



## Klassenrat: The Class Council – students learn democracy

The class council (= Klassenrat) promotes democratic cooperation and participation at school. It is a democratic forum of a class, to discuss conflicts and problems, find solutions together, but also to discuss the concerns of the students.

At weekly meetings students discuss their self selected subjects. Subjects can either be topical issues like conflicts but also problems in the living-together of a class or school.

The assignment of fixed roles like chairperson, keeper of the minutes, time monitor and also a rule monitor, who provides with clear duties and rights for the fact that it comes to no verbal injuries allows a clearly structured discussion and treatment of the subjects. The teacher has only participation rights, which makes the student council completely self-determined with full responsibility and administration rights in the students' hands. So students can learn to take control of successfully running discussions or finding solutions for their own problems.

The class council is a constant institution in the living together of the students. It guarantees a weekly discussion of their concerns, problems and wishes. Thus it protects a good living together within the class community.

The students get coached in their communication abilities and acquire higher social competences: bringing forward active listening competences, respecting other opinions, dealing in a fair way with each other, sticking to rules and fitting into a community. It also helps forming peaceful social coexistence. In the discussions they learn to reflect upon their own perspectives or opinions, to accept other opinions and to solve problems together. During class council also tasks and duties in class can democratically get discussed and then must be responsibly taken over.

Summed up students learn to accept decisions, even if they do not necessarily correspond with their personal preferences. They are trained in the fact that problems are solvable and conflicts can be worked upon. Thus the students learn to form democracy within the protected framework of the class council. They learn for their whole lives.

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