

Promising Practices: Design-O-Saurus—A participatory design process

Challenge

Establish a way for children and adults to use their imaginations and work together to create, plan, and implement new exhibits, programs, products, and events

Program Description

Using the IDEPPI design process (Please see below), the Design-O-Saurus program incorporates four stages that involve community members to promote participatory design of museum displays, workshops, exhibits, etc.

Stage One: Get a core group of “planners” together—youth, subject matter experts, and community members—who are committed to meeting about eight times to solve a problem, fulfill a need, or plan a project.

Stage Two: Review the IDEPPEI design process with the core group. This will familiarize them with the basics of the process so that they can begin to plan how they will work as a group.

- I=Intending** Identify what the need is and talk about it. Think of something you want to understand or do and describe what you hope to accomplish, and for whom.

- D=Defining** Define the problem that you will be solving, as well as who will be working on this problem. Think about what is involved and the information and resources needed.

- E=Exploring** Explore new, unusual, creative, off-the-wall, and out-of-the-box solutions. Think of fun, informative, and inspirational exercises that will help explain the subject and show the many sides of the problem. The exploration should be hands-on and meaningful. Imagine and discover how things can be or are related. Use a diagram, map, or chart to organize the elements of your ideas.

- P=Planning** Plan a proposed or tentative course of action that defines what steps will be taken—an outline of important things to include in each meeting session with goals and objectives listed. This should include plans for session meetings, who will facilitate discussions, how to recruit participants, and apply what you know and can use to achieve your goals.

- P=Producing** Produce a prototype or working model of the solution—a schedule and recruitment model that is explicit and definitive. Outline and describe your plan in detail.

E=Evaluating Think of your goals and how to determine whether you have met them. Suggest why your solution is a good one and describe how it might be improved.

I=Integrating Implement your plan into the real world for the final evaluation.

Stage Three: Conduct Design-O-Saurus sessions:

Session One – Icebreaker, IDEPPEI steps “intending”, “defining the problem” and the beginning of “exploring”

Session Two - Continuation of the IDEPPEI “exploring” process

Session Three – This session is centralized on the IDEPPEI steps of “planning” for the solution and “producing” the solution model.

Session Break – In between session three and four the core team of planners review all of the models. A composite of the ideas that work within the needed parameters is developed. The core team then presents this model during the final session.

Session Five – Core team presents the composite plan for the final solution. This session focuses on the IDEPPEI step of “evaluation” where participants are asked to give their feedback, suggestions, and concerns regarding the final model. This is also a celebration session of the hard work and outcomes of the process.

Stage Four: After the Design-O-Saurus sessions are completed, the IDEPPEI step of “integration” takes place and the plan is put into motion.

Results

Participatory design at the UPCM has resulted in the establishment of the following exhibits and structures:

- The Front Entrance - Fall '92
- The Theatre - Spring '93
- The Kitchen - Spring '94
- Play Area Exhibit - Summer '94
- The Kid's City Street Exhibit - Summer '94
- The World of Mining Exhibit - Fall '94
- The Ground Water Exhibit - Fall '94
- The Forestry Exhibit - Spring '95
- Safety Exhibit - Fall '95
- Weather Exhibit - Fall '95
- The Touch Tank Exhibit - Spring '96
- The Museum's web page - Spring '96
- The Health Exhibit - Fall '96

- The Retail Store - Fall '96
- The Aviation Exhibit - Summer '97
- Youth Design Studio - '01
- Healthy Choice Exhibit - Fall '02
- Healthy Community Healthy Youth Coalition Logo - March '03.

Target

Any organization or group interested in participatory design

Source

Chuck Burnette from the Philadelphia School of Art developed the IDEPPEI participatory design process. The UPCM expanded the design and applies it to numerous planning and design creative processes.

Organization

Upper Peninsula Children's Museum
 Nheena Weyer Ittner, Director
 123 West Baraga Avenue
 Marquette, MI 49855
 (906) 226-3911
www.upcmkids.org

Organization Description

The Upper Peninsula Children's Museum (UPCM) is a center for learning in partnerships with schools, community organizations, religious groups, art organizations, and education professionals. It is committed to offering learning opportunities through the Museum's exhibits and related programming that are not currently available to youth in the rural Upper Peninsula. The Museum builds positive assets in our youth through unique learning methods and provides role models that are needed to form healthy and happy lives.

Each museum exhibit is a unique environment and offers a tremendous amount of learning through investigation and creativity. Through creative youth empowerment, the museum is able to offer cultural and educational exhibits that reflect the diverse interests, history, culture, and heritage of the families of the rural Upper Peninsula.

The UPCM empowers youth by giving them a significant voice within their own programs, as well as providing a mechanism for spreading their voice to the community.

- The UPCM believes in the importance of giving youth the respect for their ideas through each stage of their growth.
- The UPCM youth programs are based on building personal and professional skills and positive assets through youth empowerment techniques.
- The UPCM's interactive museum and related programming is based on the philosophy that experiential hands-on learning is a critical component of REAL learning.

- The five fundamental resources of “America’s Promise” (mentor, protect, nurture, teach, and serve) provide the basis for programming at the UPCM.
- The UPCM utilizes the Search Institute’s developmental asset research as a road map in programming and as an evaluation tool.