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Well-being and life skills literature lists

Introduction

Welcome to **Wellbeing and life skills literature lists**. This book contains annotated lists of fiction and some non-fiction which support a Well-being program in schools. It also fits the General Capabilities strand in the Australian curriculum with an emphasis on the Personal and Social Capability theme.

It is designed to help the busy teacher and teacher/librarian easily find books that are suitable for the curriculum under themes that will enhance well-being, social and emotional skills and life skills.

The titles have been carefully selected for their appropriateness and quality. The lists contain a range of books including many that are newly published as well as some that may already be available in the library. They also represent a range of genres. Many will have been reviewed by ReadPlus Review blog reviewers and reviews are available at <https://www.readplus.com.au/reviewsindex.php> Others will be on lists of award winning books.

Each title is annotated, giving a taste of what the book is about. Approximate age levels are given and the lists are divided into the following groups: Picture books, Primary and Secondary. However what is suitable for one child or class of children or age level may not be suitable for another child or class or age level. Teachers and teacher/librarians will need to read the books and judge the suitability for their particular clientele and school situation before using them in the classroom.

For more guidance you could use ReadPlus, an online database of fiction organised under themes. As more titles are published, they will be entered into ReadPlus, so that your lists will always be up-to-date. For more information visit <https://www.readplus.com.au>

For a trial of ReadPlus fill out the form at <https://www.readplus.com.au/trial.php>

Newly published books are being constantly reviewed at the free ReadPlus review blog available at <https://www.readplus.com.au/blog.php>

Pat Pledger

Well-being and life skills literature lists

Anger management

Picture books

Bang, Molly. **When Sophie gets angry - really, really angry**

Scholastic, 2004.

Sophie takes the time to calm down and gain her composure after she gets really angry.

Bauer, Michael Gerard. Krebs, Chrissie. **Rodney loses it**

Scholastic, 2017.

Rodney loses his cool and falls down broken hearted when he loses his special pen.

Dockrill, Laura. **Angry cookie**

Walker books, 2018.

Cookie is angry. His best friend, the cactus, plays his recorder badly, a pigeon tries to snack on him, and he has had a bad haircut. In fact, his whole day goes awry but he still has friends.

Jeffers, Oliver. **Fate of Fausto: a painted fable**

HarperCollins Children's Books, 2019.

Fausto stamps his feet and puts up a fight in order to get his own way.

O'Brien, Belinda. **Monsters inside**

Tiger Tot Books, 2015.

Jack's monsters always want to come out whenever he gets angry or upset. What can he do to stop them?

Percival, Tom. **Ravi's roar**

Bloomsbury, 2019.

Ravi becomes very cross when he can't do what the others can, so cross that his face becomes hotter and redder, a tail appears behind him, his hands develop claws and his face becomes striped, and he can roar like a tiger.

Prasadam-Halls, Smriti. **Don't make me cross!**

Illus. by Angie Rozelaar. Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2019.

Don't make Little Monster cross, especially as he thinks the birthday party is all about him.

Primary

Balen, Katya. **Space we're in**

Illus. by Laura Carlin. Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2019.

Frank loves his autistic brother Max - but is sometimes angry with Max's demands. When tragedy hits the family will he be able to cope?

Bailey, Patricia. **The tragically true adventures of Kit Donovan**

Albert Whitman & Company, 2017.

In a Nevada mining town in 1905, thirteen-year-old Kit uses the life skills learned from reading *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to go undercover at the local newspaper and manage her anger about the unfair practices at the local mine.

Dahl, Roald. **The magic finger**

Illus. by Quentin Blake. Puffin, 2016.

Angered by a neighbouring family's sport hunting, an eight-year-old girl turns her magic finger on them.

Paterson, Katherine. **Great Gilly Hopkins**

HarperCollins, 2015.

Eleven-year-old Gilly has been stuck in more foster families than she can remember, and she's disliked them all. She has a reputation for angry and unmanageable, and that's the way she likes it.

Well-being and life skills literature lists

Anxiety

Shanahan, Lisa. **Grand, genius summer of Henry Hoobler**
Allen & Unwin, 2017.

Henry Hoobler is a boy with worries. He is travelling with his family on a camping holiday but would rather stay at home with Nonna and not have to think about all the things that could go wrong or have to face the challenge of learning to ride the ominous new bike that is coming along on the holiday too. Teacher's notes are available from the publisher's website.

Williamson, Lara. **Girl with space in her heart**
Usborne, 2019.

Ten-year-old Mabel and her older sister, Topaz, are finding it hard to cope with the separation of their parents. When their mother starts dating Galactic Gavin, Mabel worries whether he is the right man for her.

Secondary

Dessen, Sarah. **The rest of the story**
HarperCollins Children's Books, 2019.

When Emma Saylor is sent to spend the holidays at North Lake with her grandmother and cousins, people she hasn't seen since she was a small child, she finds things difficult. Here she is called Saylor, while at home she is called Emma by her father and other family members. There are unknown cousins to become acquainted with and Roo the boy who had been her best friend when she was little.

Keil, Melissa. **Secret science of magic**
Hardie Grant Egmont, 2017.

Sophia is very smart - she loves mathematics and finds it easy to relate to logic. Joshua loves his magic tricks and is obsessed with finding a way to get to know Sophia. He decides that timing is everything and begins a campaign starting with leaving 2 of hearts card in her TARDIS wallet. As the end of school life looms, both have to come to terms with change and work out what they will do with their futures.

Lord, Emery. **Names they gave us**
Bloomsbury, 2017.

Her mother wants to spare Lucy the worry of her cancer treatment and asks her to work at the summer camp she herself attended as a troubled teen. At camp Daybreak Lucy sees how the less fortunate live and becomes protective of her young charges. She feels happier in the service of others.

Jonsberg, Barry. **Song only I can hear**
Allen & Unwin, 2018.

Rob has a huge crush on the new girl at school. But Rob is painfully shy and suffers severe panic attacks. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Sutherland, Krystal. **Semi-definitive list of worst nightmares**
Penguin Books Australia, 2017.

Esther Solar has a dysfunctional family life. Her twin brother is severely challenged by the dark, her mother is afraid of bad luck and her father has not left the basement for years but Esther manages to keep going. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Wakefield, Vikki. **This is how we change the ending**
Text Publishing, 2019.

16 year old Nate McKee is doing his best to stay a good person in terrible circumstances. His only refuge from a violent father is hanging out at the local youth centre, and when its closure is threatened, doesn't know what he will do without this one safe place outside of school. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Well-being and life skills literature lists

Body Image

Picture books

Anderson, Laura Ellen. **I don't want curly hair**

Bloomsbury, 2017.

The girl with curly hair really wanted it straight, and the girl with straight hair tried to curl hers. This book will encourage children to look at their positives and not to be dissatisfied with how they look.

Anderson, Laura Ellen. **I don't want to be small**

Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2019.

The boy tells us of his problem, being so small that his friends forget him, or that he is not allowed to go on the bigger rides at the fair. When his bear gets stuck in a tree, a taller girl comes by and offers to help get the teddy out of the tree, and together they sort out the problem. A story promoting satisfaction with what you are, of loving who and what you are.

Barkla, Charlotte. **All bodies are good bodies**

Illus. by Erica Salcedo. Hardie Grant, 2020.

In this superbly illustrated book, each body part such as hands, hair, eyes and even tummies is featured while those characteristics which make them unique are celebrated.

Hall, Alyce. **Perfect puppy**

Illus. by Katrina Fisher. Little Steps, 2019.

Logan the little pup is rejected because he has one floppy ear, but finally a young girl and her mother come along and see him, crying out that he is perfect because of his one floppy ear and he has found his home. A sweet story of belonging, of being different, of accepting one's difference, this tale could be used in the classroom to look at the tricky subject of body image, difference and acceptance.

Henderson, Alisha. **Millie Muffin**

Bauer Media Books, 2019.

Millie feels that she is a plain old boring muffin and aspires to be like the Cupcake Girls who are glitzy and glamorous. While on her daily stroll she meets other treats who are also feeling lost and lacking in confidence about how they look. Millie kindly points out what makes them special and realises that she is not the only one unhappy with her looks.

Sanders, Jessica. **Love your body**

Five Mile, 2019.

Young girls are encouraged to love and celebrate their bodies for the amazing things that they can do, regardless of imperfections.

Primary

Kinney, Jeff. **Diary of a wimpy kid: the ugly truth**

Puffin, 2012.

Greg Heffley is getting close to puberty and facing all the changes that that means for his body. Not only are there orthodontics and boy-girl parties but he and his best friend Rowley have had a fight.

Nyong'o, Lupita. **Sulwe**

Illus. by Vashti Harrison. Puffin, 2019.

Sulwe compares herself to her fairer skinned and popular sister and attempts to lighten her skin but to no avail. She eventually shares her pain with her mother who supports her with love and understanding.

Pearce, Jackson. **Doublecross: (and other skills I learned as a superspy)**

Bloomsbury, 2015.

Hale Jordan is an overweight and un-athletic Spy School trainee. He is "fat" according to his classmates. Will he make it as a super spy?

Well-being and life skills literature lists

Bullying

Secondary

Abdel-Magied, Yassmin. **You must be Layla**

Penguin Books, 2019.

Layla's first day at an elite private school is a disaster, and it ends up with her being suspended before she's even started, because she head-butts the school bully who happens to be the son of the Chair of the school board. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Alt, Alexandra. **Promise**

Omnibus Books, 2019.

It is 1942 and 15 year old Lene lives with her mother in a Berlin apartment block, her father is away at the war. Above them are the Schlucks and she walks to school each day with their son Ludwig. Hitler Youth is compulsory for boys. Both hate being part of the brutal organisations and Ludwig has been secretly listening to allied radio broadcasts, which is considered treason. Bullying and intimidation escalate.

Amnesty International United Kingdom. **Here I stand: stories that speak for freedom**

Walker Books, 2017.

The focus is not so much on political issues and human rights so much as the commonly encountered issues of bullying, abuse, self-identity, LGBT rights, exploitation, loneliness, and similar issues experienced by many young people. The authors are 25 leading writers and illustrators inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, writers such as Neil Gaiman, John Boyne, Tony Birch, Sita Brahmachasi, Kevin Brooks and others.

Anderson, M. T. **Burger wuss**

Candlewick Press, 2017.

Hoping to lose his loser image, Anthony plans revenge on a bully which results in a war between two competing fast food restaurants, Burger Queen and O'Dermott's.

Beauvais, Clementine. **Piglettes**

Pushkin Press, 2017.

Mireille, Astrid and Hakima are three girls at the same school and recently voted as the first three place-winners in a Facebook 'Pig Pageant' for the ugliest girls by their schoolmates. While the girls are all pretty crushed by this horrible bullying, they are not going to let it get the better of them and form a friendship that will fly them forever.

Crowley, Cath. Howell, Simone. Wood Fiona. **Take three girls**

Pan Macmillan Australia, 2017.

When the private school they attend starts a Wellness program to combat the cyber bullying that is taking place, three girls find themselves in the same group and begin to question the nature of friendship especially as the toxic PSST website has targeted them and other girls with nasty rumours and innuendos. Teacher notes are available on the publisher's website.

Daddo, Andrew. **One step**

Penguin, 2016.

Dylan becomes the butt of everyone's humour and taunts after a bullying incident and his own lack of wisdom in the moments afterwards.

Donnelly, Jennifer. **Step sister**

Hot Key Books, 2019.

Award winning author Donnelly takes the reader on an engrossing tour examining what happens to Cinderella's step family after she leaves to marry the prince.

Herrick, Steven. **Another night in mullet town**

University of Queensland Press, 2016.

Jonah and Manx not only are facing the dilemmas of teenage life but their small coastal town is being taken over by rich city developers. Teacher's notes are available from the publisher.

Well-being and life skills literature lists

Communication

Picture books

Carnavas, Peter. **Quiet girl**

UQP, 2019.

Mary is a quiet girl, in a noisy family. She speaks quietly and notices everything. Sometimes she is so quiet that she is overlooked, but she shows her family what they have been missing. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Cook, Julia. **My mouth is a volcano!**

National Center for Youth Issues, 2008.

Louis' thoughts are very important to him, so much so that they erupt and interrupt everyone. He needs to listen and wait his turn to speak.

Cummings, Phil. **Boy**

Illus. by Shane Devries. Scholastic Australia, 2017.

Boy, who is deaf, lives in a small village on the edge of a forest and communicates with his 'dancing hands' and by drawing pictures in the sand. When a dragon and king who have been fighting stop to read his words, "Why are you fighting?" they discover that it is the result of misunderstanding and a lack of communication. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

DeGennaro, Sue. **We're stuck!**

Scholastic Press, 2019.

Layers of understanding about life in a city, isolation and lack of communication will not go unnoticed by the readers when the apartment dwellers get stuck in a lift.

Jones, Christianne. **Lacey Walker, nonstop talker**

Picture Window Books, 2013.

Lacey Walker just loves to talk nonstop, but when she loses her voice she discovers that listening is important.

Parish, Peggy. **Amelia Bedelia**

HarperCollins Publishers, 2017.

Amelia Bedelia is so anxious to please her new employers that she literally obeys their written instructions with hilarious results.

Reynolds, Peter H. **Word collector**

Orchard Books, 2018.

Jerome enjoys collecting and using words that he hears, reads, or sees, and discovers the joy of sharing them with others.

Reynolds, Peter H. **Say something**

Koala Books, 2019.

Reynolds explores the many ways that a single voice can make a difference, and encourages children to speak out, to say what they feel and to make themselves heard.

Simpson, Kate. Ghosh, Ronojoy. **Dear Grandpa**

Allen & Unwin, 2019.

Henry sees the 2003 kilometres between him and his beloved Grandpa in terms of blue whales placed end to end, and goodnight kisses as impossible as shooting stars. The letters written between the two reveal the love that exists and the things that they once did together. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Topouzoglou, Elena. **Mr Pegg's post**

New Frontier Publishing, 2018.

For many children this story will have new ideas for them to absorb, as Anna lives in a remote lighthouse, so remote that the only communication with her friends is via the post. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Well-being and life skills literature lists

Conflict resolution

Temple, Kate. **Birthday wars**

Allen & Unwin, 2019.

Alice Toolie and her worst enemy Jimmy Cook have a huge problem. Their birthday parties are on the same day, and they have both invited the whole class.

Whittle, Cate. **Wyrd**

Omnibus Books, 2018.

Emma and Pip, short for Philippa already know each other at school. In the same year group, 5/6, they hate each other with a vengeance. Now that they are to become a blended family, their hostility increases. How will they manage?

Secondary

Abdel-Fattah, Randa. **Ten things I hate about me**

Pan Macmillan, 2006.

Jamilah Towfeek hides her Lebanese-Muslim background from the other kids at school by dying her hair blond and wearing blue contact lenses. This is fraught with difficulties and gradually she changes.

Alexander, Kwame. **Booked**

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019.

Nick Hall's world turns upside down when he can't play football, his parents are divorcing and bullies target him. His father's obsession with words finally help him with the bullies and get the girl.

Almond, David. **War is over**

Illus. by Litchfield, David. Hodder Children's Books, 2018.

John's mother works in a munitions factory putting shrapnel into shells; his father is fighting in the trenches in France and his teacher, a most unpleasant character, insists that the children too are fighting a war. But there is a man, Dorothy's Uncle Gordon, who has been forced to live in the woods and who doesn't believe in the war and insists that the children in Germany are just like the children where John lives.

Donnelly, Jennifer. **Step sister**

Hot Key Books, 2019.

Isabelle, one of Cinderella's ugly stepsisters, believes that being pretty is the most important thing that she could wish for and begins a journey to find her heart, on the way learning that her strengths of bravery and fearlessness are ones worth having.

Heiss, Anita. **Our race for reconciliation**

Scholastic Australia, 2017.

The story of one family and its journey to Sydney for the People's Walk for Reconciliation across Sydney Harbour Bridge in 2000 is the basis for this evocative tale reflecting the solidarity shown on that day and on Sorry Days since, as all Australians recognise the past and look forward to a future together.

Lanagan, Margo. **Tintinnabula**

Illus. by Rovina Cai. Little Hare, 2017. picture book.

The term Tintinnabula means small tinkling bells and the young woman follows their sound to find that final good place that she needs. The idea that people in trouble can find a peaceful place within themselves is one that will resonate with readers and will be a comfort to those who are having problems, be they ones of mental illness or of war and violence.

Spinelli, Jerry. **Stargirl**

Orchard, 2007.

In this story about the perils of popularity, the courage of nonconformity, and the thrill of first love, an eccentric student named Stargirl changes Mica High School forever.

Well-being and life skills literature lists

Cooperation

Picture books

Bauer, Michael Gerard. **You turkeys!**

Scholastic, 2019.

Jake and Anna's dad loves his garden. So do the scrub turkeys. Will they ever be able to share happily?

Booth, Christina. **Are these Hen's eggs?**

Allen & Unwin, 2020.

After a storm Hen gathers ten eggs beneath her, aware that some are not her eggs. Duck gives her one of her eggs, underlining the efforts we must make in helping others.

Donaldson, Julia. **The Go-Away bird**

Illus. by Catherine Rayner. Macmillan Children's Books, 2019.

The Go-Away bird rejects attempts at friendship by other birds but when frightened by a larger bird is helped by a Come-Back bird who calls out, making sure the other birds return. Together the loud, colourful group of birds is able to scare off the larger predator and stay with the Go-Away bird in her tree.

Fox, Mem. **Roly Poly**

Illus. by Jane Dyer. Puffin Books, 2019.

Learning to get along with a new member of the family, especially one who wants what you have, can be a painful transition for some, and Mem Fox brings this issue to life with her delightful character Roly Poly.

Harrison, Penny. **Emily Green's garden**

Illus. by Megan Forward. New Frontier Publishing, 2019.

Emily Green wants to bring the green into her home. She learns about plants and then decides to share the green with others. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Ledden, Liz. **Tulip and Brutus**

Illus. by Andrew Plant. Ford Street Publishing, 2019.

Tulip is a ladybug and lives with the other ladybugs amongst the flowers, while Brutus is a stinkbug, and stinkbugs live in trees. When threatened by a dragonfly, the ladybugs and stinkbugs work together to evade the invader, letting off a combined pall of smell, sure to deter any possible threat.

Plant, Andrew. **The perfect leaf**

Ford Street Publishing, 2018.

Two little girls are searching for the perfect leaf, enjoying the autumn day. This book explores the idea of perfection and its attainment, while extolling the virtues of cooperation with friends. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Smith, Craig. **Willbee the bumblebee**

Scholastic, 2019.

With help from Monica the butterfly and Steve the spider, Willbee recovers his jumper and is back to buzzing around the garden in no time.

Tozer, Gabrielle. **Peas and quiet**

Illus. by Sue DeGennaro. HarperCollins Children's Books, 2017.

Pip loves to sing while she does the dishes, her off key voice annoying Pop who has his own discomfiting habit: he snores. This is a useful story to lead children into discussions about friendship and getting along together. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Well-being and life skills literature lists

Creative thinking, curiosity

Nannestad, Katrina. **Girl, the dog and the writer in Provence**

ABC Books, 2018.

Themes of friendship, family relationships, creativity and acceptance are beautifully interwoven in this story of Freja and Tobias in Claviers, Provence.

Nannestad, Katrina. **Lottie Perkins, fashion designer**

Illus. by Makoto Koji. ABC Books, 2018.

Seven year old Lottie Perkins demonstrates her awesome creativity and flair by becoming a fashion designer, utilising items from her family wardrobe.

Riddell, Chris. **Ottoline and the purple fox**

Macmillan Children's Books, 2016.

Ottoline and Mr Munroe meet a purple fox who takes them on an urban safari where they discover all the animals who live in the city. This is one of many stories about Ottoline.

Shepherd, Megan. **Secret horses of Briar Hill**

Walker Books, 2016.

When other children in London are evacuated to the country, Emmaline is taken to Briar Hill, Shropshire, which is a place for children with breathing difficulties. Her friend Anna, is sixteen and confined to bed, while some children are allowed to walk around the halls of the once beautiful building, and sometimes Emmaline is allowed outside. Here she finds a garden, and in that garden, a winged horse.

Tullet, Herve. **I have an idea!**

Chronicle Books, 2019.

The author explores the thrill of creativity when searching and finding an idea.

Yaxley, Sharon J. **Sea monsters**

Forty South Publishing, 2018.

A book of photos from the seashore is given extra life by the inclusion of poetic lines giving a hint about what we are seeing. Not seaweed but monsters with eyes and tusks and jagged teeth, whispering tales from the deep. Teacher's notes are available from the author's website.

Secondary

Acevedo, Elizabeth. **Poet X**

Electric Monkey, 2018.

Xiomara Batista takes us on an emotional, heart-rending journey through a tumultuous time in her young life and every moment of joy, agony and discovery, is powerfully communicated through her unique mix of prose and poetry.

Ahmed, Samira. **Love, hate & other filters**

Soho Teen, 2018.

Maya Aziz dreams of going to film school in New York. Her family have other ideas. They want her to be a dutiful daughter and train to be a doctor. Maya must find the strength to decide where she truly belongs.

Alvarez, Lorena. **Nightlights**

Nobrow, 2016.

At night, Sandy's imagination allows her to catch the lights that come into her room. She then uses them and her imagination to draw amazing designs and images. But the new girl at school notices them and is she really helping or is there something more sinister at work?

Gaiman, Neil. **Ocean at the end of the lane**

Headline, 2015.

When the family lodger stole their car and committed suicide in it forty years ago ancient powers were disturbed and it will be difficult for the narrator to stay alive.

Well-being and life skills literature lists

Critical thinking and problem solving

Picture books

Bland, Nicholas. **Three billy goats gruff**

Scholastic Press, 2019.

The three clever billy goats Gruff decide to try the grass that is greener on the other side of the bridge. But of course they have to get past the ugly troll who lives under the bridge.

Clayton, Sally Pomme. **King with dirty feet**

Otter-Barry Books, 2018.

When the king decides to take a bath he cleans his teeth, scrubs his body and washes his hair but when he gets out of the river his feet remain dusty and dirty. He is appalled, and tells his servant, Gabu, that he must find a way of allowing his feet to keep clean on pain of death.

Hale, Shannon. Hale, Dean. **Princess in black and the science fair scare**

Illus. by LeUyen Pham. Candlewick Press, 2018.

The Princess in Black has to use her problem solving skills to defeat the goo monster, with a lot of help from her friends.

Lawrence, Nina. **Clever crow =: Wak Liya-Djambatj**

Illus. by Bronwyn Bancroft, Magabala Books, 2018.

A delightfully funny and rounded story of being clever, crow will make readers laugh as they watch his antics at getting food for his empty stomach.

McKenzie, Heath. **How to build the perfect cubby house**

Scholastic Press, 2019.

The story is structured as an instructional 14-step plan to building the perfect cubby house: '1. Have a plan, 2. Listen to others, 3. Allow plans to change, etc.'

Stanley, Rose. **Tilly's big problem**

Starfish Bay Children's Books, 2015

Tilly has a problem so big that she is unable to deal with it on her own. Her close friend, Ned, comes up with a plan to share the problem with a 'big person', and they list the likely candidates and come up with a test to see who is the most suitable to tell about the problem.

Williamson, John. **John Williamson's My Dad snores**

Illus. by Peter Carnavas. Penguin Random House Australia, 2019.

All children will recognise someone in their family with snores so loudly they keep the house awake and drown out the television. The family tries a number of remedies to halt the noise, like putting a peg on his nose, but he laughs, not seeing the problem at all.

Primary

Black, Holly. Clare Cassandra. **Golden tower**

Magisterium series. Corgi Books, 2018.

Callum and his friends have to work together as a team and share problem solving techniques for the good of the community in this final book in the series.

Black, Jess. **Mr Walker and the perfect mess**

Illus. by Sara Acton. Penguin Random House Australia, 2019.

Mr Walker and his hotel family scramble to deliver an important function under the marquee whilst continuing regular services to guests. To make matters worse the staff need to organise a surprise farewell gift for their beloved groundskeeper, Josephine.

Eulberg, Elizabeth. **Great Shelby Holmes and the coldest case**

Illus. by Matt Robertson. Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2019.

After being contacted by Tatiana, the coach of a world famous figure skater Jordan Nelson, Shelby and John are drawn into a highly complex case involving difficult codes and intimidating characters.

Well-being and life skills literature lists

Critical thinking and problem solving

Flint, Shamini. **Show stopper!**

Illus. by Sally Heinrich. *Susie K diaries*, 2019. Allen & Unwin, 2019.

Susie's mother signs her up for the talent show, much to her daughter's dismay. Susie is a problem-solver, analytical, she converses with George the class fish and likes playing with Bones the skeleton. Once again, this feisty girl needs to use her scientific skills, her creativity and resolve to stand up to her mother's demands.

Harvey, Jacqueline. **Kensy and Max: Undercover**

Penguin Random House Australia, 2018.

Undercover is another brilliant read, complete with spy craft and code cracking, proving to be another winner for the preteen and young teen audience. *Out of sight* (2019) is another.

Howarth, Kylie. **Fish kid and the lizard ninja**

Walker Books, 2019.

Bodhi and Emely find themselves alone on a desert island in the company of Guapo, an intelligent marine iguana, who joins the children on their quest to safety. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Johannes, Shelley. **Beatrice Zinker, upside down thinker**

Lothian Children's Books, 2017.

Life in the Zinker family proves difficult for middle child Beatrice as everyone else likes to follow the rules and fit in. When her friend Lenny comes back from the Philippines she has changed and Beatrice has to come up with a solution to fit in.

Miles, Alex, **Making magic**

Girl geeks. Puffin Books, 2019.

The main characters, Maggie, Evie, Niki and Hamsa, are all best friends who love computers, coding, gaming and all things technology-based. With their classmates they have to create a SPACE-TACULAR production for the school community after a class unit of work on Space.

Secondary

Gordon, Kate. **Writing Clementine**

Allen & Unwin, 2014.

Clementine Darcy's year 9 philosophy class isn't turning out to be what she expected. The teacher asks the students to simply write, whilst Clementine is hoping for answers to the big questions of life and wants to know 'Why am I here?' As she writes, she reflects upon her own life which isn't quite going in the direction she has hoped for either.

McKinlay, Meg. **Drawn onward**

Fremantle Press, 2017.

This picture book for older readers shows how the very same situation can be viewed quite differently depending on your perspective. Teacher notes are available on the publisher's website.

Patterson, James. **Genius experiment**

Young Arrow, 2019.

Orphan Max Einstein is squatting above the Central Park horse and carriage stables, attending college classes at NYU and supporting the homeless people who live in the building with her. Max has the ability to face new situations and creatively problem solve through her scientific understandings. Teacher's notes are available on the publisher's website.

Thomson, Sarah L. **Eureka Key**

Bloomsbury, 2017.

When middle school puzzle master Sam and history wiz Martina win a contest for a summer trip across the US, they discover they've been drafted into something vastly more extraordinary. Joining another kid on the trip, Theo, a descendant of George Washington himself, they must follow clues to find seven keys left behind by the Founding Fathers.