SKILLS EXPLORATION DAYS DESIGN CHALLENGE

Chindogu: Designing for the fun of it

SkillsCanada Alberta

Overview

We often think of design as the creation of an object for a specific function and we implement the design thinking process to help us focus on how the design will solve real life problems. Chindogu is a fun twist on the typical design process. Established in the 1990's, chindogu is a Japanese word that means unusual tool. The inventor of the term, Kenji Kawakami actually thinks a better translation for the word chindogu is "weird tool." There are 3 basic rules for creating chindogu objects: they must be "make-able" (although they actually don't have to serve any real or needed purpose), be open access and cannot be patented, and be humorous (but this is not their entire purpose or function). In other words, they are an actual tool and not a joke or trick.

Design Rational

People are encouraged to make chindogu for the sheer pleasure of designing a tangible item. Kenji Kawakami suggests that making chindogu helps us to: improve our divergent thinking and creativity, improve our craft abilities and artist skills, and revel in creativity without the pressure of making something functional or commercial.

The best way to think about chindogu is to consider two items that have seemingly absolutely no connection. For example, think about shoes and an umbrella – anything pop into your mind? You can find other examples by using the websites listed in the Suggested Resources section.

Problem Scenario

Your team has been selected to design a functional chindogu prototype that either:

1. Enhances your school's learning environment (inside or outside)

2. Assists students or teachers to help make their daily school tasks easier

3. Makes learning more fun and will provoke a smile on the face of students or teachers using it

Your chindogu prototype should be relevant to students ranging from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (you can determine which audience you would like to focus on) and can be something used by students with a variety of abilities.

Success Determinants & Parameters

For this design challenge, your prototype **must be original** (not an exact copy of something that already exists) **and as real looking as possible**. Other criteria and parameters for a successful prototype are outlined below.

Success in the classroom will be determined by:

- Quality of initial design sketch meeting the definition of a prototype and chindogu.
- Creative and appropriate use of the potential tools and materials that will be provided.
- Degree to which you have accurately and carefully developed your prototype.
  (is it to scale, is it functional, the aesthetic quality, constructed and assembled well, etc.).
- Uniqueness and usability of your prototype design sketch to ensure it adds value for the users.
- Alignment to design motto: *Make it smaller, stronger, do more, be easier to use, be cheaper.*

Success at Skills Exploration Days will be determined by:

- Appropriate and safe use of tools and materials provided on site.
- Ability and quality to integrate tools and materials from at **least 3 different Learn-A-Skill stations.**
- Quality of your final display - title of prototype, final prototype sketch, project description and team reflection.
- Self-evaluation of the design, prototype and your personal skill set.

*A **prototype** is a model that illustrates the functionality of an idea or design. It may be life sized or scaled to a model that fits in your hand. However, a prototype needs to be as real looking as possible, using the materials available.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED

Chindogu:

Official Chindogu Website
www.chindogu.com

Chindogu Unuseless Japanese Inventions - *PowerPoint that includes a definition, history and visual examples*
https://visaapplieddesign.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/visa-chindogu.pdf

Chindogu: The Art of Un-useless Inventions - *Meet chindogu, the art and craft of inventing things that are (almost) useless but a whole lot of fun*
https://people.howstuffworks.com/culture-traditions/cultural-traditions/chindogu-art-un-useless-inventions.htm

Simone Giertz Ted Talk "Why you should make useless things" - *In this joyful, heartfelt talk featuring demos of her wonderfully wacky creations, Simone Giertz shares her craft: making useless robots*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0bsKc4tiuY&t

Learning Environments:

What is Interior Architecture and Design? - *Learn how architectural concepts and design principles transform structures into amazing spaces with cool design elements*
https://youtu.be/KvQUsr19zco?list=PLAXeXQ0M-02w-NNxfeMNdDLULC2_dwbjC

BA (Hons) Interior Architecture and Design - *How to take your own inspirations to produce designs*
https://youtu.be/HRxC3eUnfbI?list=PLAXeXQ0M-02w-NNxfeMNdDLULC2_dwbjC

Learning Environments: An Introduction - *Lesson highlights the importance of the environment and provides an overview of what to consider when creating and maintaining developmentally appropriate learning environments*
https://www.virtuallabschool.org/school-age/learning-environments/lesson-1

Flexible Classrooms: Providing the Learning Environment That Kids Need - *How flexible classrooms empower student choice, increase student engagement, and improve student participation*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cscJcRKYxA

Innovative Learning Spaces for the Next Generation: Centerview Elementary School - *A school that emphasizes flexible and personal learning at the elementary level*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUisTKQFDho

Old School Supplies: 28 Items We Wish We Still Had - A *nostalgic list some of some all-time favourite school supplies*
https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/08/20/old-school-supplies_n_3786292.html

17 Inventions That Could Make Going Back to School a Little Bit Easier - *Loads of inventions that parents and children can appreciate during the school year*
https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/17-inventions-that-could-make-going-back-to-school-a-little-bit-easier-180956498/?page=8

56 Hi-Tech Back to School Supplies - *Examples of back to school technology that leave old school supplies in the dust*
https://www.trendhunter.com/slideshow/back-to-school-technology