

Designing Happiness

A draft project proposal

Introduction

This project aims to make pupils aware of the aspects of their physical environment that influence their sense of well-being. It invites them to make an analysis of 'good' and 'bad' architecture and city development, and then to put forward dos and don'ts for the design of spaces, buildings, neighbourhoods, and entire cities. Finally, they pick a concrete building (railway station, school, public square...) or even an entire neighbourhood, and develop a concrete proposal for redesigning it.

The format of this project description is aimed at making it as concrete and as easily applicable as possible: a blueprint for the actual instruction sheet for the pupils. From our experience, an exact task and deliverable description is crucial to the success of this kind of project. In the beginning of this text, most categories (like 'evaluation criteria') are mentioned as a reminder of what still remains to be specified once this project is actually launched. Further on, only the categories relevant at this conception stage are included.

Another underlying principle of this project is that it allows work to go on even if the partner schools go incommunicado or get stuck. The reasoning is that communication will only work out if all participants have been immersed into the contents of the project and been confronted with the same challenges and thought processes, but not necessarily together: they will naturally be interested in how things went on the other side, and will hopefully be more inclined to communicate, with concrete information, arguments and choices to exchange. If a partner goes AWOL (as has been known to happen), the 'abandoned' partner will still have something to show for their work.

The estimated work load for this project is 25 working hours, which corresponds with 1 hour a week during an entire school year.

It will be noticed that the most difficult and complicated task (T10) is currently under-documented in this text. However, the documents for this project component do exist and have even been tried out with four classes of pupils in the past school year. It's simply a question of translating them into English.

This project outline is very ambitious. But it is easier to drop well-defined tasks than to invent them. The core module is obviously T7-T12. T3-T5 can also be carried out independently, or not at all.

At our school, this project will be partly supported within the framework of an official one-hour subject 'project work'. The optional tasks described at the end of this document will be taught there, among other things. However, not all students participating in the European project take this class. Hence, the relationship will be one of 'sideline' inspiration and motivation, rather than project management.

Tasks and deliverables

Task code	T1
Title	Interview: which places make you feel good or bad, and why?
Task description	Interview yourself and at least 2 other persons, including 1 from a different generation, to learn in which places your interviewees feel good and bad. These locations will be private ('my room', typically), but you should also – and especially - look for public places, like the school playground, town squares, bus stops or libraries.
Estimated work load	3 hours
Configuration	Individual
Deliverable D1a	Physical proof of the interviews
Format	Free choice: written notes of answers, audio, video
Hand in by when	To be determined
Hand in how	Upload onto Digital Learning Platform
Evaluation criteria	Handed in on time? Convincing?
Evaluation weight	
Deliverable D1b	Interview report: a short reflection on this activity: what went well, what went wrong, what have you learnt, any anecdotes?
Quantity/Format	> 250 words (~ 1/2 page) or equivalent effort
Hand in by when	To be determined
Hand in how	On paper, to teacher
Evaluation criteria	Handed in on time? Convincing?
Task code	T2
Title	Analysis of and conclusions from interviews
Task description	Write either an essay or a PPT presentation that summarizes your findings from T1
Estimated work load	2 hours
Configuration	Individual
Deliverable D2	Essay: What people (dis-)like about certain places
Format	Written text or PPT presentation
Quantity	> 500 words (≈ 1 page) or equivalent effort
Hand in by when	To be determined
Hand in how	Upload onto Digital Learning Platform
Evaluation criteria	Coherence, quality of contents, style
Task code	T3
Title	A pictorial guide to pleasant and unpleasant places – field work
Task description	Select 6 places, 3 of them pleasant, 3 unpleasant. Make sure you can objectively describe (in words) which are the specific positive and/or negative aspects of these spaces: the lighting? The materials used? The scale (too big, too small? As compared to what? Too open, too closed? Temperature? Smell? Feeling of (in-)security? Why?... Find places with <u>different</u> causes of (un-)pleasantness
Configuration	Individual
Deliverable D3	Comment on chosen locations
Format	Text
Quantity	> 50 words per location (≈ 1 paragraph ≈ ± 5 sentences)
Evaluation criteria	quality of contents, style

Task code	T4
Title	A pictorial guide to pleasant and unpleasant places – product
Task description	Take photographs of the places discovered and present them with the comments in a Word document, Saved As – ‘HTML’ or ‘Web Page’. Alternatively (and ideally): in ACDSee, (free trial download at http://www.acdsee.com) add your ‘author’ name and fill in the comments in ‘caption’. This will allow for an easy creation of ONE file with all the photographs.
Configuration	= Individual
Deliverable D4	Photo album with comments D3
Format	Web page (HTML), or ACDSee These products are published on the web, if technically possible (ACDSee) in one single file.
Quantity	= 12 (self-taken) photographs; you take at least one photograph of every location; you decide yourself how the ‘extra’ six shots are divided among the different locations
Evaluation criteria	Cf D3 + Quality of photographs (cf TO1)
Total output	± 20 pupils x 12 photographs = 240 pictures with comments

Task code	T5
Title	A pictorial guide to pleasant and unpleasant places – best of Antwerp (Sosnowiec Madrid...)
Task description	D4 is published on the www as one file. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All project pupils of one school look at their own D4 and select the 20 photographs. If you manage to get yourself organised to achieve that rapidly, the entire group gets a bonus. If not, your teacher(s) will solve the problem. • Moreover, you do the same for a partner school: you look at their D4 and select 20 photographs from/for them • A partner school - which may, but need not be the same as the one you choose photographs for - does the same for you • Probably, a number of the chosen photographs on both sides will overlap, so it will take some communication to arrive at an exact number of 40.
Configuration	Entire Group + entire group from partner school
Deliverable D5	One ‘Best of’ photo album with comments per school
Format	HTML Photo album (easily generated with ACDSEE; alternatively: PPT, Word, ... saved as HTML
Quantity	40 photographs

Task code	T6 (May be optional)
Title	Dos and don’ts of designing space
Task description	From your findings in T1-T5, draw up a list of dos and don’ts for architects and city planners: if you are going to build a space, a building, a neighbourhood, a city, what should you keep in mind to ensure that the inhabitants feel good about it?
Configuration	Groups of 3 or 4
Deliverable D6	Presentation with dos and don’ts for architects and city planners
Format	PPT, HTML, Word
Quantity	> 7 dos and >7 don’ts

Task code	T7
Title	What are we going to design?
Task description	Draw up a list of possible spaces to design: public spaces (a park, public square, playground...) buildings (a school, library, town hall, church, factory...), entire neighbourhoods or cities. All these places should be situated at concrete locations in your own city or at least region, to provide a realistic setting for the design.
Configuration	Groups of 3 or 4, then consolidation for the entire school
Deliverable D7	List of possible spaces to design
Format	PPT, HTML, Word

Task code	T8
Title	Select a subject to design
Task description	Every team chooses one item from list D7
Configuration	Groups of 3 or 4
Deliverable D8	Choice of subject
Format	Word of mouth, or E-mail

Task code	T9
Title	Finding a designing partner
Task description	Find another team who want to design the same kind of space/building/neighbourhood/city as you. Ideally, there would be two different teams per school with the same subject, and two other teams with the same subject in at least one partner school
Configuration	Groups of 3 or 4
Deliverable D9	Declaration of partner
Format	Word of mouth, or E-mail

Task code	T10
Title	Do it
Task description	Work out your design. Further support documents and details exist and are currently being translated into English. Teams are encouraged to discuss their project with their 'partner' teams in the other countries. Guidelines and suggestions should still be developed of along what concrete lines these discussions could be organised
Configuration	Groups of 3 or 4
Deliverable D10	Extensive project file including overall project description, digital drawings (cf TO3: Sketchup), and PPT presentation. The existing and road-tested list of deliverables with their specifications is being translated.

Task code	T11
Title	Final presentations
Task description	The different teams present their projects, both in the form of an exhibition and a public, PPT-supported presentation. Ideally, this would be staged during a visit of one partner school to another, with an audience including parents, the school management, and other members of the school community. Moreover, we have had a very positive experience with an external jury of 'real' architects and city council responsables.
Configuration	Groups of 3 or 4
Deliverable D11	PPT-supported public presentation

Task code	T12
Title	Award ceremony & reception
Task description	The external jury of specialists select the project that they judge as being the most valuable, and officially award them a prize. There may also be a prize awarded by the pupils themselves.

Nice to have / possible extensions

Task code	TO1 (Optional)
Title	A course in photography
Task description	Improve your photographic skills, e.g. by learning from http://bawa.be/photographycourse (under construction)
Deliverable	Become a better photographer, and show that in T4-T5

Task code	TO2 (Optional)
Title	A course in digital image processing
Task description	Learn at least the basics of digital photo processing in a program like Photoshop Elements, Paint Shop Pro, ACDSee...
Deliverable	Application in T4-T5

Task code	TO3 (Optional)
Title	3D- design software SKETCHUP
Task description	Download from http://sketchup.google.com/download.html and learn how to use it. If this download is not free any more, we still have a free version available.
Deliverable	Application in T10

Task code	TO4 (Optional)
Title	Ecological building
Task description	Study how living in general and building/city planning in particular can be made more ecologically sound

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