

C.H.E.S.S. “CHESS HELPS EVERY STUDEN SUCCEED”. DEVELOPING SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SKILLS FOR ALL STUDENTS NOT ONLY THE TOURNAMENT PLAYERS”

Fernando Moreno, Montgomery County Public School (Maryland) United States; NCC, School Counselor

This program described the chess counseling program conducted in a Title One Elementary School called Broad Acres ES (2014) in Silver Spring MD, US. **“Chess Helps Every Student Succeed”** was initiated in 2007 with a grant from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE 2007). Since that year the Program has secure grants from nonprofit organization. Las year the program received funds from the Education Foundation Inc. (2014).

Also, there are several legislative initiatives to secure chess instruction in Maryland schools (MSDE 2010)

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS 2014) is a large suburban school district with more than 150,000 students enrolled. MCPS has an average of 35% of Free and Reduce meals (FARM)and, 14% of Language Limited English, LLE students. Broad Acres’ students and their families face a lot of emotional, academic and economic challenges in contrast to many of other families in MCPS. The population at Broad Acres is around 700 students from Pre K to 5th grade. The students are predominantly low income (95% FARMS), immigrant (75% Language Limited English, LLE) with a disproportionate level of major health problems. .These problems included alcohol and other drugs involvement, domestic violence, truancy from school and high risk of gang involvement and teen pregnancy. Also the Broad Acres families have lower rates of higher education such as college degrees. Because of all the challenges describe above the Broad Acres students and their families need extra support to increase their participation and engagement in school as well as in the whole community at large.

“Chess Helps Every Student Succeed” provides chess instruction during whole class room instruction, individual and group sessions to facilitate the development of social emotional, problem-solving, and thinking skills and better integration of the English Language Learners (ELL) at Broad Acres ES (Moreno 2002)

Chess skills will be correlated with social emotional skills (CASEL 2014) such as:

- recognizing and managing our emotions,
- developing caring and concern for others,
- establishing positive relationships,
- making responsible decisions,

All students graduating from school learn how to play chess. Students learn chess as a way to increase their critical thinking, decision making and emotional skills to further advance their cognitive, social and academic performance. Mr. Moreno's counseling with chess provides an opportunity for students to increase their self-knowledge, and ability to think critically, Improve their persistence, and motivation toward learning. Student plan for their future and, make better decision.

The program is structured in 3 components. A chess curriculum is presented to all students in the upper grades integrating social emotional skills through chess. (Moreno, 2002) The second component is the after school chess club for students in the upper grades. (Around 100 students signed last this year) Former students from the program who are in Middle and High School help teach chess during the after school program (Moreno 2014). The third component is chess competitions. We sponsor a chess tournament for only the 4th and 5th grade students during their recess and lunch time during school. In this inside tournament all students are invited to participate regarding if they are members of the chess club. Last year more than 75 % of students participated. The last component is the smaller component of the program. Few students participated in local and state rate chess Tournament. Last year around 25 students participated in a local Elementary Chess League as well as the Maryland State Tournament with different result. Our team won the Beginner section in 2007. This component is small due to the high fees that attending a Tournament cost. Transportation to local tournaments, USCF membership fees and inscription fee in chess Tournament cost more than \$50. Our low income families cannot afford it. Part of the grant money tries to cover part of this cost.

During this decade Broad Acres has been increasing their Math and reading Scores to a higher level. (MSA 2010) The school has been recognized nationally for their improvement in the Maryland Student Achievement test, some years with students having the 100% in proficiency in

Math achieved.

The participants and teachers fill out surveys at the end of the school year. In a consistent basis the results are the same. More than 90% likes the program using chess during whole classroom instruction for Counseling. And they have learned from the social emotional skills that the program teaches. However, around 30% of them would like to participate in Chess tournaments.

Also the school community superintendent Dr. Start visited the school, played chess with our students and commented positively about the skills the students were learning. (Broad Acres 2014)

This is the key information that we can learn from it. Creating and implementing chess program for all students. Not only because you can increase math and reading scores, but because you can facilitate the development of social emotional skills. Part of the program can naturally be used to create tournament players, but not the primary goal of the program. "Chess Helps Every Student Succeed" has proven that it is possible to create a chess program that all students benefit from it regarding their social economic status and their ability or interest to become tournament players.

Fernando Moreno is a National Certified counselor with more than 20 years of experience. He is a member of the USCF Chess in Education Committee from the USCF and presented in many international and national Conferences in how to use the game of Chess in Schools. He published "Teaching Life Skills through Chess" and his work has been mentioned in many articles and other publications.

References:

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<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/broadacreses/about/chess.aspx>

(CASEL2014) Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning

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MCPS 2014 Summary

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