

A Research Paper by Silver Oaks on Developing School Culture

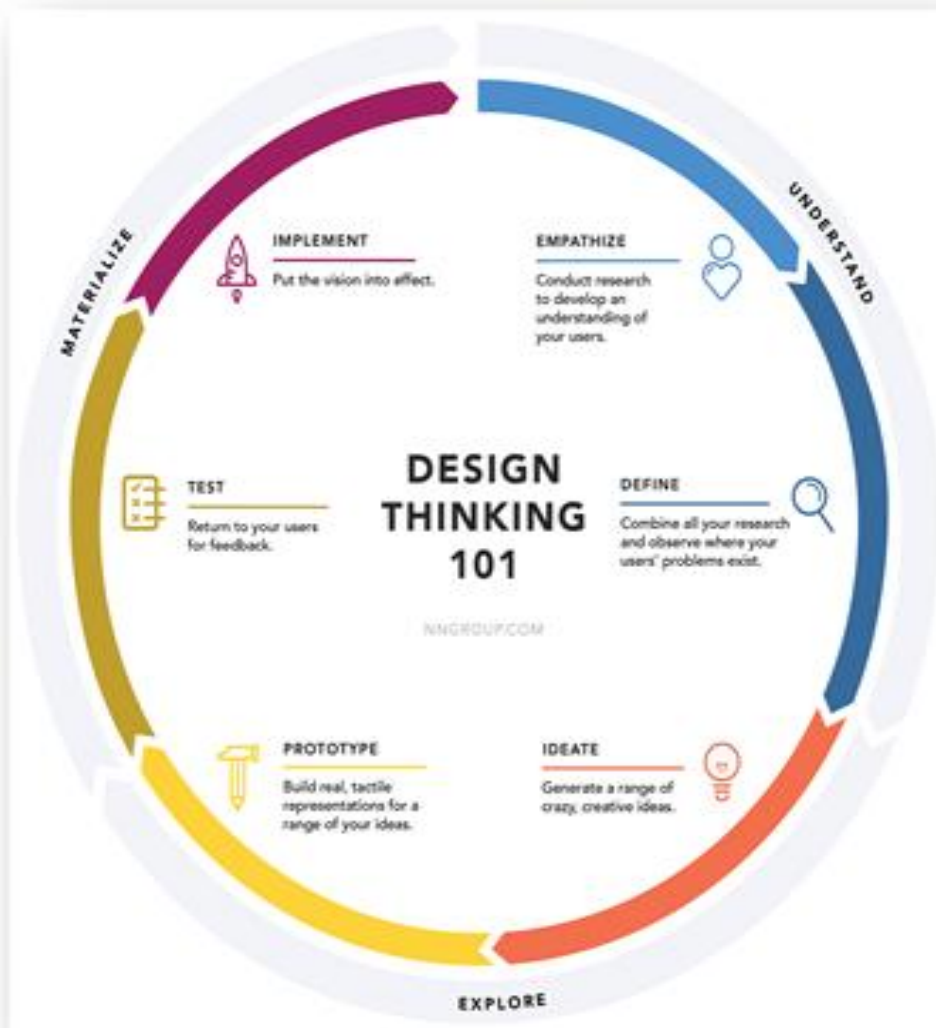
Cultures @ Silver Oaks International School

Culture is us.

We make it.

We shape it as we love it to be.

Design Thinking in Cultures @ Silver Oaks International School



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Empathize:

Silver Oaks International School, an ecosystem of learning, is a diverse community of faiths, beliefs, cultures, with 3000 students, 200 staff, 200 sub staff and their families. While diversity plays an important role in an organization by learning from each other and respecting others' culture, it is equally important that all individuals in an organization are bound by a commonality that brings harmony amongst them and gives a direction to meet the vision of the school.

Define:

Way back in 2005, it was highly observed that all entities in the school wore an authoritarian tone of communication. Parents with Management and teachers; Teachers with colleagues and students; Staff with sub staff - in all cases, the former being superior to the latter, for reasons known best to them.

Birthdays were celebrated in a grand way - students cutting cakes in classrooms; distributing expensive gifts and chocolates and creating unhealthy competition and a show off of wealth and status.

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Ideate:

- The Culture of Silver Oaks School (2005 - 2006) '***Speak softly and pleasantly, Smile always and Be Positive and Progressive, Feel good Look good and Do good, Have and Show Confidence***' came into existence in order to have harmony amongst all entities in the school and create an egalitarian community. These verses were then given a tune for students, teachers and parents to sing along and internalize it.

A noticeable change in the attitude of entire school community prevailed. Two years of consistent and deliberate practice led to a desirable change.

- Value generation through "***Live life the lean way***" was achieved in 2006 - 2007. Students were shown a more meaningful way of celebrating birthdays by sharing their happiness with the needy and sensitive. They were encouraged to visit old age homes and/or orphanages and celebrate their special day. Distribution of chocolates and cutting of cakes were replaced with being gifted with birthday books by the school and all students singing "Happy birthday" song in the school assembly.
- Policies like Stationery, Homework, Reading and their kinds were brought in, to in still independence and responsibility towards their work in the later years.

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The School Culture *'Speak softly and pleasantly, Smile always and Be Positive and Progressive, Feel good Look good and Do good, Have and Show Confidence'* left a great impact on the school community and served as one such effective experience which led to the ideation of converting policies into cultures. All the existing policies were then re-interpreted as 12 Cultures that will *groom young people who will Live for a purpose, Learn to apply, Lead with determination and Leave a timeless legacy.*

Prototype: 

A [School calendar](#) was designed with 12 cultures and their collective behaviours for every month.

Details of the collective behaviours conveyed through each culture

1. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO LIVE:

- We Speak Softly & Pleasantly. We Smile Always.
- We are Positive and Progressive.
- We Feel Good, Look Good and Do Good.
- We Have and Show Confidence.

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2. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO LEARN:

- We Inquire and Construct Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes.
- It's Constructivism!
- We Think, Analyze and Reflect on our Character and Competence.
- It's Cognitivism!
- We Make Connections between our Learning and Living.
- It's Connectivism!

3. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO CONSERVE:

- We Live Life the Lean Way.
- We Use Pencils, Pens, Papers, Staplers, Sharpeners, Wisely.
- Respect and Conserve Stationery and Materials in School, at Home and in Public Places.
- We save the Unnecessary Costs on Stationery and all Materials.
- Balance and Sustain Environment, Economy and Culture by Reducing, Reusing and Recycling.

4. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO WORK:

- We Have a Proactive Work Culture.
- We Thrive in Our Work.
- We Preserve to do More than We Can.
- We Work Without Reminders.
- We work Independently and Collaboratively.

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5. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO GIVE:

- We Respect Other's Needs.
- We Save and Earn Coins for the Country.
- We Donate Funds to Those Who Need Education.
- We Support and Train Teachers in Community Schools.
- We Collect and Donate Things We Don't Need, for Those who are in Need.
- We Feel It's Our Responsibility and Not Charity.

6. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO APPRECIATE:

- We Thank People, Places, Nature, Sources and Things for Enriching Our Lives.
- We Give Credit To and Acknowledge People and Sources.

7. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO THINK:

- We Read, Listen, Observe, Analyze and Connect.
- We Reflect Before and After We Talk, Question, Write or Act.
- We Engage in Critical and Logical Thought.

8. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO READ:

- We Learn to Read and Read to Learn.
- We Read to Comprehend, Develop Fluency, Vocabulary and Knowledge.
- We Use Books, Newspapers, Articles, Reports or any Reading Material to Connect, Extend and Challenge Us.

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- We Believe that Reading is the Only Treasure that Accompanies Its Owner Everywhere.

9. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO TRUST:

- We Earn Trust Through Our Integrity.
- We Repose Trust When People Show Integrity.
- We are Balanced and Honest.
- We Do Not Sham, Lie, Evade or Avoid.
- We are Consistent in our Behaviour and Interactions.
- We Seek Out the Good In Everyone.

10. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO COLLABORATE:

- We Think Win-Win. We Synergize.
- We are Open Minded.
- We Seek Multiple Perspectives.
- We Respect Individual Strengths and Collective Spirit.
- We Understand Other People with their Differences can also be Right.

11. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO BE CONSISTENT:

- We are Congruent in What We Say, Think and Do.
- We Continue, Preserve, Persevere and Sustain the Good Practices within the School.
- We Explore the Depths of Each Practice and Make Connections.

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12. CULTURE OF SILVER OAKS TO LEAD:

- We Do What We Ought to Do. We Do More than Talk, We Act.
- We Do More than Belong, We Participate.
- We Do More than Live, We Grow. We Do More than Earn, We Enrich.
- We Do more Than Believe, We Practice. We Do More than Learn, We Apply.
- We Believe that We can Do Something.

Pdf of the School Calendar.

Test:  and **Implement:** 

2018 -19 is a testing period where the implementation is planned through various activities like:

- Orientation for parents on Graduation days towards cultures to be followed by us.
- Workshop for teachers on 'What are the Drivers/Preventers of cultures at SOS.
- Student Government members discuss in groups about each cultures
- Speaker @ Silver Oaks: Children to choose one culture and speak about it.

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- Word Craft-Children choose a culture and write their understanding about it.
- 'Street store' conducted on 30th September, 2018 is an implementation of - 'Culture to Give'.
- A survey is being done on 'Culture to Live' and 'Culture to Trust' among student groups and teachers.
Survey sheet link:
<https://goo.gl/forms/s4lyC3THTj2WDGZJ3>
- Teachers are integrating these cultures into their teaching and learning programmes for students to understand and demonstrate in their attitude and behaviour.