



Flying Friends Introduction

Elevator Pitch:

A bilingual memory game that deepens and accelerates the understanding of nature.

Summary:

Green Steps is a start-up for environmental education. We are constantly developing new methods to increase respect for Mother Earth and our understanding of our responsibility to the planet, others and oneself. Our games aim at an accelerated and lasting understanding of the natural world.

People ask us why we are trying to reinvent the wheel. There are already many hundreds or even thousands of publications about wildlife and games about nature on the market. However, we think that these publications and games have nothing to do with the immediate ecosystems we live in. They offer either an encyclopedic overview of life or a selection of species that we will rarely encounter in our neighborhoods or hometowns.

Our game idea rests on three pillars:

1. Ecological concept: Nature knows no political boundaries, so we work with the geographical territory of the bioregion. Bioregions are characterized by specific landscape form, soil, climate, flora and fauna, hydrological properties such as watersheds.

2. Educational concept: We use a part of the Montessori method, the so-called "Nomenclature and Definition Cards", which have been proven to promote the entry of learning content into long-term memory. "Nomenclature Cards" are a proven method for explaining and retaining the vocabulary for entire concepts such as birds, mammals or insects.

3. Linguistic concept: Our game can be set up bilingually to make the vocabulary accessible in cross-border bioregions, for example German and Hungarian or Chinese and Thai, and to allow children of different nationalities to participate in the same game.

Biodiversity

Our game idea potentially encompasses the entire biodiversity of birds on our planet, but breaks them down into bioregions. This practically means that in the course of the game design we collaborate with birding experts of a certain bioregion e.g. Yangtze Delta, and identify which birds exist in this bioregion and based on the frequency and probability of encountering these birds, we make a selection to group the memory card sets.

Problem Background

A team of researchers from the University of Pennsylvania examined the testimonies of hundreds of astronauts who had the opportunity to view Earth from space. Their analysis revealed three common feelings:

1. a greater appreciation for the beauty of the earth;
2. a heightened sense of attachment to all other living beings;
3. an unexpected, often overwhelming feeling of emotion.

The researchers believe that someone who looks at Earth from a far away is developing new cognitive links to understand what they see. They believe that this new view, this new perspective, this new visual truth has changed these astronauts forever. This feeling is commonly referred to as the "overview effect".

We have known since the 1970s at the latest that human impacts are irretrievably damaging our planet, and we have only recently celebrated Earth's 50th day with no scalable solutions to climate change in sight. What if the overview effect could transform many millions of people without shooting them into space?

Solution

We believe that a playful creation of bioregional identities is key to a solution to the climate crisis. Bioregions are a natural steppingstone to perceive Earth as a gigantic ecosystem. Bioregional identities, however, cannot be created with a map or Google Earth, but only through physical and multisensory engagement with nature.



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Our games support this process by applying an aspect of the Montessori method. The so-called Three Period Lesson which consists of the presentation of entire concepts such as birds, its multisensorial exploration in nature and the repetition of the experienced in the form of logbooks, creative works or games like Flying Friends.

Target Audience

Children, Students, Parents, Teachers, Schools

This game applies the mystery effect and ties deeply into the reward system of our brain. Children have a natural curiosity and want to know what they find on the back of a card. Especially smaller children have a hard time waiting and want to turn all the cards over at once. Learning to wait and do things in a structured and sequential order is an important lesson and a habit that helps to navigate life better.

This game helps children to read and remember small parts of the natural world. Parents and teachers are invited to help children 6 years and older read or spell bird labels one at a time before the player flips the next card. Observe your children; sometimes they are eager to read at a much earlier age and you can use this game to get them going.

Flying Friends is a pairing game. Children are asked to pair identical photos and supplementary names in two different languages. Pairing is a basic skill for later scientific work. Players build their identical, partial and complementary pairing skills, which are required for many tasks in different careers such as biology, archaeology, physiology and much more.

Idea Novelty

Bioregional games do not exist. We analyzed dozens of memory games, but we found time and again that these games do not create a bioregional identity. Our USP is created from three game concept pillars:

1. Ecological concept
2. Educational concept
3. Linguistic concept

We also offer a downloadable user manual on our website, which enables parents, teachers and readable children to use this game independently as a learning method.

Company Milestones

- Chinese company registered Nov 2016 in Shanghai
- 2000+ learners joined Green Steps activities since 2017
- 20+ Green Steps Nature Guides trained since 2019
- European headquarter registered Nov 2019 in Austria
- Participant of Robert Bosch Foundation accelerator "Citymakers" from Feb-Sep, 2020
- EUR 25k Erasmus+ grant awarded by the European Commission for the training of 40 Green Steps Nature Guides in summer 2020

Team

Our entire team, full-time and part-time employees in Europe and China can be found on www.greensteps.me/about.