

EINSTEINKLAS

ASHOKA EDUCATION



THE PROJECT IN A NUTSHELL



«HELPING TEENAGERS UNDERSTAND HOW THEIR BRAIN WORKS TO BECOME MORE INDEPENDENT AND FULLY AWARE OF THEIR OWN POTENTIAL»



CHALLENGE

The project starts from the observation that students in secondary school sometimes suffer from low self-esteem and lack of confidence. Rather than a problem of motivation, it is often due to limiting beliefs they have about themselves which prevent them from reaching their full potential. Part of these beliefs are unfortunately strengthened in the playground by negative group dynamics or by a lack of support at home. But these limiting beliefs are also a consequence of the multiple changes, emotions and doubts they experience as teenagers and that can be sometimes overwhelming.



PROJECT

Based on this statement, the Einsteinklas aims at helping young people understand what happens in their adolescent brain in order to become more aware of the inner transformations they experience. The objective is to demystify the obstacles they might encounter and deconstruct their limiting beliefs so that they can own the decision to become active learners. By letting them explore the functioning of their adolescent brain, they also practice scientific examination and experience it through day-to-day examples such as multitasking or multiple intelligences.



PARTNERS

Teachers: any teacher can start an Einsteinklas provided they train themselves on how the brain works.

Parents: it is important to have support from the school administration and from the parents. Having the parents reflect on the home environment and how suitable it is for the «teenage brain» can play a critical role in the success of the project.



WORKLOAD

One hour of Einsteinklas per month as part of your regular class can be enough to start. You can then either add more sessions or simply repeat and adapt the concepts in your regular lessons.



RESSOURCES

You can create your own toolbox or use an existing one (cf. Einsteinklas project toolbox). The most important tools are the participation in trainings for the teachers as well as the acquisition of specific books on the topic !

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT **IN YOUR SCHOOL**

1 - PREPARE THE CONTENTS OF THE EINSTEINKLAS



GET THE KNOWLEDGE

Get started by familiarizing yourself with the subject by reading books and meeting experts in the field such as neuro-psychologists. This is the foundation of the project!



TRANSLATE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Use images, metaphors, games, and examples from everyday life in order to translate the neuro-psychology concepts into information that is accessible to the students.



TEST AND EVALUATE

Test your methods and ask for feedback from other teachers, students themselves and specialists to validate your approach and your pedagogical tools.

2 - LAUNCH THE EINSTEINKLAS



INTRODUCE IT TO STUDENTS

Introduce the concept at the beginning of the year to your students and evaluate their interest. It is better to offer Einsteinklas sessions in addition to the class on a voluntary basis but sessions can also be integrated into the class.



START WITH SELF-EVALUATIONS

To begin with, get students to work on a self-assessment of their work environment around several pillars through targeted questions (concentration, self-organization, distractions, family environment...)



EXPERIMENT ON THE BRAIN

Gradually introduce the «teenage brain» concepts. Always start with a fun experiment before debriefing. For example, you can introduce multi-tasking notions by asking students to perform unsynchronized body movements.

3 - INCREASE SELF AWARENESS



SELF AND GROUP REFLECTION

In groups or in pairs, give the students space to reflect on the observations they make from the experiments, but also on their own progress and transformations.



GIVE FREQUENT REMINDERS

Using cards, images and quotes during the rest of the class, make sure to repeat frequently the notions that you've discovered during the Einsteinklas to create connections and strengthen the learnings.



ASSESS CHANGES AND AWARENESS

At the end of the year, ask students to re-assess their inner and outer environment. Help them observe what changed in their own belief system about the world and about themselves to become more aware of their capacities and talents.

PRE-REQUISITES FOR THE PROJECT



Be aware that the adolescent brain is not fully formed. The pre-frontal cortex is only **fully developed around 20-25 years old**. It is key to teach young people how to plan, manage time, organise and analyse, keep their emotions under control...But also to keep in mind that neurocognitive concepts themselves **must be explained to become more accessible**.

Also, **don't forget the parents!** Give them information about the key concepts behind the Einsteinklas along with tips to support their children home in order to avoid confusion.

BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT

ATTITUDE TO LEARN

Show your engagement first around the topic and use their mirror-neurons to help them get motivated around the topic in return! Include it in the regular class as much as possible in order to make it more impactful.

CURIOSITY

Always look for more! Keep on reading on the topic and follow trainings to get up to date. There are plenty of experts in the field: find a coach you feel at ease with in order to avoid getting lost and make sure you master the key concepts.

MAKE IT COZY

Bring cookies, make the class cozy and warm. Make it fun in order to facilitate the learning but avoid transforming the Einsteinklas in a playground. Install clear rules that you can stick to, in order to keep a consistent frame.



LIMITS & OBSTACLES

It is important that the students don't lean on the Einsteinklas as the universal solution to pass the next class. Einsteinklas cannot be the solution to everything! Make sure students actually become more independent and don't develop a dependency to the Einsteinklas. They should not see the class as a punishment either. Einsteinklas should not be only for students who have bad points or who show behavioral problems, but for those who are interested in it.

MORE INFORMATION TO GO FURTHER



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VIDEO

Discover the story, the participants
and behind the scenes of the project
in video:
ashoka.org/en-be/eduinnovation

