



level up democracy

strengthen
youth leadership

Level up democracy & strengthen youth leadership with the sociocratic election of class representatives Checklist und working material

Worksheets for students

- 1.1. **Introduction to sociocracy:**
reading, exercise
- 1.2. **Motivation and goals:**
basic, advanced
- 1.3. **Speak in rounds:** Exercise
- 2.1. **Role description**
Assignment
- 3.1. **Nominate a candidate**
Preparation
- 3.2. **Nominate a candidate**
Fill out the nomination sheet
- 4.1. **Reflexion:** basic
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advanced

Solutions for teacher

- 1 **Checklist for**
the sociocratic election of
class representatives
- 1.3.1. **Speak in rounds:**
Rules and guidance
- 2.1.1. **Role description:**
Solutions
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Vocabulary

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- 2.2. **Presentation:** Decide the role
description by consent



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Checklist for the sociocratic election of class representatives



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1 Role description

- Define role description:**
The class defines together what the tasks and responsibilities of the class representative team are and what skills they need. Write the resulting role description on the board.
- Consent on the role description:**
If no one has any more additions, ask all students if they agree: "Is this description good enough for now?" The description is consented when no one has any more objections. As the teacher, you also give your consent.

2 Nominate candidates

- Fill in the nomination sheet:**
On a nomination sheet, everyone now writes down their own name and the name of a candidate for the class representative team: "I, Tobias, nominate Lea."
- Possible candidates:**
In the open election, all pupils are eligible from the beginning. The aim is to find the most suitable person for the role of class representative that has just been defined. If you think you are the most suitable, you nominate yourself.

3 Exchange opinions

- First round of opinions:**
Now ask each student in turns who they nominate and what their arguments are. The arguments should relate to the role description.

Tip: Make a circle of chairs so that everyone knows when it is their turn. Ask the students to tell the nominees directly why they are nominating them.
- Write down the arguments:**
Write down the names of the nominees and the arguments on the board.

Tip: If a person is nominated more than once, only add new arguments. Avoid making a line per name nomination - that would be majority voting.

- Second round of opinions:**
Sociocracy is about learning from each other and making the best decision together. In the second round, ask the students one by one if their nomination has changed because of what they heard.

Tip: Don't cross out names, just add the new arguments.

4 Find consent

- Formulate a proposal for election:**
Now ask if anyone can formulate a proposal for the class representative team based on the arguments collected. It is helpful to have another look at the role description. The proposal is written down for all to see.

Tip: Through the open election, it may turn out that, for example, three people would be very suitable for the class representative team. Find a creative solution for this together.

- Ask for consent:**
Now ask each pupil in turn whether they give their consent to the proposal.

Tip: For a quick check, ask for a show of hands: Hand on heart = consent. One hand forward = consent, but a slight objection. Two hands forward = serious objection, no consent.

- Listen to objections:**
Objections are a gift because they make the decision better. If there are objections from someone, they are heard and asked how the proposal should be adjusted.

5 Conclude election

- Give consent:**
The new nomination is written down and it is asked for everybody's consent again. The nominees are asked last. They should feel the support of the whole class. If all students agree, the nominees are asked for their consent. If they also have no objections, the election is valid and the new class representative team has been found.

- Election completed:**
Done! Find a ritual to celebrate the open election and the class representative team.

Roadmap

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Session 3: Election

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- Second nomination round
- Find consent

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Session 4: Reflexion

- Reflect on the election

Reading

What is sociocracy?

Sociocracy can be best translated by “ruling together”. This method helps to distribute power. In Sociocracy diversity is seen as a great chance to solve complex problems together. The developer of the sociocratic circle method, Gerard Endenburg, was a student at a residential school community in the Netherlands during the second world war. In this school students and teachers were all equally involved in decision-making. Gerard Endenburg studied Engineering afterwards.

He used his engineering knowledge and longing for peace to develop the consent method. This is the basic principle of sociocracy. It's a more efficient decision-making-method than consensus decision making and basic democracy, but also as inclusive as them.

What distinguishes a sociocratic from a democratic election?

Sociocratic decisions are not made by majority vote, but by the "no objection principle" (also "consent principle"). This means that all participants are heard equally and included in the decisions. In contrast to democratic ones, nobody can be overruled in sociocratic elections.

How can one describe a sociocratic election?

Essentially, it is an open nomination; decisions are only valid if no one has an objection in the context of a previously agreed-upon goal. The goal is to find a person who is the most suitable to the agreed-upon role description.

What is the advantage of sociocratic election decisions?

All voices are heard. The mutual feedback and the sense of responsibility of each individual involved play a central role. Sociocratic elections are therefore characterized by a high degree of acceptance and sustainability.

When does a sociocratic election make sense?

Experience shows that it is particularly suitable for small and medium-sized groups, where the trust between the chosen persons and the respective group plays an important role or where it is important to find the most capable person for a particular role.

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Reading

What you should know before the election

What you should know before the election is...

... which role we are electing into.

The sociocratic election is not just about giving a vote to a person. Above all, it is important for those involved to think in advance about the tasks and responsibilities that the assigned role entails. In other words, only if there is an agreement on the qualities that are important to fulfill the role of a class representative can we form an opinion on who is best suited to it. The quality of the role description therefore plays a significant part in the quality of the decision taken.

... what is consent - the "no objection principle".

Central to the sociocratic election is the "no-objection principle." It states that a decision is valid only when no one has a reasonable objection against a proposed solution or election. The corresponding question is not: "Are you in favor of this solution or election proposal?" Instead, the question is "Do you have an objection to it?" , i.e. is there any harm if this person fills the role? If no one has an objection in the sense of the previously formulated goal, consent has been reached. That means that everyone will have shared ownership of the decision. Consent means "Good enough for now. Safe enough to try. Brings us closer to our common goal."

... how to deal with objections.

For a sociocratic election to succeed, students should not only be encouraged to voice their objections confidently, but they should also be prepared to give reasons for their opinion. If there is a reasonable objection this indicates that not all concerns have been considered and therefore the solution or election proposal is not yet complete. In the case of an objection, it is particularly important to listen to the reasons given. The lessons learned help to improve the original proposal.

... that everyone wins.

Students have the opportunity to participate in the design of everyday school life through their class representatives. Typically and outside of sociocracy candidates are elected by majority vote. The downside of voting is that the minority is not fully behind the decision because it may feel that they have lost the election. In the sociocratic election, everyone gets the chance to co-determine and bring their personal objections. Power and responsibility are distributed equally to all. With the positive side effect: in the end there are only winners.



Introduction to sociocracy

Exercise



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Exercise

Create in small groups of max. 4 a poster answering these questions:

What does sociocracy mean and what does it support?

What is important to pay attention to when conducting a sociocratic election?

1.2.

Motivation and goals basic



Roadmap

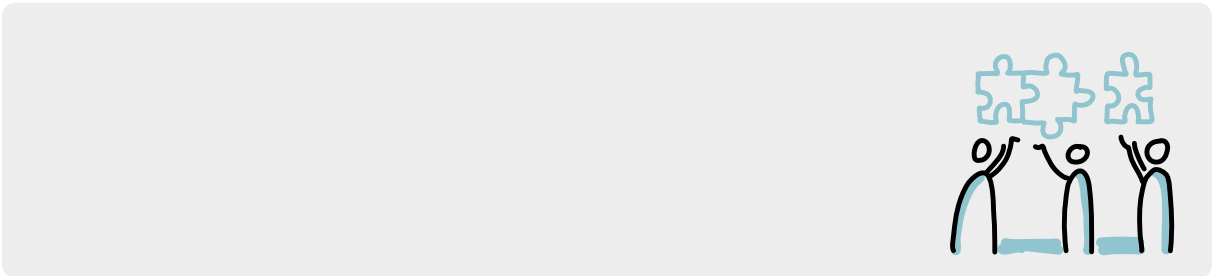
- 1 Session 1: Preparation**
 - Introduction to Sociocracy
 - **Motivation and goals**
 - Speak in rounds
- 2 Session 2: Role description**
 - Role description of the class representative election
 - Decide the role description by consent
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Assignment

Watch the video "What is sociocracy?" and answer the following questions:

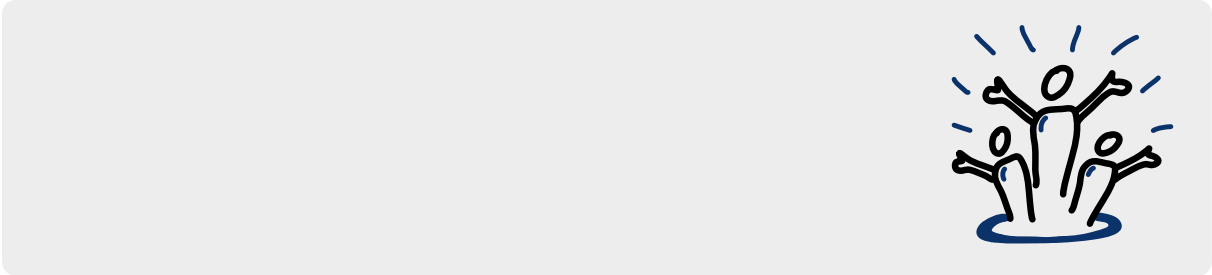
VOCATIONAL TRAINING

What can you contribute to successful teamwork?



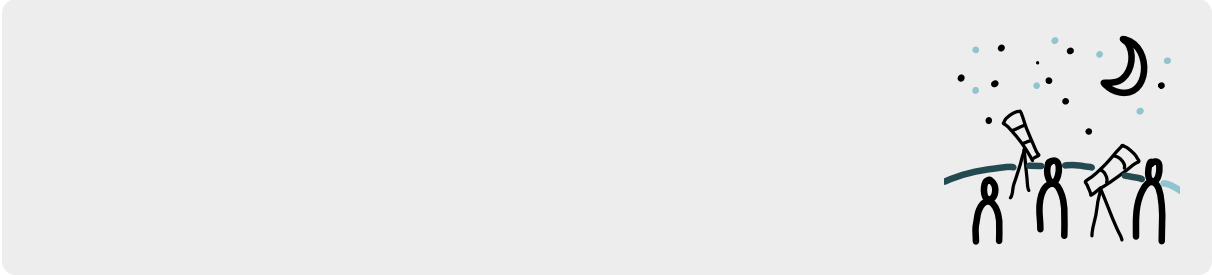
LEADERSHIP & EMPOWERMENT

How do you respect others?



PARTICIPATION & DEMOCRATIC LEARNING

Do you know the first situation in the video? If so, in which situations have you experienced this before?



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Session 4: Reflexion

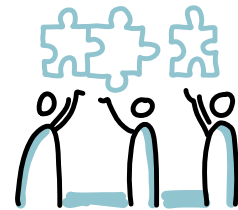
- Reflect on the election

Assignment

Answer the following questions on separate sheets of paper and write down your your name with them:

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

1. What are your skills that you are proud of?
2. What can you contribute to successful teamwork?
3. What is helpful to give and receive feedback?
4. Write down for at least two of your classmates on one sheet each which skills and talents you appreciate in them.



LEADERSHIP & EMPOWERMENT

1. How do you feel respected by others?
2. How do you respect others?
3. What kind of leader do you want to be?
4. Write down on a piece of paper when you feel empowered by your teacher and when you can follow his / her / their lead.



PARTICIPATION & DEMOCRATIC LEARNING

1. In which project did you enjoy participating and reaching a goal with others?
2. What is helpful, what is frustrating about the secret ballot vote?
3. What is important so that we can create a good life for everyone?



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Assignment

Get together in small groups and share your answers to the questions in rounds one by one. Remind each other kindly to listen to each other and only speak when it's your turn.

1. VOCATIONAL TRAINING
2. LEADERSHIP & EMPOWERMENT
3. PARTICIPATION & DEMOCRATIC LEARNING



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Rounds are the basis of sociocracy and are very rich in their effect. This is why:



It takes away the anxiety if everyone knows when it's his turn.

In rounds we don't need to have the courage to call out into the whole group.

RULES:

1. The round typically starts with one person speaking and then moves around the group in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction.
2. This process continues until everyone has had a chance to speak or until the allotted time for the round has ended.
3. It is not important that everyone speaks up if it's their turn. If they have nothing valuable to add, they pass the word to the next in line.

Don't expect that everyone is participating right away in the circle process. It takes time for a group to build up the psychological safety for everyone to speak up in the circle. The necessary trust is built by not making funny and unnecessary comments, speaking only when it is your turn, and listening to others' opinions to learn more about them.

Start practicing rounds in small groups of 3-4 students. The smaller the group the more students can be in a conversation together and more voices can be heard. This is the basis of participation.

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Assignment

Come together in small groups and do two rounds to collect responsibilities and tasks:

1. What are the **responsibilities and tasks** of:

- The whole class
- The teachers
- The class representatives
- Other roles eg. class cashier...

2. In two rounds, collect what **strengths and competences are needed** to take on the responsibilities and tasks of the class representative team.

3. **Discuss in a round** whether the team:

- should be equal or divided into main class representative and deputy,
- should be male and/or female
- should be familiar with the tasks and have well-developed qualities or not.



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Examples for responsibilities and tasks:

The whole class:

- keep classroom tidy
- be quiet during class
- respect each other
- do homework
- help each other
- have important dates in mind
- share their opinions



The teachers:

- teach students
- keep students safe during school hours
- share information from other teachers and the headmaster, if needed
- explain the rules of the school
- hear the opinions of all students

The class representatives:

- represent the interest, wishes and opinions of students of their class in the student or school parliament
- help students to bring their issue to the awareness of fellow classmates, teachers and school staff if they don't have the courage to do it themselves
- act as mediator in small arguments / fights between classmates and get the support of a teacher or the school social worker for de-escalation.

Additional tasks:

- Rubbish duty
- Take class book
- Collecting money for excursions
- Blackboard duty,...

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Vocabulary for strengths and abilities

Talk well (communication skills): Being able to express thoughts and feelings clearly and politely.

Understanding others (empathy): being able to put yourself in other people's shoes and understanding their feelings and perspectives.

Organise things (organisational skills): being able to organise oneself, one's own actions, tasks and also larger projects efficiently and to keep track of things.

Keeping promises (reliability): Others can trust you to keep your word

Working with others (teamwork): like to have fun or do tasks together

Helping others (helpfulness): Provide support with tasks or in difficult times

Do not give up (determination): continue to work on difficult tasks until you succeed

Be punctual (punctuality): arrive on time for appointments and meetings, avoid waiting times

Believe in yourself (self-confidence): Trust in your own abilities and decisions

Be able to listen: actively listen when someone is talking to you, rather than waiting to speak yourself

Sharing with others: Willingness to share things or ideas with others

Being resourceful (creativity): being able to come up with creative ideas to solve problems or create new things

Staying calm (self-control): Being able to control emotions and act calmly even when you are angry or upset.

Being strong (assertiveness): standing up for one's own opinion and being able to defend interests when necessary.

Saying thank you (appreciation): Being able to express gratitude when you have been helped or given something.



3.1.

Nominate a candidate Preparation



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Assignment

Put yourself in the shoes of the class representative team.

1. Here's what I could do well as a class representative:

2. Here's what I would need to learn in order to do a good job as a class representative:

3.2.

Nominate a candidate Fill out the nomination sheet



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Assignment

Who do you think is the most appropriate person to best fit the role description?
(You can nominate yourself!)

"I (my name) , _____,

nominate you (name candidate), _____,

Because you have the following strengths:

You're good at... _____.

You are... _____.

I appreciate about you... _____.

In these situations you showed your strengths (give concrete examples):

_____.

4.1.

Reflexion basic



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Assignment

Now think about what you experienced during this open class representative election and complete these sentences:

I learned...

I have understood that, ...

I liked that, ...

In the future, I would like to ...



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<p>1 Session 1: Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Sociocracy • Motivation and goals • Speak in rounds 	<p>2 Session 2: Role description</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role description of the class representative election • Decide the role description by consent 	<p>3 Session 3: Election</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill in the nomination sheet • First nomination round • Second nomination round • Find consent 	<p>4 Session 4: Reflexion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on the election
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Assignment

Now think about what you experienced during the open election and reflect on these questions:

Vocational orientation: skills and talents

1. What skill did you learn?
2. How did you contribute to successful teamwork?
3. What was a difficult moment for you during the election and how did you deal with it?

Leadership & empowerment

1. How does this kind of communication help to strengthen each other in the class?
2. How does this kind of communication promote mental health in the team?
3. What has become important to you through the open election process?

Participation and democratic learning

1. What group behaviour is encouraged by the open election?
2. In which situations could open election and decision-making by consent also be used?
3. What have you learned about your class?



Consent building process

Consent means "No objection = I go along with the decision".

- Good enough for now. Safe enough to try it out. Lead us closer to the goal.
- Facilitate consent-building in the circle, so that everyone gets a chance to contribute.

Round 1: Define a goal

It is important to set the goal together so that everyone knows for what a solution is now being sought for. What information is available and needs to be gathered in order to form an opinion? It is important that all questions are cleared out so that everyone is on the same page.



1

- define goal
- share information
- clarify questions

Round 2: Ideas + opinion formation

Do two rounds to collect ideas on how to achieve your goal in a way that everyone shares the responsibility. In the first round, be open and do not judge the ideas. You are not making any decisions yet. In the second round, you can build on the ideas from the first round.



2

- collect ideas for a solution
- share opinions

Round 3: Formulate a proposal

The facilitator or someone from the circle formulates a proposal from the ideas heard. It is written down for all to see. Make it possible to have "both and" instead of "either or". It is not about finding a perfect compromise as a solution, but a proposal that meets no objections.



3

- good enough for now
- safe enough to try
- brings us closer to the goal

Round 4: Query objections + consent decision

Now everyone is asked whether they have an objection or a consent on the proposal. If there are objections, they are heard and you work together on how the proposal can be adapted. It is helpful to keep the goal in mind, or to change the validation period of the decision (for how long is the decision good enough?). If everyone can share responsibility for the decision and there are no objections, there is a consent!



4

- hear objections if necessary
- if necessary, formulate a new proposal
- consent decision



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youth leadership

Level up democracy & strengthen youth leadership with the sociocratic election of class representatives

Checklist and working materials

Level up democracy & strengthen youth leadership
Instructions for the sociocratic election of a class representative

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