



mateneen

Practice booklets
Democratic school culture

The Class Council

IMPRESSUM

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The Practice Booklets Democratic School Culture offer school administrators and school staff theoretical basics and practice oriented instructions for democratic pedagogical school development.

Each issue is dedicated to a particular form of democratic education or a strategic question of school development.

The practical booklets in German are made available to all Luxembourg schools as a print edition and are available online with additional material, both in German and in French.

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Foreword

Pupil participation can be promoted on many levels. The spectrum ranges from a systematic participation - as an integral part of the school culture - to individual projects and actions designed by pupils, from participatory teaching to more institutionalised and representative participation via class representatives and student committees. All levels are essential, and achievements can be made at every level.

The first booklet presented the theoretical concept of democratic school culture and the different possibilities in Luxembourg's school system. Several concrete methods showed how to discuss the promotion of a democratic school culture with the whole school community.

This booklet starts off in the classroom, introducing a specific tool that can be used efficiently in every classroom, both in primary and secondary schools: the class council (*Klassenrat*). With the help of the class council, the entire class can debate, develop proposals, and make decisions according to a clearly structured procedure and defined roles. It allows the learning and

testing of concrete competencies as well as the promotion of real participation of all pupils at the class level. The approach has been tested and improved in many schools over the years. Class councils can be used both in primary schools and in secondary schools. Only the teacher's tasks differ slightly, as do some of the topics discussed.

The following booklet contains a detailed description of the method. The theoretical part depicts the procedure of a meeting and explains the teacher's role. The presentation from the pupils' point of view shows the positive effects of the class council. It underlines various factors for its success, such as the importance of adhering to a binding and regular implementation of the sessions and the teacher's positive attitude.

The practice material contains material for a general introduction to the topic of participation and democracy in the classroom. Furthermore, you will find all the necessary practice material for setting up the class council in primary and secondary schools. Especially for the latter, suggestions are given on how to deal with political issues

in the class council. As usual, all documents and material can be downloaded free of charge from the mateneen.eu homepage.

We hope that you enjoy the booklet and that you can successfully apply the class council method. We look forward to your comments, reports and suggestions.

The Editorial Team

The class council: democracy learning in the classroom

Matthias Busch, Carina Otto

It is the participation of committed citizens that keeps democracy alive. To this end, it is necessary to introduce children and young people to democratic methods as soon as possible. The democratic class council offers pupils a variety of opportunities to experience participation and to strengthen their democratic competencies.

The precursors of the class council go back a long way. As early as the 1920s, corresponding bodies such as the 'school community' or the '**hour for contemporary issues**' existed with the aim of promoting democratisation and political judgement in schools. Unlike other representative forms of participation such as the student committee or the national youth parliament, which can only be attended by individual representatives, class councils offer all children and young people - regardless of gender and educational level - the chance to experience participation. In the protected setting of the learning group, **democratic competencies can be trained** and an understanding of participatory processes developed. These form the basis for further involvement in pupil representation, in children's and youth councils in municipalities or in civil society. Class disruptions and conflicts in the class are generally solved constructively and

Hour of contemporary issues

The hour for current issues is a method which enables learners to discuss a current political or social issue in a controversial way. The focus is not on acquiring knowledge, but on exchanging arguments and different opinions to promote political judgement.

more permanently with pupil participation than through conventional 'top-down' interventions. In addition, the identification with the class and school community grows. The class council is a democratic participation body in which all pupils are represented. In regular meetings, common concerns of the pupils, conflicts, matters of the school community and political topics can be discussed, while binding decisions for the learning group can be made, too. The organisation and chairing of the meetings are carried out in an autonomous way. Pupils who are specially elected as moderators for the class council discussions - which take place according to a structured procedure - ensure that the discussion rules are adhered to and that the results and decisions are documented. Although the concrete form of a class

council varies from one learning group to the other - and needs to be adapted to the specific needs and conditions of the class, as well as to the pupils' ages - there are central principles and defined organisational structures which are essential for the success of this form of democratic learning.

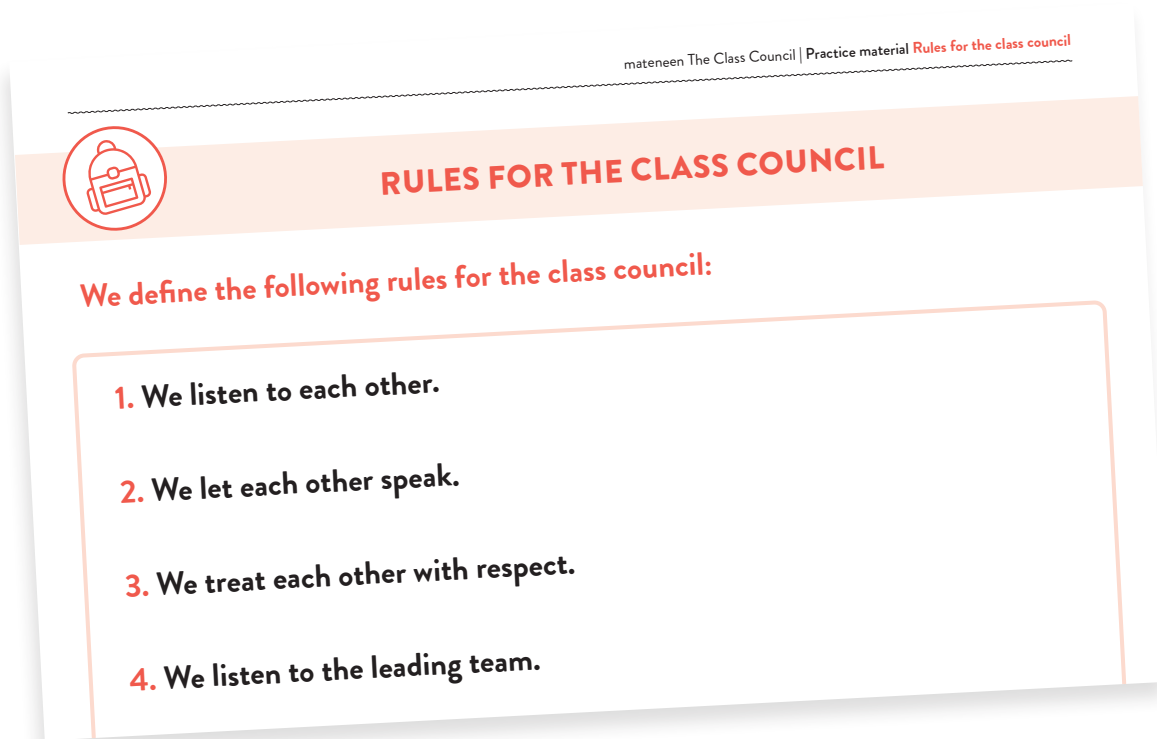
Rules and positions in the class council

The discussions in the class council are based on clear responsibilities and rules for discussion that structure the interactions and procedures in the class council. These include respectful interaction, listening to each other and letting each other speak, as well as agreements stating that everyone speaks for themselves and that only one person speaks at a time. To promote commitment and understanding for a constructive culture of discussion, it is advisable to make pupils develop the rules of discussion together and display the latter on a poster in the classroom, which may even be signed by all participants (cf. Fig. 1). Teachers should make sure that the rules are formulated in a concrete and verifiable way and that they describe the desired positive actions, instead of the undesired (mis)behaviour (for instance: 'I will listen attentively' instead of 'I do not interrupt others').

Democratic competencies

Democratic competencies include the following abilities: to adopt other peoples' perspectives, to clarify conflicts in a methodological way, to evaluate social problems, to participate in civic self-government, in social and political initiatives and in the formation of public opinion.

Fig. 1: Discussion rules for the class council of a 7th grade class at Lycée Nic Bieber



'I'-Messages :

With the help of the 'I'-message developed by the American psychologist Thomas Gordon, criticism can be formulated not as an attack on the interlocutor ('You'-message), but as a conflict-mitigating self-revelation in which the speaker expresses his or her feelings and opinion (Gordon model).

Especially for younger pupils, it is helpful to combine the introduction of a class council with communication exercises that specifically train the necessary communicative skills and applications, such as the formulation of **'I'-messages**. The list of rules should be reviewed from time to time and, if necessary, supplemented with further rules of conversation.

The pupils are responsible for observing the rules of discussion and for ensuring a constructive discussion process in the class council. To this end, roles are assigned in

the class council, representing different functions. One person leads the meeting and moderates the discussions as president or chairperson, giving the floor to individual pupils, organising votes and summarising results. A timekeeper makes sure that the scheduled discussion times for the individual agenda items are adhered to. A referee or rule keeper ensures that the rules of the discussion are not violated and, if necessary, admonishes and sanctions individual pupils. A secretary documents the decisions and central results of the class council. The individual positions can be determined by election, drawing lots or – initially – the teacher's or classmates' suggestions, too. A rotational change, for example every trimester, gradually gives all pupils the chance to try out the different leadership roles and to take responsibility for the class. Especially with inexperienced groups of learners, it can be useful to assign each role to two pupils so that they can assist each other with the respective task. Role cards that provide tips and formulation aids for the individual roles support the work.

Procedure of a class council meeting

The procedure of a class council meeting is clearly structured and includes recurring phases. With the help of this fixed structure, it should be ensured that the participants reach a result within the given time and gain increasing confidence in the implementation.

The topics to be discussed in a session can be suggested by all pupils in the days before the actual session. In a 'topic-box' or on a 'notice board' (cf. Figs. 2 and 3), which are permanently set up in the classroom, topics for discussion, criticism and praise are collected. Especially for younger pupils, it is advisable to use prestructured cards or different-coloured cards to make it easier to formulate the different concerns. The leadership team, consisting of the chairperson, the timekeeper, the referee and the secretary, reviews the proposals shortly before the start of the meeting and arranges them in an agenda, which is displayed in the classroom beforehand. This will inform all pupils about the upcoming topics.

'Unlike other representative forms of participation, class councils offer all children and adolescents, regardless of gender, origin and level of education, the chance to experience participation.'

In order to encourage the pupils to stand up for their positions and to avoid the topic - box being used as an outlet for frustration, anonymous topics should not be dealt with in the class council.

Before the class council starts, a circle of chairs is formed in which all pupils sit down. This chair arrangement, apart from expressing the shift from subject lessons to class council, emphasises the equality and unity of the workgroup¹.

The class council session begins with the official opening of the meeting by the chairperson. For younger pupils, this can be followed by a positive round in which the participants, one after the other, report an accomplishment from their everyday class life. Since conflicts are often at the centre of the class council, its kick-off should create a positive atmosphere. The next step consists in reading the minutes: the decisions of the last meeting are read out and the participants asked for brief feedback.

This reminds the participants of the agreements, and their implementation can thus be verified. Via the class representatives, the student committee's report, respectively the school parliament's or children's council's report informs the pupils about school issues and decision-making processes and offers them the opportunity to bring their own concerns to the attention of the school administration.

Fig. 2: Concerns and topic suggestions for the class council are collected in this topic-box



Photo: Julie Heusbourg

Class council box of a primary school class in Mersch

'For the success of the class council, it is crucial to hold the meetings regularly and at binding times.'

This can strengthen the fundamental democratic anchoring of the student committee, which it often lacks without a class council.

If no objections are raised by the participants, the topics that have been collected during the week can be addressed. As soon as all perspectives on a topic have been expressed, the search for a solution and a subsequent agreement follows. During this phase, the whole class can brainstorm solutions. A decision is usually reached by a final vote. If there is conflict between individual members of the class council, a vote is not possible. In this case, the conflicting parties have to work out a

solution that works for them. Afterwards, the decisions are documented in the minutes and read out again. The class council session ends with the chairperson thanking the members for their cooperation.

Conditions for a successful class council

For the class council's success, it is crucial to hold the meetings regularly and at binding times. For younger pupils, a weekly cycle can help them to internalise the processes and roles. With older or more experienced groups of learners, it is also possible to work with a two- to four-week rhythm.

In any case, it is important that pupils know for sure that the class council will take place, and when. If teachers postpone meetings at short notice, for example in favour of subject lessons, the council

quickly loses its importance. As a result, the conceded democratic participation is experienced as a sham and a farce. When deciding on discussion topics, care should be taken regarding the issues that are dealt with; it is important that they can actually be decided on by the class and that they allow, contrary to private topics, for public discussion. It is of course true that the pupils decide which topics are discussed in the class council, and that it is not the adults' but the pupils' standard that is decisive. Nevertheless, it is not advisable to discuss certain topics (see overview). For example, incidents of bullying should not be discussed in class, in order to protect the victims and to avoid staging the class council as a trial. The focus of the procedure is not on convicting perpetrators and assigning blame, but on finding constructive solutions.

Fig. 3: Notice board as an alternative to the letterbox



Notice board of a primary school class in Roeser

Photo: Fanni Müller

What belongs in the class council? Tom Ketter



This does not belong in the class council

- The class council is not a place to discuss recurring conflicts and more serious misdemeanours. Such matters must be discussed in alternative school settings.
- The class council is not meant to decide on punishments or sanctions of any kind, since the class council aims to work in a solution-oriented way.
- The class council is not a place to deal with anonymous concerns.
- The class council does not treat pupils in a derogatory way or expose them.
 - The class council does not talk about absent persons.
- The class council does not discuss pupils' private affairs.



This belongs in the class council

- The class council can be a place to deal with the internal organisation of lessons and school life (seating plan, class duties, organisation of homework, etc.)
 - Extraordinary school activities (e.g., excursions, school trips, etc.) can be discussed in the class council.
- A common project can be discussed in the class council.
- Problems between several pupils can be discussed in the class council.
- The class council is a place where pupils can learn and try out co-determination.
- Pupils should learn to explain, justify, and defend ideas and proposals in the class council.
- The class council is where objective criticism is learnt and practised.
- Constructive debates should take place in the class council.

Moreover, it would be wrong to use the class council exclusively as a space to discuss individual conflicts. The discussion of organisational or school-related issues is crucial to preserving the school council's character of a democratic participatory body. Furthermore, the school-policy, as well as communal or general socio-political

issues can be discussed in the class council, if requested by the pupils (see the corresponding article by Michell Dittgen in this issue of mateneen). Regarding the topics and the decisions made, it should be kept in mind that 'the effect of the class council must not end at the classroom door – and just as little at the school gate.'³

Example of a class council session

- 1 Opening of the meeting by the leading team.
- 2 Positive round.
- 3 Presentation of last meeting's minutes and review of the application of decisions.
- 4 Report of the pupils' committee and the class representatives.
- 5 Debate and decision-making on topics of concern to the class.
- 6 Closing of the meeting by the leading team.

Teacher role in the class council

Teachers have an ambivalent position in the class council. With younger pupils, teachers take a seat in the circle of chairs as a member of the class council, making it easier for them to speak if necessary.

However, it should be emphasised that the class council is not led by the teacher, but by individual pupils. This means that teachers adhere to the agreed rules of discussion and that they have to ask for permission to speak if they want to take part in the discussion, too. Yet full equality can never be achieved, as teachers, on account of their office, always bear a specific responsibility: if, for instance, ethically unacceptable decisions are made or if the safety or well-being of individual pupils is endangered, teachers have to intervene.

However, this does not mean that any disputes, procedural errors, resistance or turmoil has to be dealt with immediately, as these can also contribute to and support productive experiential learning. The goal of granting pupils the greatest possible freedom to manage their own affairs independently and responsibly presupposes an awareness on the teacher's part, given that they have to take on an observer's role to the fullest extent and for as long as possible.

This may imply that teachers have to leave the room for a short time if, for instance, they become the topic of the class council themselves. Irrespective of this fundamental restraint during the sessions, teachers are still required to be present at the class council. Their presence supports the leading team, showing a fundamental appreciation of the class council and their availability with advice and assistance, should any questions from the pupils arise. Only if teachers show interest in the class council and are committed to both holding regular meetings and taking the learners' interests and concerns seriously will the pupils accept and recognise the class council as an enriching learning opportunity and a relevant participation committee.

1 Cf. Birte Friedrichs (2009): Praxisbuch Klassenrat. Gemeinschaft fördern, Konflikte lösen. Weinheim: Beltz, p. 22.

2 Cf. Josef Blank (2013): Der demokratiepädagogische Klassenrat. In: Birger Hartnuß, Reinhild Hugenroth, Thomas Kegel (Hrsg.): Schule der Bürgergesellschaft. Bürgerschaftliche Perspektiven für moderne Bildung und gute Schulen. Schwalbach/Ts.: Wochenschau Verlag, pp. 281-288.

3 Blank, loc. cit., p. 287.



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The class council from the pupils' point of view

Carina Otto

Implementing a class council is linked to the hope of strengthening the pupils' democratic competences. An empirical study at the Lycée Nic Biewer in Dudelange examined, on one hand, the competences that the participants acquire through this democratic educational method and, on the other hand, how the class council affects the class community

During the 2017/18 school year, the development of social and democratic competences in all the school's seventh-grade class councils was analysed through a combination of methods: participant observation, interviews and questionnaire surveys. The study focused on the pupils' self-perception - after all, who could report better on personal perceptions and developments than the target group itself?

Positive impact on social skills

Within the framework of this study, it was found that the class council has a positive impact on pupils' social and democratic skills in many ways. The interview participants appreciate the possibility to talk about common concerns in the class council.

Prior to the introduction of the class council, the pupils, according to their own assessment, 'mostly did not hear about anything'. After its implementation, however, the interviewees report an improved exchange of information and an increased awareness of what is going on within the class community.

Both their self-perception and their perception of others are promoted, and their understanding regarding fellow pupils' views increases. They also describe a process of democratisation regarding decision-making:

'It is definitively helpful and positive. Now we can discuss everything together and it is not just one person saying yes, this will be done and no, this will not be done dispute. We decide as a class and it

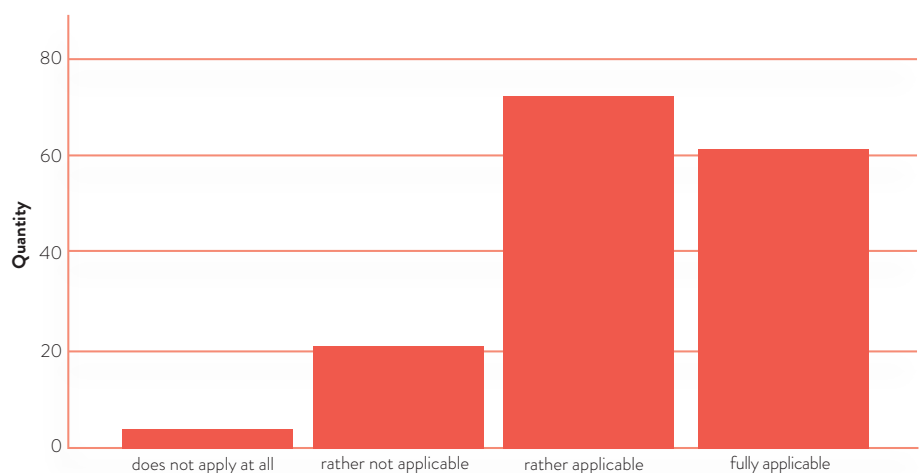
is good for the class, that we understand each other better and that problems can be solved - even disputes.'
(Pupil, Grade 7)

In addition to describing the class council as 'helpful' and 'positive', the pupil explains that the class council's decisions are not made by individuals, but together, including all class council members involved in the decision-making process. The described development from the monocratic to democratic procedure does not only strengthen the participation of the pupils; beyond that, the class council opens up an opportunity for all pupils to enter into a joint exchange with the class council members.

'When there are different opinions, we often take votes, and we talk about what is positive about one and negative about the other. Then we usually make a joint decision.' (Pupil, Grade 7)

Another pupil describes the collective evaluation of different options for action, which furthers the pupils' ability to properly assess a situation and to make an informed decision. This approach trains the class council members' democratic competency of (political) judgment. Moreover, the class council allows the pupils to become familiar with different forms of decision-making within the democratic process. Apart from consensus decision-making, the interviewees mainly mention majority decision-making. Their accounts offer testimony on the fact that class council members learn, as the case may be, to both lose votes and to support democratic decisions. Some 81.6% of the survey's participants⁴ agree with the statement that fair decisions are made in the class council.

Fair decisions are made in the class council.



Democratic conflict resolution in the class council

Regarding the variation of topics, the interviews show that the discussion and resolution of inter-individual conflicts represent a focal point of the class council. Before the class council was introduced, conflicts were settled 'by arguing', 'not at all' or 'with a punishment'; the class council, from the pupils' point of view, offers the possibility to talk about 'problems which otherwise would not be discussed'. It follows that the class council offers an appropriate space and a structure that paves the way for sustainable conflict resolution. The class council verbalises the competency of conflict skills, which is based on both the ability to address conflicts appropriately and resolve them co-operatively.

Several respondents reported positive effects on the class community, too. Especially through the resolution of issues on the inter-individual level, the respondents perceive an improvement in the class climate.

'I noticed that the class definitely argues less among themselves and that many problems do not exist anymore.' (Pupil, grade 7)

Some 73% of the participants 'rather' or 'completely' agree with individual pupils' perception of a positive change in the class community.

Progress in the social skills area contributes to an improved classroom climate, too. Several interview participants describe the option of changing perspectives in the class council.

'If we do not agree, we discuss it and if others have a different opinion, it makes it possible to see what they think.' (Pupil, Grade 7)

In dealing with different opinions, the pupil first expresses the possibility of collective discussion. According to her, this collective exchange makes it possible to find out about the views of fellow pupils and to examine

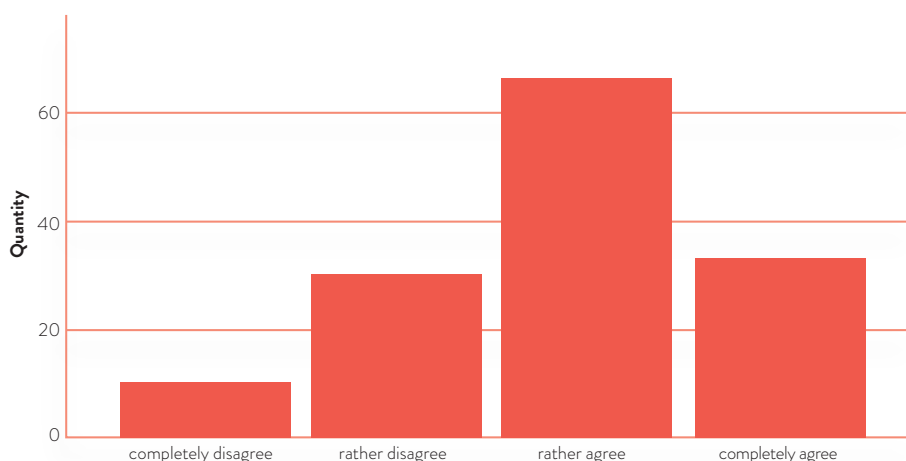
'We decide as a class and that is good for the class.' (Pupil, Grade 7)

issues from different angles.

In the questionnaire survey, individual pupils also recommend the class council because 'you get to know the views of other pupils'.

Finally, the relevance that the pupils attach to the class council proves their high level of satisfaction regarding the democratic educational method: as many as 81.6% of the surveyed pupils stated that, in their opinion, the class council is an important school institution. The importance and effectiveness of the class council is underlined both by this appreciative response and the pupils' view that it promotes democratic and social skills. In addition, the competencies described do not only positively influence the everyday school day - they are, in fact, essential for life in a pluralistic society.

I think that we understand each other better with the help of the class council

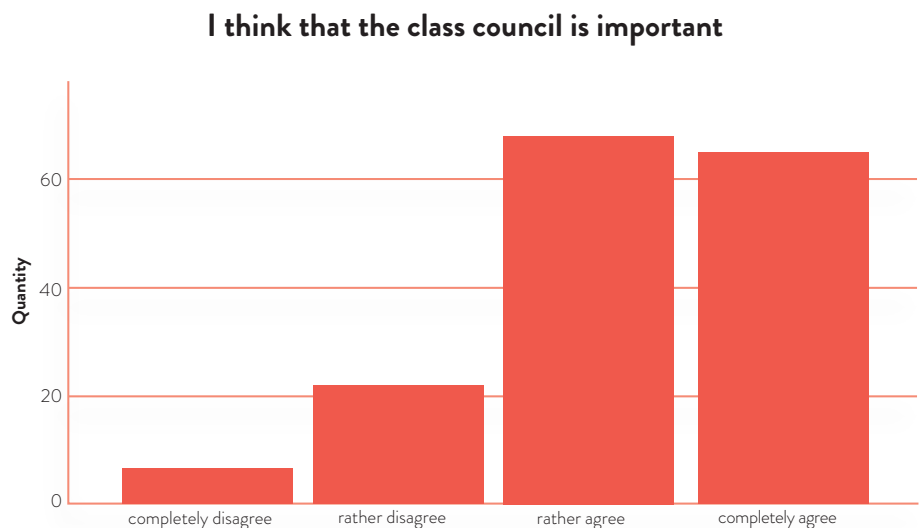


Implementation is what matters

However, a comparison between the eight surveyed classes showed that the effectiveness of the class council strongly depends on the framework conditions under which the accompanying teachers initiate and carry out this democratic educational method. Thus, the perceived positive effect of the class council and the satisfaction with the method were particularly strong in classes in which the class council took place in a regular and binding way.

Conversely, pupils who had experienced few and irregular class council meetings displayed a more sceptical and dismissive attitude. For a class council to actually fulfil the expectations linked to it, specific requirements are important. First, firm and transparent agreements on when and how often it takes place are required. Second, patience is needed until the participation process, which is initially unfamiliar to many pupils, can be understood and its opportunities recognised.

At the same time, teachers' attitudes and their approach are important factors that influence the class council's success. The study shows that many pupils perceive the teacher's role during class council sessions as unclear. Uncertainty can arise among pupils when teachers do not value the class council and question the relevance of the sessions, notably when scheduled class council meetings are arbitrarily cancelled in favour of subject lessons or when negative comments are made about the democratic educational method. In other words, teachers have to display a fundamental appreciation for the class council in order for the pupils to recognise the learning



arrangement as relevant and meaningful. In addition, the study results show that the teachers' actions in the class council also have a central influence on the success of its democratic learning processes. Pupils are able to register if teachers themselves adhere to the discussion rules within the class council and recognise its results. The learners neither appreciate a *laissez-faire* attitude in which accompanying teachers completely withdraw from the discussions in the class council, nor are they happy with teachers who try to intervene in class council discussions unannounced and without being asked to do so.

Teachers who are available to provide support when asked for it, who do not impose themselves and who treat the autonomously organised class council and its discussion rules with appreciation and respect are felt to be much more useful for the learning process. Where this succeeds, the class council can best unfold its effectiveness.

4 Cf. Carina Otto (2018): Der demokratiepädagogische Klassenrat aus Sicht der Schülerinnen und Schüler. Eine empirische Studie zur Situation in Luxemburg, Trier. (unpublished Master thesis)

5 In total, 163 pupils from eight classes were included in the study evaluation.



'You can do it!'

Why the class council makes sense.

An interview with Dr. Christian Lamy

mateneen: Mr. Lamy, how did you come up with the idea of the class council? What convinced you to introduce and implement it?

Christian Lamy: On the one hand, I got to know the class council during my training as a primary school teacher in Luxembourg, because at that time there were already teachers implementing it. On the other hand, I was very involved with the class council during my two-year stay in Quebec, where I was doing a Master's degree at the university.

When I came back to Luxembourg and started teaching, I quickly realised that I would have to spend a lot of time discussing conflicts and the class climate with the pupils. So, I asked myself whether I should invest time and do this in a focused and planned way or leave it to chance. It quickly became clear to me that the class council would become an integral part of my teaching.

mateneen: How did you implement the class council?

Christian Lamy: For me, the class council is an integral part of classroom life, which means that if school starts on 15. September, the first class council can be on 16 September. The class council is then used in a more preventive way: the pupils see the council as a natural element and realise that it is not only a crisis instrument, but above all a place where they can congratulate each other, apologise, make suggestions and – yes – also resolve conflicts. It is also important that the class council takes place strictly once a week, that the pupils can rely on the fact that, for example, there is a class council at 3 o'clock every Friday, and that it becomes a fixed ritual. If they do not know whether the class council is taking place or not, they lose confidence in the council and it loses its effect.

mateneen: How do you answer the question whether primary school children can conduct the class council?

Christian Lamy: Definitely with a yes! But the question is always: what support do they need? Just because the children need more support since they are younger, it does not mean that it is not possible. I have seen class councils in

kindergartens and daycare centres that were fantastic. It is often very impressive what these children say. They can do it!

mateneen: What advice would you give to teachers for a successful class council?

Christian Lamy: Well, there are already two or three things. The class council should become a firmly integrated part of teaching and life in the classroom, it has to become a ritual. It often takes patience until a constructive culture of discussion has developed within the class council. It also seems essential to me that it is above all the children who have their say and that the teacher tries to dictate and determine as little as possible. Moreover, it is important that the class council is short and crisp. It can last only ten minutes, but above all it should not last indefinitely, because then pupils lose interest and concentration. It should also not be an organising committee in which the implementation of good suggestions is planned down to the last detail. Beyond that, the class council must not be a courtroom, because very importantly, the class council should always be solution-oriented. Consensus is important, far more important than voting. Voting should not be carried out too early, one should always try to reach a consensus. I firmly believe that the class council can only have its full effect if the teacher also takes the children seriously the rest of the time – outside the class council – and consistently focuses on participative and cooperative class management.



Dr. Christian Lamy
Director of IFEN

Dr. Christian Lamy is a primary school teacher, educationalist and the current Deputy Director of the Service de Coordination de la Recherche et de l'Innovation pédagogiques et technologiques - SCRIPT

Introducing the class council

Vanessa Reinsch

Before the class council can be introduced in a class, organisational, content-related and methodological preparations are necessary. The article gives tips on how to introduce the class council and offers concrete methods that support its successful implementation in a class.

The plan of introducing a class council should be discussed in advance with the school management and the subject teachers to clarify, among other things, which opportunities of influence should be granted to the class council. Since the class council gives the pupils the chance to, for instance, react to problems by themselves and to develop solutions among themselves, it is essential to inform subject teachers about the possibilities of the new participatory body and to appreciate pupil commitment. At the level of school management, it is advisable to ensure the necessary support, especially for the regular class council meetings. Little is gained if the time slots in which the class council can meet are not bindingly regulated after an initial trial phase. In addition, the pupils' parents should be informed in plenty of time about the introduction, objectives and the added value of the class council, so that they can, if necessary, understand the pupils' reporting on the council.

Methodical preparation

In addition to clarifying organisational and structural issues, methodological preparation is also of central importance. Class council meetings demand considerable communicative and social skills from the pupils. To have the class council members successfully listen to each other, moderate, take minutes and formulate personal concerns, it is advisable to specifically train some of the central communication and working techniques through exercises beforehand.

For example, keeping minutes can be worked on in language classes. Exercises in constructive conversations (formulation of 'I'-messages, the giraffe language, non-violent communication techniques or expressing emotions (cf. overview)) can be implemented in lessons when the opportunity arises. This will facilitate the proceedings in the class council. Moreover, it can be helpful to introduce a silent exercise which will mark the start of every class council. On the one hand, such a ritual increases the pupils' concentration while, on the other hand, it can be a meaningful opening ritual for the class council meetings.

⬇️ Rituals to increase concentration

Content preparation

For pupils to understand and use the functioning of the class council as a democratic participation body, it is advisable to not only talk about the aims and organisation of the class council in a preparatory lesson, but to discuss fundamental questions of democratic coexistence and opportunities for participation at school as well. How do pupils understand 'democracy'? To what extent do they experience school as a democratic space which they can help shape? Which participation opportunities do they know and make use of in school? The material **⬇️ To have the choice** and **⬇️ Participation structures in school** help discover the participation structures within one's own school and understand the integration of the class council as a basic democratic concept in the context of class representatives' meetings, the student committee, and the school administration.

Moreover, it makes sense to co-develop the rules of the class council and the tasks of the different positions with the pupils. However, explanations about the purpose of the class council and the age-appropriate material to be used (e.g., role cards, topic sheets, minutes templates) should be kept within limits and adapted to the specific needs and level of achievement of the class. At this point, it is important to involve the pupils directly in the various decision-making processes so that they can design their class council. Pupils can decide for themselves how to submit their topics (e.g., topic-box, notice board) or how they want to shape their feedback culture.

The teacher can, however, provide food for thought and, if necessary, give formal advice by reminding the participants to formulate positive and verifiable rules for discussion, for example.

The allocation of roles can be done by ballot, secret ballot, or a rotation system. If pupils apply for certain positions, they can say in the class council why they think they are suitable for the role. Then again, classmates can also suggest other pupils and explain why they think a person would be suitable for a certain task. This goes hand in hand with a respectful behaviour towards each other. It is important that pupils, before the election, are aware of the fact that no derogatory comments will be tolerated if it turns out that any candidates receive few or no votes.

From the first meeting an autonomous functioning

The introduction of the class council itself can take place in many ways. The concrete implementation depends above all on the pupils' age, time availability, one's own demand for completeness and how quickly a functional class council is to be set up. However, it is recommended that the

introduction of class councils for primary school children should not be extended indefinitely and should be very illustrative. In her practical report, Anne Blau¹ describes how she introduced and accompanied the class council in the first year of primary school. While the first phase starts with reviewing the week in a discussion round, the first elements of the class council are

introduced in phase two (e.g., the teacher taking minutes) until concrete class council meetings are finally held in phase three.

PRACTICAL MATERIAL

To have the choice (interactive positioning exercise)

This interactive exercise is designed to help pupils understand that decisions have to be taken on a daily basis. Depending on the decision, the consequences for a person can be more or less significant. In addition, the more people who have to make a joint decision based on democratic principles, the more difficult it becomes to reach a common ground. This exercise aims to show pupils that compromise solutions are often necessary if no consensus can be reached. The positioning exercise below can be done in a standing circle. If pupils agree with a statement, they move to the centre of the circle. If they disagree with a statement, they take steps back. The positioning of the pupils offers the teacher different opportunities for discussion.

mateneen The Class Council | Practice material To have the choice



TO HAVE THE CHOICE (INTERACTIVE POSITIONING EXERCISE)

Instructions: Please stand in a circle. I will now make different statements. If you agree with the statement, come to the centre of the circle. If you disagree, step back. If you are unsure, stay where you are.

Exercise: To have the choice

Control statements (to check if the pupils understood)

01. I am a pupil.
02. I go to a school called [name of the school].
03. I am a pupil in class [name of the class].
04. I stayed at home today.

Statements

01. I decided when to get up this morning.
02. I decided what to eat for breakfast/lunch today.
03. I decided which class to join today.
04. In my family, we make a joint decision about...
05. As a class, we can decide how our teachers...



Photo: Vanessa Reinsch



Find the complete
version of the material
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The sooner the teacher withdraws from the proceedings and grants the pupils responsibility for the processes, roles, rituals and feedback rounds, the sooner a state of autonomy can be achieved. If different pupils take on a leading and moderating role in the class council (e.g., chair), they will probably need a little support from the teacher in the first sessions.

Particularly at the beginning, there can always be difficulties with the process, position-specific tasks, or behaviour in the conversations. It is helpful if the teacher guides the pupils in phases of metacommunication towards feedback and reflection and shows them ways to solve problems on their own, for example by adding discussion rules. The continuous assumption of responsibility and the development of independence in the class council require patience and faith in the pupils on the part of the accompanying teachers. In the long run, this will lead to the success of the class council.

1 Anne Blau (2015): Implementierung & Entwicklung des Klassenrats in der 1. Klasse. (unpublished work)



Vanessa Reinsch

Vanessa Reinsch studied Social Pedagogy and Protestant Theology at the TU Dortmund University with a teaching profession in mind. She works at the Zentrum für politisches Bildung.



CHECKLIST : Introducing the class council

Aim

Introduce the class council as a building block of democratic school culture in the classroom.

Target group

School class (10-25 people).

Duration

One double lesson or two individual lessons.

Preparation

- ✓ Inform relevant parties about the project (e.g., school management, parents).
- ✓ Prepare material and methods according to the pupils' age (see role cards).

Implementation

- ✓ Change the seating arrangement in the classroom (circle of chairs).
- ✓ Reflect on the meaning of (school) participation.
- ✓ Introduce the methods and procedures of the class council.
- ✓ Introduce a ritual (e.g., silent exercise, positive round).
- ✓ Distribute roles/positions (e.g., elections).
- ✓ Submit topics (e.g., topic-box or notice board).
- ✓ Establish rules for the class council (ensure positive wording).
- ✓ Conduct regular sessions for evaluation and feedback.

Advice

Involve pupils directly in decision-making processes (e.g., setting class rules) and allow autonomy (e.g., the class council runs without further guidance from the teacher).

Important

Teachers keep the main responsibility for the class and the right to intervene under certain circumstances (e.g., in conflict situations).

Communication exercises to prepare the class council

⬇️ Rituals to increase concentration

With the help of these exercises, the class can build up the necessary concentration and calmness for the class council.

⬇️ Emotion cards

The emotion cards can help pupils express their feelings in an objective way. They can be used either for practice or be used in role play.

⬇️ Justified 'I'-messages

In the class council, discussions and statements should be conducted as free of conflict and values as possible. This is made possible by the 'I'-messages, whereby the 'justified 'I'-message' is particularly useful in the class council. With these methods, situations in which criticism or complaints are made can be dealt with in a constructive and controlled way. However, pupils have to learn and train this kind of communication before being able to use it correctly in relevant situations. There are several small exercises for this purpose. Every exercise can be adapted, by adding more examples or tailoring it to class-specific needs. The document explains, among other things, the 'justified

'I'-message' and contains exercises, e.g., to formulate 'I'-messages and to train the use of the conversation method. This is done in addition to the short theoretical part. The poster serves as a visual reminder and stimulus to use the trained communication method. It can either be handed out to the pupils or be visibly displayed in the classroom.

⬇️ Giraffe language

By using the giraffe language, pupils should learn how to objectively formulate criticism and how to express their emotions and wishes in a factual manner. After the introduction of the giraffe language, the technique of the 'justified

'I'-message' can be further practised. The instructions help pupils learn a solution-oriented way of conducting discussions. With the questionnaire, pupils can independently evaluate their communication and conflict behaviour, and draw the necessary conclusions. The poster, which can be displayed in the classroom, serves as a visual reminder and stimulus to use the trained communication method.

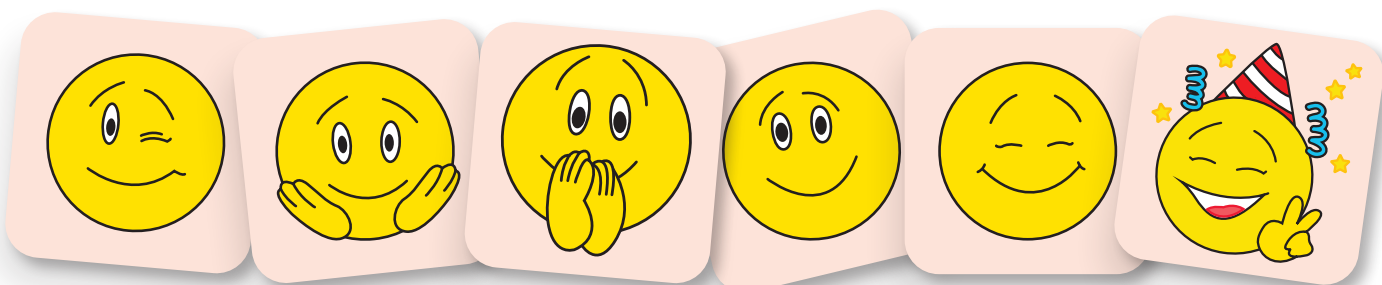
1 Anne Blau (2015): Implementierung & Entwicklung des Klassenrats in der 1. Klasse: document non publié.
 2 The expression 'giraffe language' was coined by Marshall B. Rosenberg. Cf. Marshall B. Rosenberg (2016): Gewaltfreie Kommunikation. 12e édition. Junfermann: Paderborn.

Template for the 'justified 'I'-messages'

If you ...	then ...	because ...	and I wish ...
Behavior that I have a problem with. (Explanation of the situation)	Feelings that this behaviour triggers in me. (Actual 'I'-message)	Justification/ reason. (What consequences does the behaviour have for me)	How the other person should behave in the future.

PRACTICE MATERIAL

Fig.1: Emotion cards





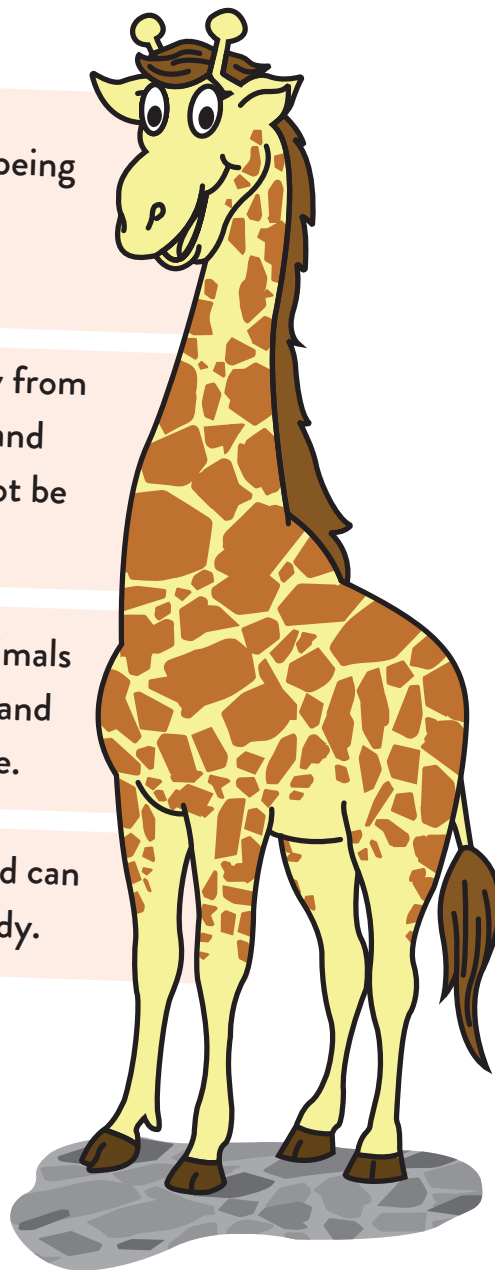
GIRAFFE LANGUAGE

... is a **friendly** and **peaceful** being which lives together with other animals.

... does not take anything away from other animals. It is **very tall** and only eats the leaves that cannot be reached by other animals.

... sees things that the other animals cannot see. It has a **long neck** and can see the world from above.

... has a **big heart**, so that its blood can be pumped throughout the body.



(Cf. Friedrichs, Birte 2009, page 76)

Practice material for the class council in primary schools Tom Ketter

In primary schools, the class council offers pupils the opportunity to learn or deepen their first steps towards democratic behaviour. Here, in a protected space, they learn how to express themselves on various topics, to deal with conflicts in a solution-oriented way and to take responsibility. The material presented here is intended to help with the introduction and implementation of the class council.

In primary school, the class council can be very useful as a fixed ritual for the class community. It grants the class a space in which the pupils can learn to articulate and organize themselves and to treat each other with respect.

Since most pupils at this age do not have much prior knowledge of democratic basics (e.g., leading discussions, consensus-oriented argumentation and solution-oriented working), it is worthwhile to discuss and practice these things before the actual introduction. This has already been shown by existing class councils at various primary schools: with the right tools and the necessary teacher support, the class council can function well and become a meaningful part of the lessons.

The material presented here was designed for primary schools. They were developed after observing existing class councils in primary schools and have already been used in this or a similar form in class councils. They serve as suggestions, ideas and stimuli for a successful class council and should be adapted to the specific needs of individual classes.



CHECKLIST CLASS COUNCIL IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Aim

Discuss pupils' concerns in class and make democratic decisions.

Target group

Primary school classes.

Duration

10 to 50 minutes.

Procedure

- ✓ Preparation and welcome.
- ✓ Reading of last meeting's minutes.
- ✓ Discuss topics, take decisions, and find solutions
- ✓ Summary and conclusion.

Advice

Grant your pupils as much responsibility as possible, and largely take a back seat.

Important

The class council should take place as regularly as possible and at set times.



Photo: Julie Heusbourg

Overview of the material

⚡ What is the purpose of the class council?

The document can help the class to keep the basic principles of the class council in mind when introducing the class council.

⚡ Procedure of the class council

This list reminds pupils of the processes of the different class council stages. It can either be handed out to the pupils or be visibly displayed in the classroom.

⚡ Rules for the class council

The rules can be worked out together with the class and then signed by all participants. This increases the symbolic character of the document. Afterwards, they can be visibly displayed in the room, or the secretary can read them out at the beginning of the class council.

⚡ Topic cards

The pupils can use these cards to make suggestions for the content of the class council. The cards can be thrown into the appropriate box or attached to the notice board.

⚡ Role cards

Through these cards, the pupils receive concrete guidelines for the tasks of their specific roles. There are corresponding formulation aids that they can use when carrying out their roles.

⚡ Buttons

There are templates for the class council directors for creating buttons that can be laminated, cut out and attached at the back with Velcro or a safety pin. Attaching the buttons can be done as a symbolic act to support the leaders in carrying out their role and help the class council members to identify their contact person at a glance.

⚡ Minutes

This template for the minutes of the class council is intended to help the secretaries record important arguments, votes and decisions during the class council. If necessary, the draft can be amended.



Tom Ketter

Tom Ketter studied philosophy and history at Heidelberg University. He currently works at a secondary school and for the Zentrum für politisches Bildung in Luxembourg.



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PRACTICE MATERIAL

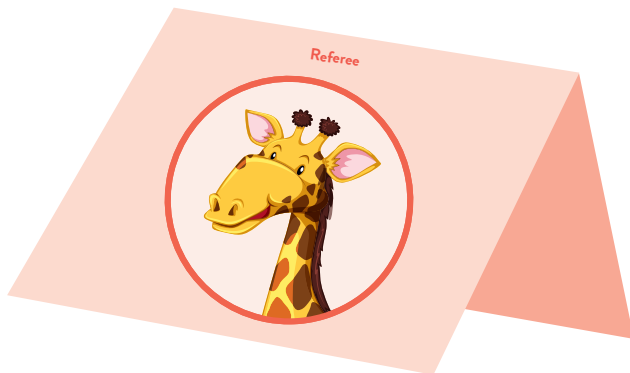
Buttons



ROLE CARDS

These cards can be distributed to the pupils. The procedures and example statements should help them understand their roles. The cards can be used as a reminder before or during the council meeting.

These cards do not have to be used with classes that are more familiar with class councils.



These cards can be distributed to the pupils. The procedures and example statements should help them understand their roles. The cards can be used as a reminder before or during the council meeting.

These cards do not have to be used with class councils.




Find the complete version of the material on www.mateneen.eu

PRACTICE MATERIAL

Topic cards

mateneen The Class Council | Practice material **Topic Cards**



TOPIC CARDS

My topic for the next class council meeting

Name: _____ Class: _____

o I like that.. o I suggest that... o I dislike that...

Date: _____ Signature: _____

My topic for the next class council meeting

Name: _____ Class: _____

o I like that.. o I suggest that... o I dislike that...

Date: _____ Signature: _____

My topic for the next class council meeting

Name: _____ Class: _____

o I like that.. o I suggest that... o I dislike that...

Date: _____ Signature: _____

My topic for the next class council meeting

Name: _____ Class: _____

o I like that.. o I suggest that... o I dislike that...

Date: _____ Signature: _____

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Practice material for class councils in secondary schools

Michell W. Dittgen

In secondary schools, the class council offers pupils the space to articulate their concerns and to explore potential improvements for the class and the school in a democratic process, too. The provided material helps to responsibly prepare and conduct the meetings.

Class councils are worthwhile in secondary schools as well. Young people want a place where they can voice their problems and needs. The aim of the class council is to make joint democratic decisions that strengthen the pupils both individually and as a group. A class council in secondary school is different from a class council in primary school, insofar as the pupils have more prior knowledge and experience and can take more responsibility for the preparation, discussion processes, decisions and their implementation.

These materials were designed specifically for secondary schools, tested in appropriate classes and revised several times. They serve as a suggestion for the introduction of class councils, but can and should be adapted to the specific needs of the respective learning group.



CHECKLIST CLASS COUNCIL IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Aim

Discuss pupils' concerns in class and make democratic decisions.

Target group

Secondary school classes.

Duration

At least one lesson at regular, binding time slots every one to two weeks; for older pupils possibly every four weeks if needed.

Procedure

- ✓ Prepare pupils for the roles, rules, and procedures of the class council.
- ✓ Adapt and supply material.
- ✓ Prepare the room.
- ✓ Conduct class councils on a regular basis and have them evaluated and further developed by the pupils.

Advice

Let the pupils act as independently and responsibly as possible within the framework of clear roles and rules.

Overview of the material

📄 Rules for the class council

The rules for the class council should be developed by the pupils and visibly displayed as a poster in the classroom, serving as an example of the process.

📄 Procedure of the class council

The prototypical process of a class council meeting and the preparation thereof can help the leading team, especially with regards to their preparations.

📄 Preparing the meeting

The document is primarily aimed at the leading team and maps out the individual steps of preparation in more detail.

📄 Topic-box

In order for pupils to be able to send in their topics for the class council before the meetings, it is advisable to place a 'topic-box' in the classroom. The box can be designed by the pupils themselves, or alternatively, the example label can be used.

📄 Topic cards

Pupils can write down their own suggestions regarding the topics for the class council on the topic slips provided and put them in the provided box. Alternatively, blank sheets of paper can be used as well.

📄 Agenda

The agenda prepared by the leading team should be posted in the classroom prior to the meeting and can serve as an invitation to the class council.

📄 Minutes

The template for taking minutes of the meeting helps pupils to document important decisions of the class council. In addition, the sheet also contains additional fields to fill out in the next meeting. Here, it can be noted if the decisions of the previous meeting have been implemented and if further measures are required.

📄 Role cards

The role cards describe the tasks of the chairperson, secretary, referee and timekeeper and offer formulation aids. The role cards of the class representatives and the student committee guide them to report on the student council's work in the class council and to take up their fellow pupils' topics. Instructions are also available for the class council members.

📄 Buttons

There are templates for the class council leaders for creating buttons that can be laminated, cut out and attached to the back with Velcro or a safety pin. Attaching the buttons can be done as a symbolic act to support the leaders in carrying out their role and help the class council members to identify their contact person at a glance.



Michell W. Dittgen

Michell W. Dittgen is a research assistant at the 'Didactics of Social Sciences' department at Trier University. Democracy education and democratic school development are among his main areas of work.

THE CLASS COUNCIL PROCEDURE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL



Up to one day before the meeting, pupils can submit public subjects that could potentially be relevant to other pupils.



The leadership team, which also consists of pupils, structures the concerns and prepares the class council. They post an agenda with enough notice so that all pupils have the opportunity to prepare for the upcoming topics.



After a few formalities and a discussion of the last meeting's minutes, the individual topics are gradually discussed and solutions developed.



In addition to discussing a current social or political issue that goes beyond the class (see the following article), it is advisable to have a feedback round at the end of each session which allows the pupils to evaluate the course of the session.

PRACTICE MATERIAL

Role cards

mateneen The Class Council | Practice material Role cards



CLASS REPRESENTATIVE



CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

The class representative's tasks in the class council

- ✓ Inform your peers about your work as class representative. There is a specific point for this on the agenda. ... and actions that are important to your classmates.
- ✓ Ask your peers for feedback: Do they agree with you and how you are proceeding? Which expectations do you have?
- ✓ During and after the class council meeting, inform your peers as a member of the student committee to help them express their wishes. Include your suggestions.

What a class representative can say in the class council:

'On the ... we had a meeting with ...'
'We spoke about/decided on...'

'In the next weeks/months, the following ...'


'What do you think about this decision/...?'

'What do you need from us?'

'As class representative(s)/student committee member, ...'

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mateneen The Class Council | Practice material Role cards



THE CHAIRPERSON



CHAIRPERSON

What a chairperson could say in the class council:

I chair the meeting according to the agenda. I moderate the discussion and ensure fair speaking times so that we achieve good results and everyone can express their opinion.

What a chairperson could say in the class council:

'Dear classmates, I hereby open today's meeting of the class council. You submitted the following topics which are now on our agenda: ...'

'To start us off, ... reads the minutes from last session. Please check that everything is correct and that all the important decisions have been included.'

'We just heard last meeting's decisions again. What has happened since then? What have we been able to implement, which points require more work on our part?'

'Dear ..., do you have something to report from the student committee?'

'Do you have topics for the student committee?'

'Let us move on to the next item on the agenda. It is about ...'

'... expressed the wish to address this point today. Dear ..., please present your concern.'

'Who wants to say something about this?'

'What can we agree on? Who can propose a compromise?'

'We now have a concrete proposal. I am going to repeat it before we move on to the vote: ... If you are in favour of this proposal, please raise your hand. Who is against? Any abstentions?'

'Now we will discuss an important contemporary subject. We agreed that we will discuss ... this time. May I request ... to give us a brief introduction to the subject?'

'Thank you very much for your positive participation. The next meeting will be held ... I hereby declare today's session closed.'

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PRACTICE MATERIAL

Minutes

mateneen The Class Council | Practice material **Minutes**



MINUTES

Class council of class		Minutes from	
-------------------------------	--	---------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Role distribution

Chairperson:		Referee:	
Timekeeper:		Secretary:	

Asbent today

Minutes from last meeting

Tasks completed

Tasks not completed:

List (topic + order)

Topic n°1:		Submitted by:	
Topic n°2:		Submitted by:	
Topic n°3:		Submitted by:	
Topic n°4:		Submitted by:	

Topic n°1:	Time:
-------------------	--------------

What is it about?	Vote: <input type="radio"/> Yes: <input type="radio"/> No:
What is the class council's decision?	
Which tasks were assigned? To whom?	

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Discussing contemporary social and political issues in the class council


Michell W. Dittgen

Should plastic packaging be banned? What are the arguments against voting rights from the age of 14? How should the EU deal with the possible effects of Brexit? – Such questions also have their place in the class council, because their discussion offers special opportunities for democratic learning processes.

In the class council, the pupils usually discuss and regulate matters that arise directly from their life together in class. In addition, a separate agenda item can deal with issues that go beyond the class and school community and that are discussed politically and socially at the local, regional, national, and international level.

There are hardly any limits to the choice of subjects. The only decisive factor is what subject the class wants to discuss. In this way, besides concerns in everyday school life, other important matters that young people consider relevant are put on the class council's agenda - for example, because the latter feel directly or indirectly affected by it.

To ensure an adequate depth of content, the class should agree on an appropriate discussion subject a few days before the class council meeting and choose two experts from their ranks who will delve particularly deeply into the subject. They should give the class council a short introduction to the subject by providing basic information and pointing out the most important political or scientific positions and controversies. The suggested procedure is already integrated

into the practice materials. A  role card for the experts guides their preparation and actions during the discussion.

From a results-oriented perspective, some pupils may initially ask themselves with some scepticism:

'Why should we discuss something that we can't change anyway?' However, in many cases, political debates and political engagement can be worthwhile and bear fruit even where one cannot make the final decision oneself or realise the desired outcome with one's own hands. Broadening one's view beyond the immediate individual sphere of influence is a crucial learning moment in the progress of actively perceiving the citizen's role, which can also be expressed, for example, through participation in elections, petitions and referendums. The class council debate could result in position papers, video statements and open letters in which the pupils address the public, members of parliament, press representatives, the Conférence Nationale des Elèves du Luxembourg (CNEL) and other social leaders.

The debate can also be a starting point for further discussions, individual learning, and volunteering.

At least as important as the results perspective is the process perspective, which reveals a whole range of learning opportunities both at the level of political content and at the level of democracy education: not only the two experts, but all participating pupils learn and practice familiarising themselves with a current subject, forming their own point of view and defending it by presenting arguments. However, they also learn to remain fair in the debate, to endure opposing positions, to understand and recognise other opinions and perspectives, to reflect on their own position and to adapt it if necessary.

While many of these learning opportunities apply to the class council as a whole, the complementary debate of larger social and political issues can be helpful when looking beyond one's individual life and the situation in the classroom, putting one's own life and work into the communal, regional, national or international context.

Democracy is a 'form of life, society and rule' (Gerhard Himmelmann), it does not end when leaving the classroom or the school building. The debate of superordinate social and political subjects in the class council can support pupils in taking a closer look at this overall picture. Through the joint exchange, they can explore individual and collective possibilities for action that go beyond their daily experiences and that they, as individuals, might not have thought of before.



CHECKLIST

Discussing social and political topics in the class council

Aim

Thematic discussion and political judgement beyond the immediate school context.

Target group

Secondary school classes.

Duration

20 to 40 minutes.

Procedure

- ✓ Early agreement on the subject of discussion and choice of two experts.
- ✓ Individual preparation of the pupils in terms of content and argumentation.
- ✓ Introduction by the experts.
- ✓ Debate and find a discussion outcome that is either a compromise or the controversy discussed.
- ✓ At the request of the pupils: planning, implementation and evaluation of activities with the aim of bringing about socio-political improvements.

Advice

Teachers should let pupils decide which subject they want to include in the class council agenda.

PRACTICE MATERIAL

Role cards

A role card for the experts introduces their preparation and actions during the discussion.

mateneen The Class Council | Practice material Role cards



THE EXPERTS



We have prepared ourselves well for the chosen contemporary subject. We get involved in the discussion with facts, different opinions and explanations.

The expert's tasks in the class council:

- ✓ Based on research in books, newspapers or on the Internet, you prepare a short introduction to the subject and present it to the class council.

These questions could help you:

- What is the subject/conflict about?
- What important facts and differences in opinion should your classmates know about so that they can have a good discussion?
- Who is arguing with whom and why? What different (economic, political or other) interests are the parties pursuing? What values do they emphasise?
- Which laws are relevant? Who has which rights?
- Who has the power to decide / change something? What are the possibilities of co-decision?
- Do you know of any comparable reasons or similar situations from historical events or other places in the world?

- ✓ You bring discussion questions to the session, which might provoke different opinions and which can be thoroughly discussed by your classmates.
- ✓ It is best to bring the notes from your research so that you can share important information with your classmates and answer questions during the discussion.

What experts could say in the class council:

‘Today, we discuss the following topic / question / problem ...’

‘This is important / concerns us because ...’

‘The following points / aspects are mainly discussed: ...’

‘On the one hand, the researcher ... believes that ...’

‘On the other hand, the politician ... says that ...’

‘One question we should discuss now is: ...’

‘Where do you stand on the issue?’

‘How do we want to deal with this issue further? What can we do?’



Find the complete version of the material on www.mateneen.eu

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Book recommendations



Der Klassenrat. Ziele, Vorteile, Organisation.

Eva Blum, Hans-Joachim Blum

2012 | Mülheim an der Ruhr: Verlag an der Ruhr.

ISBN: 978-3-8346-2289-1 | Price: 24,99 €

Class councils are now implemented in many schools. While its supporters would not want to miss this democratic educational method in everyday classroom life, its critics often declare it to be 'cuddle pedagogy' or even completely useless. In their practical book 'The Class Council', Eva and Hans-Joachim Blum provide numerous arguments that could convince even the most sceptical parents and members of the school staff. The authors draw on many years of experience with the class council method and list the acquisition of various competences and the improvement of the class climate as reasons for its introduction. In addition to developed and tested concept proposals for the step-by-step introduction and implementation of the class council, Blum and Blum offer copy templates, worksheets and graphic overviews that enable immediate implementation. According to them, their concept focuses primarily on discussing supposedly small things that are of importance to all members of the school community and contribute to a sense of well-being in the school as a living space. All in all, the practical book is particularly suitable for teachers and interested parties who have not yet had the opportunity to gain their own experiences with the class council. Although conceptual suggestions are given for all types of schools, it is recommended to use the book especially when implementing the class council with younger pupils.

Carina Otto



Praxisbuch Klassenrat. Gemeinschaft fördern, Konflikte lösen.

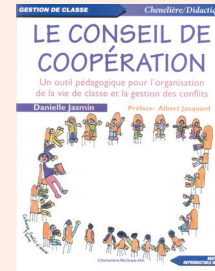
Birte Friedrichs

2014 | 2^e édition | Weinheim et Bâle: Beltz Verlag.

ISBN: 978-3-407-62824-4 | Price: 19,95€

In her 'Praxisbuch Klassenrat' (Practical Book Class Council), Birte Friedrichs calls for greater use to be made of the design's democratic pedagogical potential. Friedrichs understands the class council as 'lived democracy, e.g., a space in which pupils and teachers do not talk about democracy, but realise democracy' (p. 12). Accordingly, Friedrichs' concept includes the integration of the student council in order to interlink the participation levels 'class' and 'school'. The author reconstructs the concept proposal based on her experiences at the Open School Kassel-Waldau, resulting in a work grounded in practice, for practice. In addition to concept suggestions, exercises, case studies and copy templates, the book explains the aims and tasks of democracy education and explores the historical roots of the class council. This makes it particularly suitable for teachers and interested parties who attach great importance to learning democracy in the class council.

Carina Otto



Le conseil de coopération. Un outil pédagogique pour l'organisation de la vie de classe et la gestion des conflits.

Danielle Jasmin

1994 | Montréal: Chenelière/McGraw-Hill

ISBN: 978-2893102009 | Price: 37,99€

'Le conseil de coopération' (Class council) by Danielle Jasmin, a Canadian author and teacher, represents a fundamental work in French-language didactics on the class council. The author refers to Freinet, who introduced the basis for the practice with the *conseil*. However, Jasmin eventually expands the term to *conseil de coopération* to avoid confusion with the *conseils de classe*. The book is divided into several parts: The first part gives readers an insight into the theory of the class council. 'Conseil de coopération' strictly adheres to the order of the different stages to successfully conduct a class council. Starting with explanatory background information, the book works its way through preparation, practical introduction, the role of the teachers and the implementation of the council, before concluding with an evaluation and a presentation of possible problems. The second part of the book provides the necessary practical examples and copy templates to get started with the class council right away. The book is useful for anyone who wishes to have a complete, quick, theoretical and practical overview of the topic in order to successfully introduce the class council.

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