

Educational Program “Design Champions”

Program Overview

Generated: 2024-12-01 10:46:12



Author of this description

Linka Toneva-Metodieva, Trust for Social Achievement

Program name

Educational Program “Design Champions”

Country of Origin

Bulgaria

Other Countries

United States of America

Implementation level of the program

The design thinking educational methodology “Design Champions” is inspired by Stanford University's design thinking approach and developed in Bulgaria by the team of the educational start-up Red Paper Plane.

Type of Program

Project-based learning methodology in preschool and primary school program.

Description

The methodology for implementing the Program "Design Champions" centers around the child and the real world around him/her. The methodology does not provide a user manual, but is a toolbox, in which every teacher can find many useful tools - to analyze children's needs, to define problems and to encourage participation and experiences. The crucial aspect is the attitude towards working with children – for exploration, for empathy, for determining problems, for thinking outside the box, for testing every possible hypothesis.

The best way to cultivate skills and learn effectively is through holistic experiences in the form of play, to encourage children to solve challenges from real life and discover how the world really works. And for that to happen in practice, we need to make the process easy, fun and impactful for all participants - both children and adults. This, in the Program, is achieved through MISSIONS. The missions set the structured activities with children while making each project much more in-depth. They also put the process of doing and empathizing in the center, through which the children themselves seek a solution.

Each mission lasts a week - 5 days, each month, the teacher has everything needed to be able to create a five-day learning experience oriented towards a profession in which children, in teams, discover their own solution to the set task.

Age Range

3-7 years

Age Range Information

4-10

Group Size

May vary. Depends on the number of children included in the program.

SEL Skills Targeted

Social awareness, Self-management

Sequenced Activities

The skills that are developed as a result of the program are:

Social and cultural awareness

Self management

Additionally:

Curiosity

Critical thinking and problem solving

Creativity

Communication

Collaboration

Adaptivity

Leadership

The teachers go through training before starting the missions. Afterwards, they receive seven missions to be completed with the children. There is one mission per month and all missions are to be completed throughout the school year. Each mission lasts 5 days, and each in each of those 5 days the teacher and the children spend 90 minutes working on the mission. Each mission is focused on a fascinating topic, and includes a detailed structure, presentations, group and individual activities, additional materials and tools from the method “design thinking”. Mission topics include Architecturer, Vehicle designer, Meteorologist, Chef, Physician, Arctic Explorer, and many others.

Active Learning

The skills developed during the missions are confidence and creativity - applying knowledge from other areas, problem solving, teamwork and empathy, perseverance, and performance. The participation of the children in different team missions is a prerequisite for the development of the linguistic skills, for inclusion in dialogue and for the expression of an opinion which is manifested in the selection or appropriate use of speech in certain situations or roles.

Outcomes / Results

Effectiveness and high quality of the program is reported in individual project reports of the implementation, ex. Champions 2020 project, implemented in the villages of Butan and Glozhene, 2019-2020 by New Road Assoc. – Hayredin.

Quality / Effectiveness

Additionally, the implementing organization has been Winners for “Leading Female Founder” and nominees for Startup of the Year, Best Educational Startup and Best Social Impact Startup — 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 – by the Central European Start up Awards.

Nominees for Best Innovation in Education — 2017, 2018 by Webit Festival.

According to Forbes magazine, Red Paper Plane combines quality content with design thinking in a truly innovative educational product.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The strengths reported through personal experience of the participants, mention the following positive outcomes from the program:

It makes going to school desirable for the children

Higher level of engagement of the students

Reduction of the levels of emotional and behavioural problems among them

Children improved and developed important skills, such as teamwork, creativity, communication by allowing children to become architects, explorers, astronauts.

Additional Information

<https://www.rpplane.com/teachers>

Citation

This document was generated from the database used to create the Programs Compendium:

Koltcheva, N., Wastijn, B., Achten, M., Van Rossem, L. & Costa, I. S (2022). Programs for Social and Emotional Skills Development for Early and Preschool Children Applied in European Countries. Compendium. EU-SELF Project. ISBN 978-619-233-211-2 (can be downloaded from <https://euself.nbu.bg>)