

Happy School in practice - Methodological renewal and professional development

Our institution has won the title of 'Happy School' for the 2018/19 academic year, and in connection with this, we would like to implement a Happy School program and reform methodologically. The underlying principle of the Happy School program is to provide young people with a clear lifestyle model that serves as a guideline for pupils, helping them face challenges, solve conflicts and overcome problems, as well as giving an opportunity to study the factors of physical and mental wellbeing.

The program is built on the widely accepted and tested research of positive psychology in Hungary, and its goal is to reinforce the sense of self of young people and help them achieve a happier lifestyle. Due to these happiness classes pupils demonstrate lower levels of anxiety, better performance in school, as well as stronger self-drive and focus.

In order for students to have a good time at school and in class, the following are needed: practicing optimism, cultivating social relations, committing to a goal, coping strategies, the enjoyment of small joys, practicing forgiveness, physical activity, sustainable happiness.

The program has a wide range of tools, with support for both individual and group learning. Encouraging and reinforcing pedagogical attitude form the basis of these classes, and activities include relaxation, meditation, the sharing of individual experiences, as well as brainstorming, and experience-based knowledge construction.

We believe that improving the capability for happiness in the next generation can be done most effectively through playful, creative exercises, and so music, art, improvisational games, photography, video and physical activity play a great role during these classes.

Our future goals and areas of development:

1. The improvement of the competencies of the teaching body in the following fields: cultural, social and national, foreign language and digital competencies.
2. Learning new teaching and training methods: Our school has drafted a pedagogical program which describes the desired qualities of a teacher as such: "Our teacher is always smiling, happy and satisfied. They believe individual research forms the basis of successful and effective learning, and that they are there to guide students. They instruct pupils, and only intervene the necessary amount at the right moment. Their pedagogical views and approach are up-to-date, methodology is well-prepared. They view teaching not as an isolated activity behind closed classroom doors, but as a concerted effort by cooperative educators. They are erudite, with solid ethos. They have a good overview of the scientific fields connected to their subject. They are interested in questions outside their subject expertise, with and above average awareness of current affairs. They are a lifelong learner and are aware of all the relevant literature. They are both creators and consumers of culture; and find joy in the arts." To achieve these qualities we have to establish an international strategy, planning joint activities – potentially pointing beyond mobility- with our European partners, putting greater emphasis on quality assurances, and ensuring the sharing of knowledge and skills throughout the whole institution.
3. European cooperation: As a bilingual institution it is essential for us to build relationships with the schools in other EU countries, share experiences with them, and maintain these relationships in the longer term.

The cooperation with international partners is a critical step to realizing our goals outlined above, as we believe in the importance of finding partner schools to improve the sensitivity towards European identity, to find networking opportunities in education, to actively participate in the European Union, and to reinforce the ideal of the European citizen.

The five teachers involved in the project are all outstanding members of our institution, with exemplary attitude, expertise, achievements and enthusiasm.

To accomplish our Happy School program and methodological renewal, it is essential that our pupils see their future in a positive light and will be able to take steps to realize their dreams. Our long term goal is to integrate the knowledge and competencies acquired through mobility into the core methodology of our institution.

All in all, "Man's biggest goal and pursuit is happiness", this can only be achieved through reaching physical and mental harmony. The road to the finish is long and arduous, and can only be reached through continuous learning, mental discipline and physical training. To convey these values to future generations is the most important task of our institution.