PRACTICING DEMOCRACY – STUDENT COUNCIL
Settings

Composition

The student council includes all the students in the class and the teacher, who is the guarantor of the general framework and the climate of trust necessary for the council (respect for each person's speech, benevolence in addressing peers, absence of mockery, etc.). The roles change weekly (or at other intervals of time, depending on the context) and are given in turns, so that everyone can have all the roles.

Place

The council is held in a place - not necessarily the classroom - that is set up to facilitate communication (in a circle, in a U-shape, etc.). Pupils should feel involved more as individuals than as pupils only.

Time

The president indicates the start and end time of the council and decides the time for each topic. The time keeper ensures that the time is respected. The councils vary in length, depending on the class level. Issues that need more time to be considered can be postponed to the next meeting, allowing students to think about them during the week.

Periodicity

The council takes place regularly (for example, weekly) and is explicitly included in the class timetable. It is not an exceptional moment It is not an exceptional moment but one that is scheduled and anticipated. The frequency and the day are known to the pupils; it is a ritualised moment.

PRACTICING DEMOCRACY – STUDENT COUNCIL
Settings

Agenda

It is read by the president or the secretary at the beginning of the council. The agenda is set during the week, with all the students' participation (see downloadable material on the council's agenda).

It can also be prepared by a "board of the council", composed of students elected by the council and supervised by the teacher. The council should set a deadline for the submission of proposals or complaints so that the agenda can be managed in advance.

Here are some examples of agendas in primary schools:

- Problems: "I had a problem during lunchtime", "It is hard to concentrate during Maths", "I brought my toy to school and now it's broken"…
- Propositions: "I propose changing places in class", "I propose having more time for shout outs during the council", "I propose buying more balls for playing at the park"…
- Shout outs: "Thank you for being my friends", "Thank you for your messages while I was sick", "Thank you for playing with me during the break"…

Operating rules

It is jointly developed by the members of the board (the issues and objectives of the board, role of the various participants, rules of organisation and holding of meetings, etc.) and is the subject of a contract.

At the beginning of the council, the president reminds everyone of their duties and how the council works. To help the pupils to respect each other's speech, a talking stick can be circulate so as to have a visual, material and symbolic support.
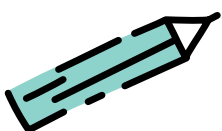
PRACTICING DEMOCRACY – STUDENT COUNCIL
Settings

The teacher's role

The teacher is the guarantor of the framework established. He/she will show the example during the first councils (how to do the different roles, which are the rules, how to take notes…).

It is important for the students to understand the importance of the moment. In order to achieve this, the teacher:

- remains the guarantor of a secure and meaningful framework in the classroom. He/she is not leading, but accompanying the process.

- seats among the students or slightly behind and respects the framework in the same way as a student, raising his/her hand to intervene when the president asks him/her to.

- intervenes as little as possible to let the pupils talk and avoids controlling postures. He/she is not prescriptive in the questions addressed by the council, but can make proposals for subjects to be put on the agenda in the same way as the pupils.

- facilitates listening, gives confidence to the pupils, encourages their progress and successes.

- helps to clarify the exchanges, to explain feelings, contributes to deepening certain subjects, ensures benevolence between peers and the absence of value judgements on people, which in no way excludes judging the behaviour of others.