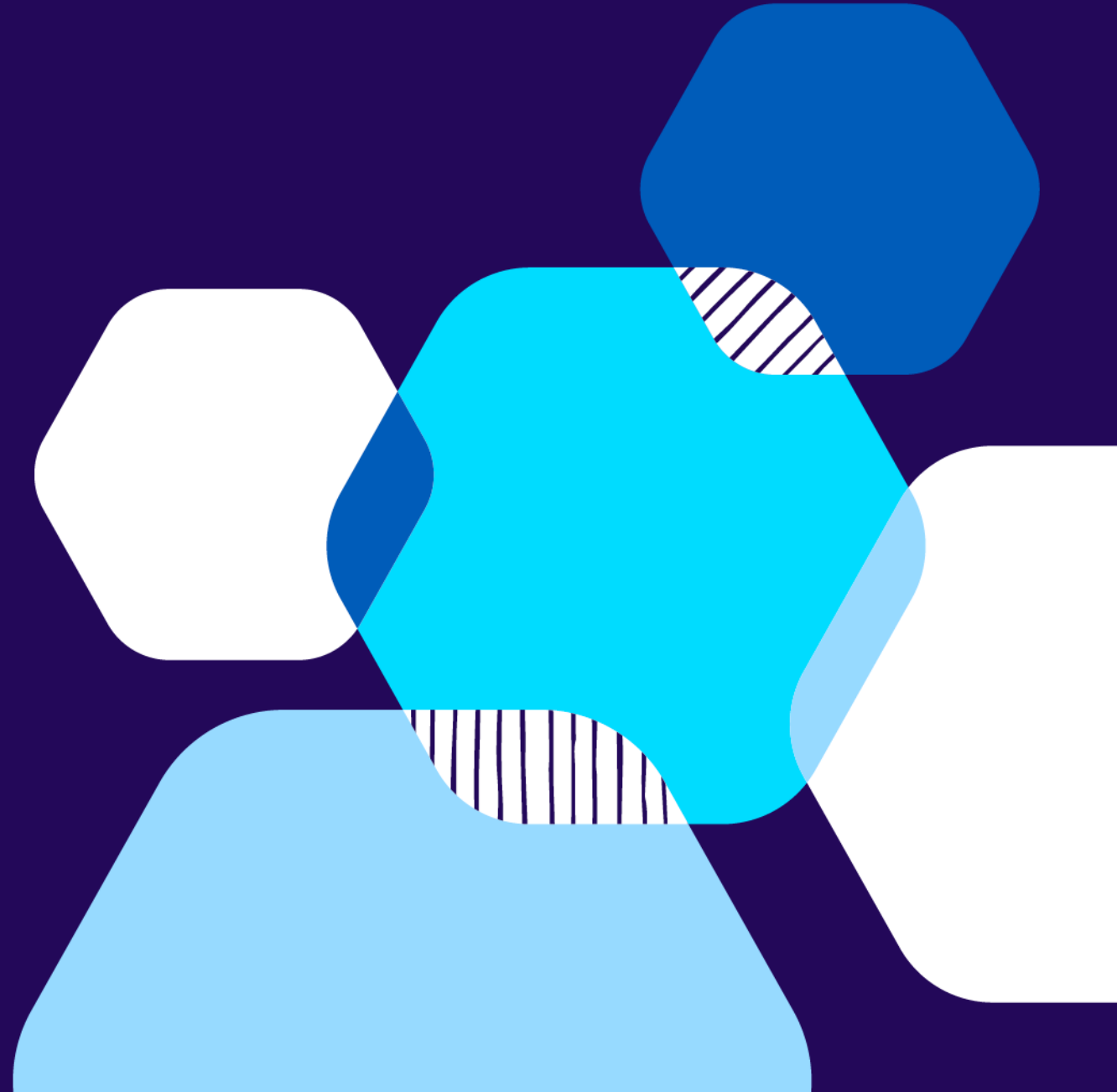
 **One strategy I will try this week:**

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# Modern Approaches Soft skills for classroom management

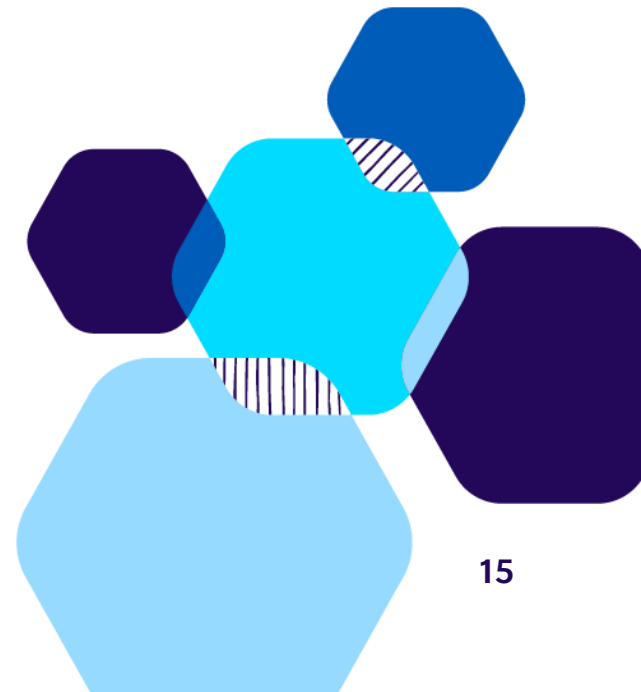
**Charlotte Kujane**



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**Current reality**

**Are your methods of  
managing a  
classroom working  
for you?**



# Soft skills

- Soft skills are a combination of character traits and interpersonal skills that influence personal and organisational aims.
- By instilling certain soft skills in learners, such as empathy, leadership, communication and collaboration, a classroom can be better managed.



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# Classroom leadership roles

- **BENEFITS**

- Giving learners leadership roles makes them more accountable.
- They play the role of mediator between the learners and the teacher.

- **STRATEGIES**

- Roles can also be diversified, e.g. materials monitor, academic guide
- Giving learners leadership roles randomly, regardless of performance or personality.
- Teacher to collaborate with learners to produce classroom rules.





# Routine and structure

- **BENEFITS**
  - Consistency in everyday activities.
  - Time management and prevents disruptions.
- **STRATEGIES**
  - Clearly define steps learners should follow entering class, during class and end of class.
  - Use gestures to indicate action to be taken.
  - Posting routines and schedules on the wall.



# Positive reinforcement

- **BENEFITS**

- Shapes desired behaviours from learners.

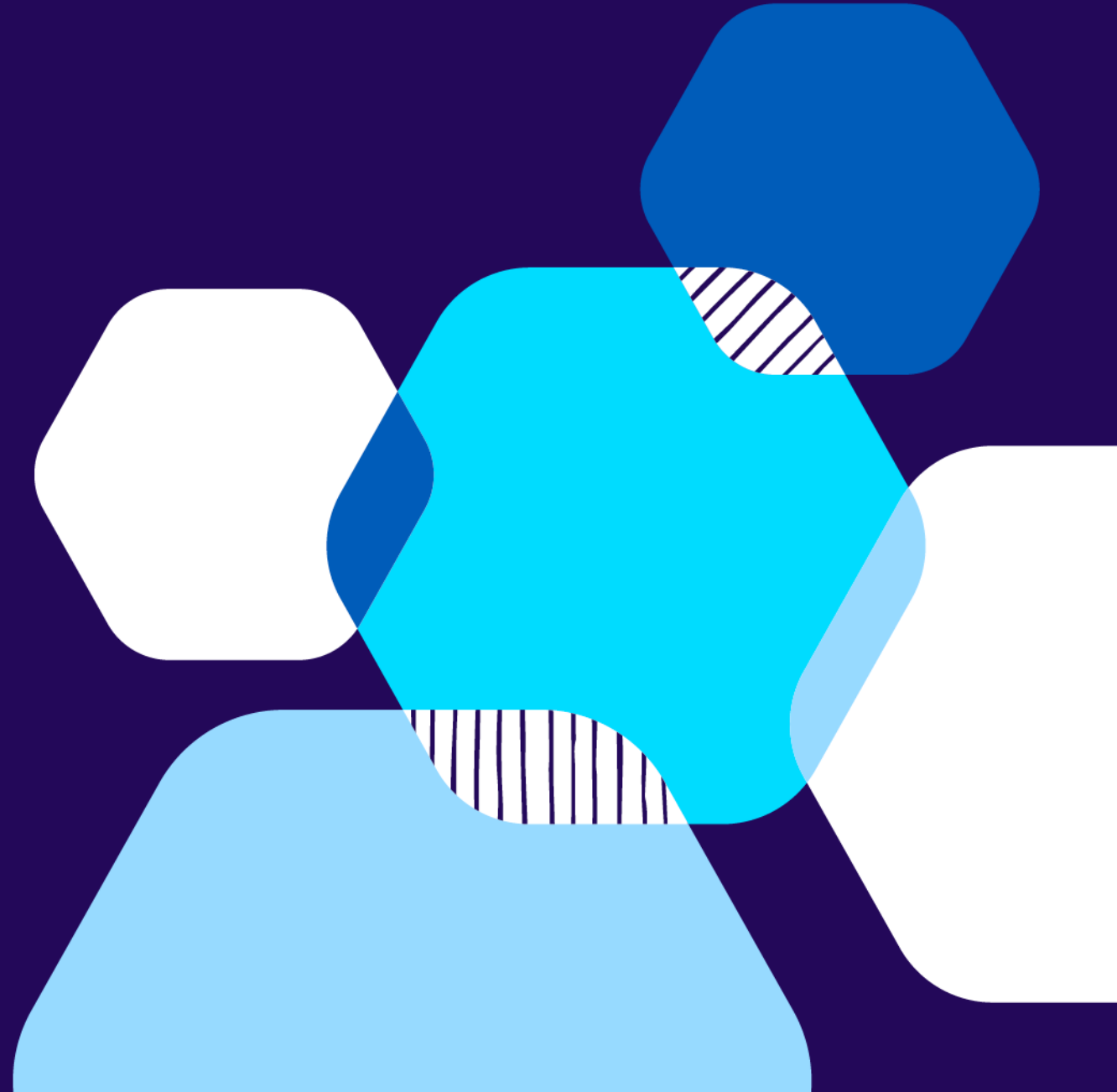
## **STRATEGIES**

- Positive praise on specific behaviour
- Merit system



# Positive discipline

**Khadija Suleiman**



# What is Positive Discipline?

A classroom management approach rooted in respect, empathy, and collaboration.

Focuses on teaching skills rather than punishing mistakes.

Encourages responsibility, problem-solving, and self-regulation.

- Positive discipline is a method of teaching appropriate behaviour by interacting with children in a kind but firm manner. (Unicef, 2017)



# Why PD Matters in ELT

Language learning thrives in safe, supportive environments.

PD reduces anxiety and increases learner confidence.

Promotes active participation and authentic communication.

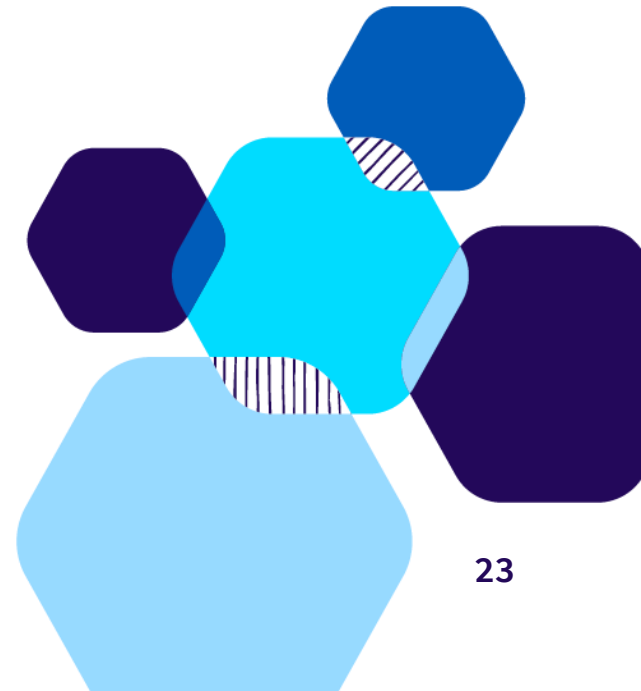


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# Relationships Before Rules

- Connection is the foundation of effective discipline.
- Learners respond better when they feel valued.
- Rules are co-created, not imposed.

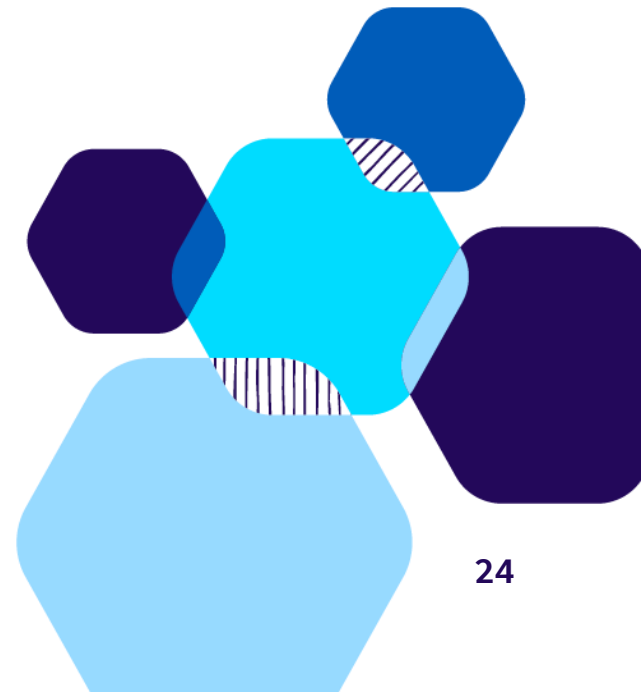
What strategies do you use to build strong relationships with your learners before introducing classroom rules?



# Encouragement Instead of Praise

- Praise focuses on judgment (“Good job”), encouragement focuses on effort and progress.
- Encouragement builds intrinsic motivation.

Language examples: “You worked hard on that essay” vs. “You’re the best student.”

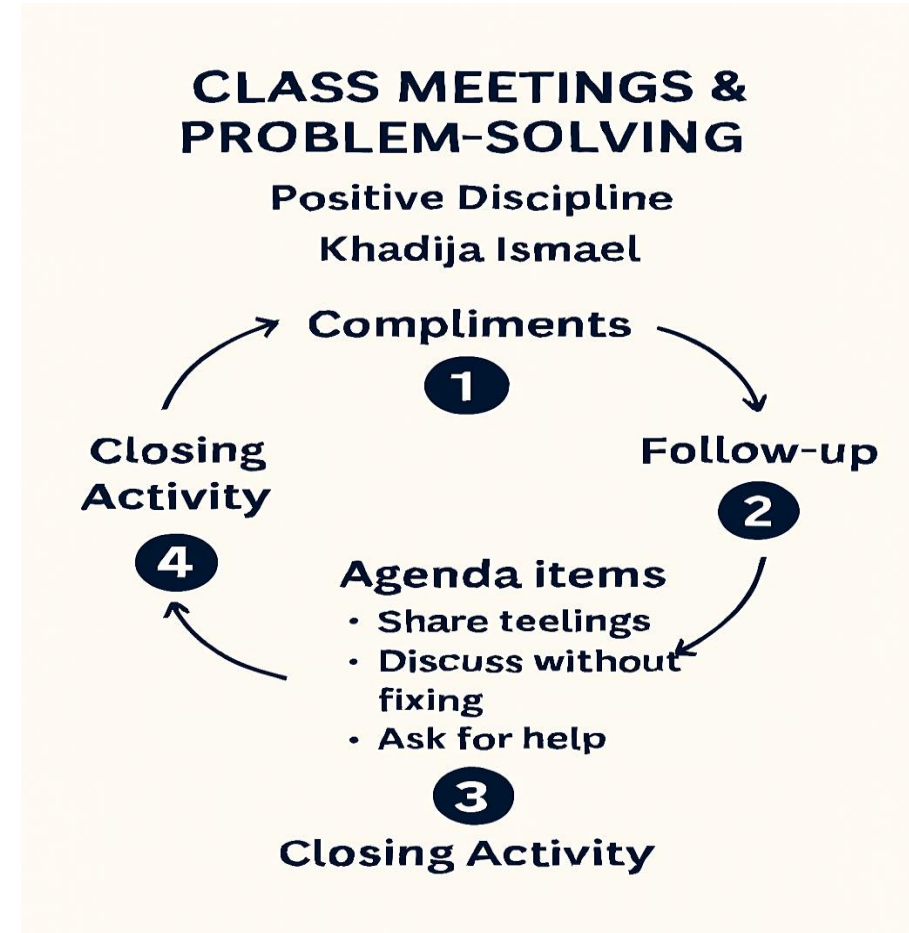




# Class Meetings & Problem-Solving Circles

- Exclusion
- Teasing or name-calling
- Group project disagreements
- Friendship conflicts
- Bullying behavior

**What challenges do *your learners* face that you think could be brought to a meeting? Please share a few examples in the chat.**

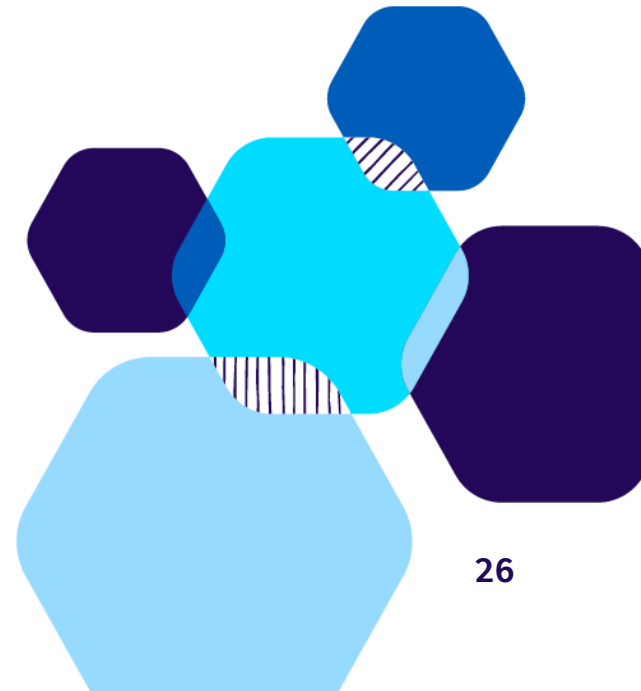


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# Guidelines for class meetings

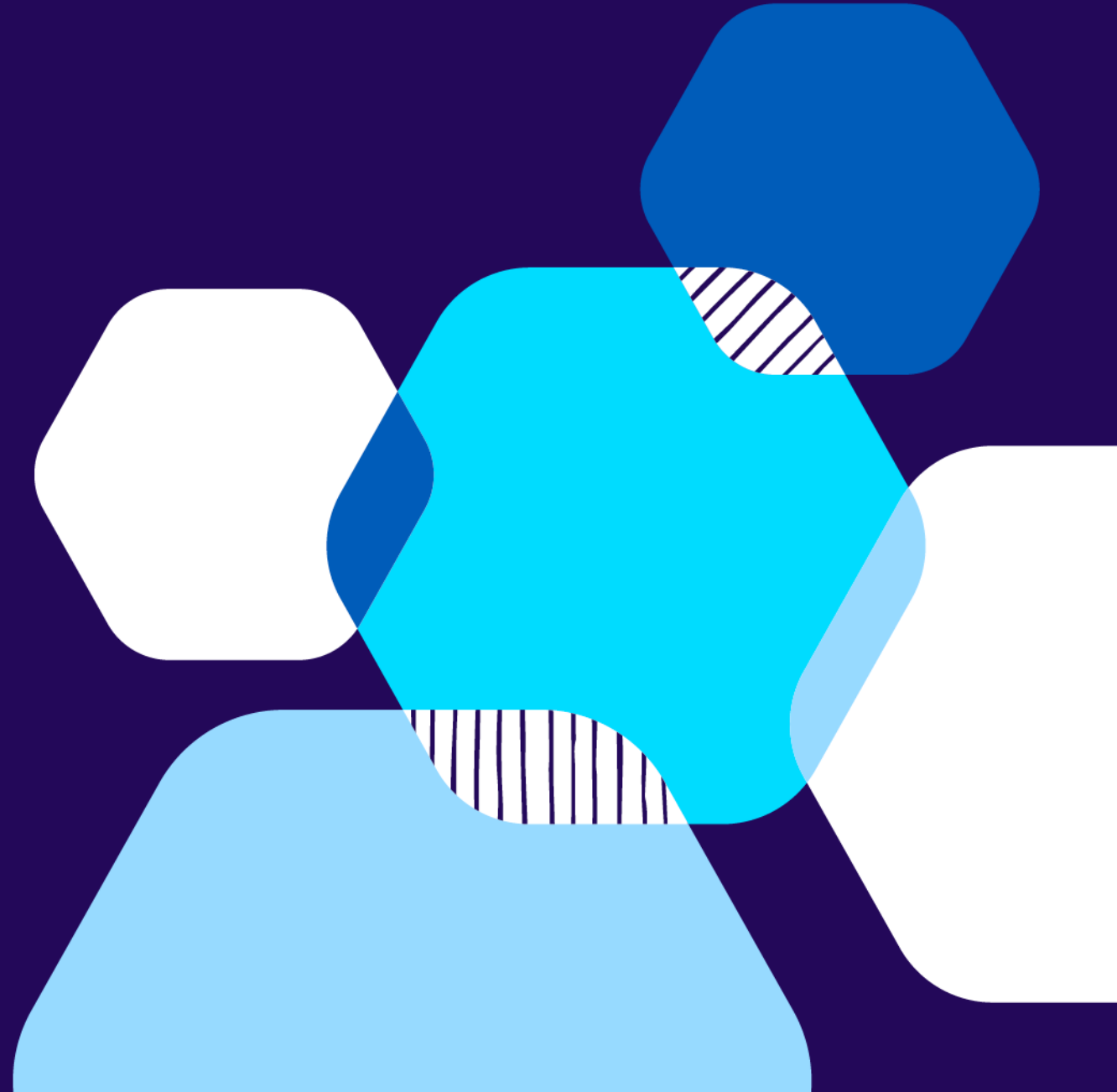
- Hold meetings regularly (1–2 times/week)
- Sit in a circle, everyone at the same level
- Start with compliments using a talking object
- Use a written agenda for problems
- Let students choose how to solve: share, discuss, or ask for help
- Focus on helpful, respectful solutions
- Follow up on past solutions
- End with a short closing activity or planning
- Keep meetings under 20 minutes

Teacher facilitates, students lead



# Co-creating a class contract

**Bougna Koné**



# Creating a class contract that works effectively

## Questions:

- a. Why have a classroom contract?
- b. What part should the teacher play?
- c. What is the contract for?



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# Why a Class Contract?

**Because it:**

- A. Builds student ownership and clearer expectations.**
- B. Reduces classroom disruptions and inconsistent responses.**
- C. Creates a predictable, restorative approach to behaviour. For instance, if so, we notice fewer interruptions (after co-creating expectations). Punishing is not always the mere or best solution.**



# What part should the teacher play?

**Teacher commitments (their role/ what to do) are illustrated by:**

- Supports and restorative responses (teaching, reteaching, repair).
- Keeping their promises to make it mutual.





# What is a class contract for/ why is it important?

**Purpose:** Create a respectful, safe space where everyone can learn

## **Expectations:**

1. Listen when others speak — stop, look, let them finish.
2. Raise your hand and wait to be called on.
3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
4. Use kind words and respectful language.
5. Come prepared and follow directions quickly.



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**Takeaway tips - before our Telegram follow-up, please look at and think about / try out some of these:**

**Social and emotional learning:**

<https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/skills/educate-other-teachers/social-emotional-learning>

**Soft skills:** <https://africa.teach>

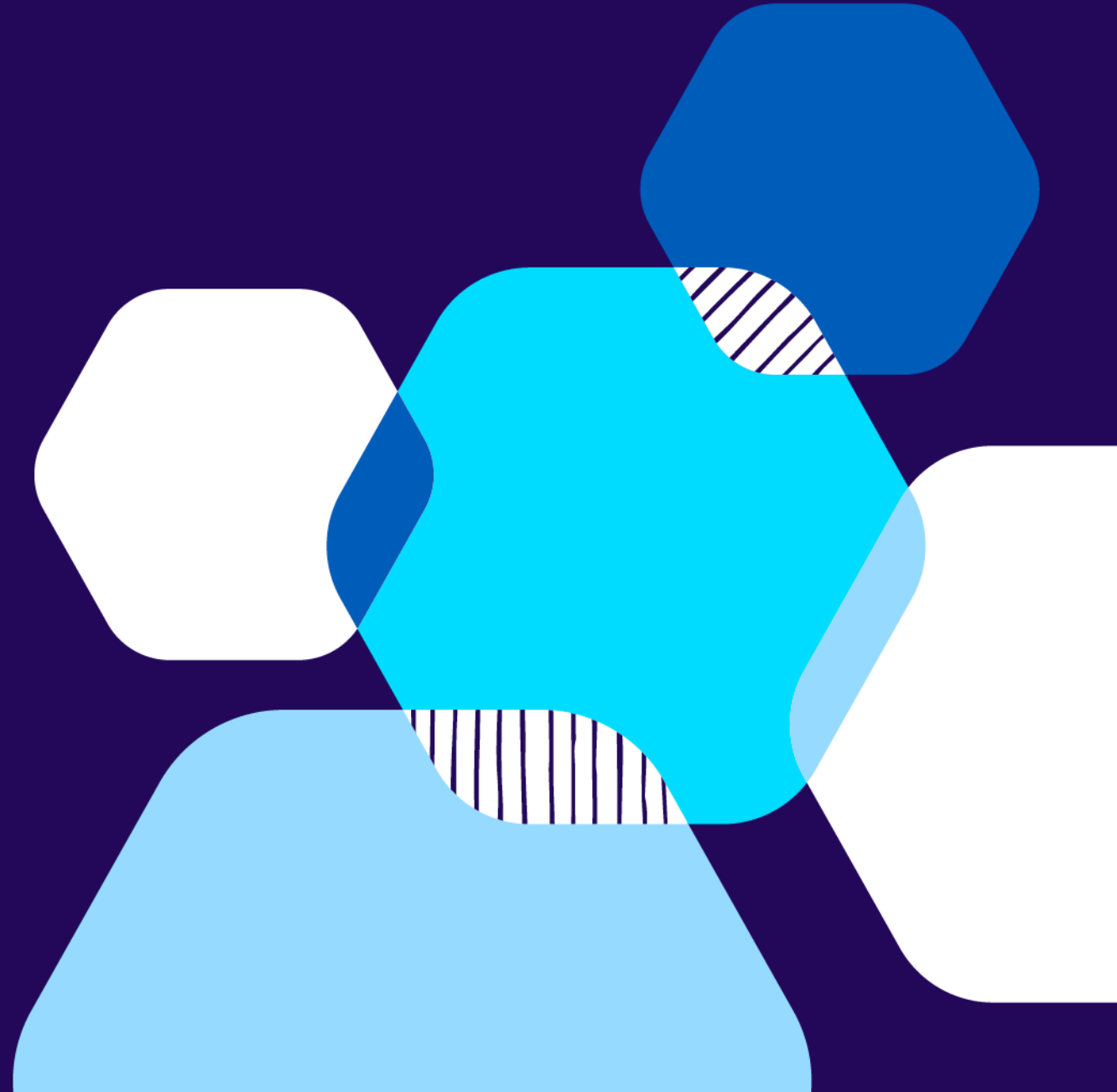
[ingenglish.org.uk/skills/educate-other-teachers/developing-soft-skills](https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/skills/educate-other-teachers/developing-soft-skills)

**Positive discipline:** <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/managing-lesson/dealing-discipline>

**Class contract:** <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/managing-lesson/establishing-ground-rules>

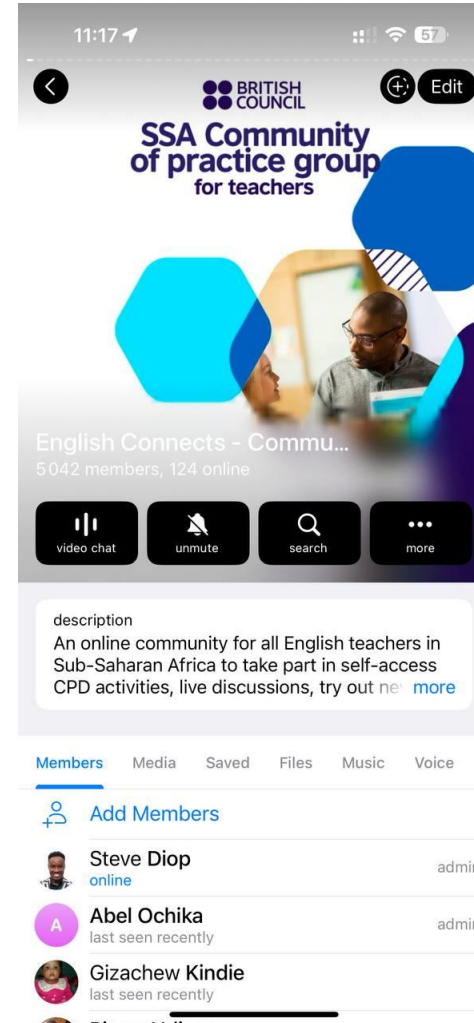


**Thank you**  
**Any questions?**



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# Next webinar

Join us on Saturday **21 February 2026** to explore practical ways to maximise learning by supporting beginners, balancing teacher- and learner-centred tasks, and strengthening learner autonomy. Register today:

<https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/events/managing-lesson-maximising-learning>



TeachingEnglish

## Managing the lesson: Maximising learning

Join us on Saturday 21 February 2026 to explore explore practical ways to maximise learning by supporting beginners, balancing teacher- and learner-centred tasks, and strengthening learner autonomy.

Click on this link to register:  
<https://bit.ly/4pUVsdb>

Unable to connect via Zoom?  
The webinar is also backed up via the Telegram app.  
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Saturday  
21 February  
2026

15.00 UTC  
16:00 Lagos  
17:00 Khartoum  
17:00 Pretoria  
18:00 Addis

