

Switzerland (Ticino)

Chiamale Emozioni (Call them emotions)

The whole school is organized around the promotion of life skills and socio-emotional competences, and the promotion of critical thinking and active involvement. It has adopted Mark Greenberg's PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies). The school is part of the local teacher education college, and the design of the curriculum and activities has been part of this larger organization. There are two leader/coordinators, three assistant coordinators, and twelve teachers. The leadership/management structure with two coordinators and three assistant coordinators could, the ILE assesses, go well beyond the 250 current learners to up to 40 teachers and 800 learners. Improving climate and motivation is regarded as fundamental. The assistant coordinators work for an hour per week in every class.

Main Focus of Innovation: TEACHERS, CONTENT

General Information

Name of the ILE: Chiamale Emozioni (Call them emotions)

Location/Address: ASP - ALTA SCUOLA PEDAGOGICA, piazza San Francesco 19, 6600 Locarno (Switzerland)

ILE submitted by: Davide Antognazza, Ed.M, project coordinator

Rationale

Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21st century learning challenges?

Our rationale is based on the "Life skills education in school", guidelines published by the WHO/OMS in 1993. For this reason, we think our project, based in the school setting, address the challenges we currently face in the educational field. Basing our project on the promotion of life skills and socio-emotional competencies, we think we can better support cognitive and emotional maturation in children. Moreover, we keep in strong consideration CASEL'S (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) social and emotional development standards, as we think that social and emotional competencies are crucial to pursue positive outcomes in education. There is growing evidence that improving social and emotional skills also improves academic performance, since better managing yourself helps you in regulating your everyday life according to the social rules followed in your culture.

Critical thinking and active involvement are primary characteristics of our ILE. All our activities, academic or not, are followed by a discussion in which conductors push the children to share their understanding and evaluate their learning. Moreover, we allows different ways to show personal learning, trough paintings, role playing, oral communication, handcraft (when is appropriate). Formative feedback is also granted, trough discussion with children and trough an analysis of life experiences that children have out of school.

Evidence

Is there any evidence or indications showing that this initiative achieves the outcomes that it is aiming at?

Self compiled teachers' reports attest that, when there is a full involvement of children, teachers and families, our initiative improves collaborative skills among children, their ability to evaluate their and other children's' behaviour, the ability of reflect on the consequences of their actions. Class climate improves, and this has an impact on academic learning (not yet assessed). Moreover, children improve their ability to recognize feelings. Wednesday

Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE

What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)

Social and emotional skills, including naming and regulating emotions; relational skills, such as collaborating with your classmates and with other people in your social environment; academic learning, since better class climate positively influences the attitude towards academic content; reflective skills, since in any activity we end the meeting inviting children think and share their understanding about what they have done.

Learners

Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?

We actually target children from 4 to 9 years old, enrolled in a normal school program both in kindergarten and elementary school. The current group is formed by 12 classes, 240 children. All the children in these classes are eligible to take part, even if sometimes some of our activities are not fitted for young children, 4 and 5 years old.

Facilitators

Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?

Our group is composed of two coordinators (leaders of the group), three assistants, and twelve kindergarten and elementary school teachers. One of the coordinator has a degree in Education in Italy, a Master in USA (Harvard Graduate School of Education) and several experiences in the social field in different countries; the other coordinator has a degree in Psychology and a Master in Educational Research. Our assistants have a bachelor from our college; two of them also have a Master in Education. Teachers have a bachelor in Education from our college.

We have decided to keep our organization "light", since we think this would be quite useful in order to easily replicate the model in other contexts. We think that this structure, with two leaders and three assistants, can appropriately serve up to 40 teachers and 800 children in the first two years of work.

Organization of the ILE

How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?

Actually, the project assistants work once every week for one hour in every class involved. Moreover, teachers enforce activities and educational messages during the week, so we would say that our intervention has a scheduled weekly meeting and several other occasions to organise the opportunities of learning. The interaction is a classical school interaction: our assistants are also teachers, so they well know how to manage a class and interact with it; teachers are the class teachers, in those classes, so the pedagogical relationship learners-facilitator is a classical rapport teacher-student. We are structuring our own curriculum that is based on the pedagogical experience that ASP (our college) has developed as the only college of teacher education in the area. Moreover, we take advantage of the Mark Greenberg's PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) curriculum and of several scientific publications on English and Italian language.

Learning Context

In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?

As we have explained above, "Chiamale emozioni" works in the public school environment, so we use classrooms and any community resource usually utilized in class.

History of ILE

Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?

"Chiamale emozioni" has been initiated since 2007. Purpose of our intervention is to verify how social and emotional education can improve class climate, children behavior and academic results. We were and we are searching innovative ways to teach children so that, beyond reaching academic goals, they will be also able to face the challenges of the present and future world.

Funding of the ILE

How is it funded?

ILE is actually funded by our college, for its research part, and from the local government. We have also obtained the financial support of "Fondazione Damiano Tamagni", a local no profit. We are actually looking for new funds, from local and international foundations.

Learning Outcomes

What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?

We use teacher self report and some questionnaires to assess our intervention. So far, we can say that the intervention improve children's ability to name and recognize emotions, reflecting skills and increase the ability to think before act. Some of the teachers attest the improvement of class climate. Academic learning is under investigation.

Documentation describing or evaluating the ILE

Is there documentation on this learning environment? Is there a website? Films? Research reports or evaluations? Other forms of documentation? (please supply references or links)

We have a short presentation of the research part of the project at:
<http://www.aspti.ch/jasp/index.php/ricerca/progetti/chiamale-emozioni>.

We add here some Power Point Presentations that we use to explain the intervention and a description of our course for future teachers, where we teach and discuss the topic "Emotions at school".

Other information about our project and our theoretical background can be found in the new book "Emozioni per l'uso", Edizioni La Meridiana, written by Mark Greenberg & Carol Kusché. Davide Antognazza wrote the introduction and collaborated for the edition in Italian.

Other information you consider to be relevant to describe the ILE

We have a blog that we use to stay in touch with our teachers and collaborators, and that can be used to discuss issues related with our intervention: <http://aspti.ch/blogs/>