



The use of social media
for democratic participation (SOCMED)

Involvement of students in school management through social media

by

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Involvement of students in school management through social media

Brief description

This unit explores how school management can use social media to involve pupils in management of school. During the proposed training school members will discover social media potential and the importance in communication and collaboration with pupils and their parents. At the same time pupils will learn about the opportunities to participate in democratic decision making.

Expected outcomes

- ✓ K_COOP_2 Understanding that every group has a power structure
- ✓ A_COOP_2 Willingness to work together with others and become actively involved
- ✓ A_HR_2 Readiness to adopt the values of human rights, and democratic citizenship as the foundations of living and acting together.
- ✓ S_COOP_3 Ability to draw on other's diverse expertise and experience for the benefit of the group's work
- ✓ S_DIV_3 Aptitude to elicit and respond to others' beliefs, values and feelings and behaviours

Activities

	Duration	Methods used
Activity 1: Identifying the school power structure	90 minutes	Pair work Think-Pair-Share Pairs compare Discussion
Activity 2: Action plan for school Facebook page creation	120 minutes	Presentation Round Robin Discussion
Activity 3: Evaluation	20 minutes	Individual work

Background and context

The idea for this training unit was inspired by the actions of pupils of Simonas Daukantas gymnasium, when they suggested several ideas about school's environment. This training unit supports developing democratic decision making. By the use of social media it offers opportunity for equal participation of all stake holders in the planning and realisation of projects relevant for school life. It presents one of the ways student voice can be heard. This training unit has been piloted in Simonas Daukantas gymnasium, Šiauliai (Lithuania).

Activity 1: < Identifying the school power structure >

Duration: 60 min

<p>Expected outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understanding that every group has a power structure (K_COOP_2) ✓ Willingness to work together with others and become actively involved (A_COOP_2) ✓ Readiness to adopt the values of human rights, and democratic citizenship as the foundations of living and acting together (A_HR_2)
<p>Methods/ techniques used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pair work ✓ Think-Pair-Share ✓ Pairs compare ✓ Discussion
<p>Resources</p> <p>Different colour papers for group division</p> <p>Appendix 1</p>
<p>Practical arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Place the chairs into semi-circle. ✓ Pair up participants according to a colour/shape/image code. A piece of paper with a specific shape or image drawn at it should be placed at seating place spread around the room.
<p>Procedure</p> <p>Step 1 (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At the beginning of the session it is recommended to state the expected outcomes of this activity. ✓ Pair up participant according to colour/shape/image code. For this activity they will be working in pairs. <p>Step 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduce the topic of power relations in a society as a whole and in the school¹. Talk with participants about the powers and spheres of activity in school management. ✓ Ask the participants to do an interview with their pair. Each member interviews their pair. Ask them to write down answers the following questions about their school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Name the person in our school that has the most influence? B) Name the person that can make things get done in our school? C) Name the person that carries the most weight in actions in our school? D) Which decisions about school life can be decided for by the following actors (tick a box): (Appendix 1)².

¹ Identifying the community power structure

² If participants ask how many people they can name it is best to say not more than 3.

Step 3 (10 min)

- ✓ Once the interviews are done, put the pairs groups in groups of 4 and compare their answers. They keep track of the replies they have in common. Ask each group to present their conclusions for each statement.

Step 4 (20 min)

- ✓ Once all the participants have presented their answers summarise the repeated „power actors“. Use a whiteboard or flipchart to write down their answers.
- ✓ If a name of a person appears more than 3 times we can say they are a power actor. Identify the area in which this person has the most power (use the table).
- ✓ Discuss the power relation in schools, ask the participants to explain their answers, do they agree with the summarised results? Are there any other decision makers or power actors not stated here?

Debriefing (x10)

- ✓ Were the results of this activity expected?
- ✓ Do you think decision making in your school is democratic?
- ✓ Which people/groups are contributing the most to school management?
- ✓ Is there place for improvement?
- ✓ How can other members be included and ensure a more democratic decision making?
- ✓ Can social media help us do so?

Tips for trainers

Make sure that in micro groups you have representatives of all groups in the school.

Activity 2: Action plan for school Facebook creation

Expected outcome

- ✓ A_COOP_2 Willingness to work together with others and become actively involved
- ✓ S_COOP_3 Ability to draw on other’s diverse expertise and experience for the benefit of the group’s work
- ✓ S_DIV_3 Aptitude to elicit and respond to others’ beliefs, values and feelings and behaviours

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Round Robin
- ✓ Discussion

Resources

- ✓ Flip chart paper
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Appendix 2

Practical arrangements

Prepare the room for micro-groups

Procedure

Step 1 (10 min)

Introduce to the group the topic of social media (SM). Ask them which social media they use? How much time they spend in SM? How many friends they have in SM? What do they usually use SM for? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the using SM?

Step 2: (10 min)

Introduce the idea of school Facebook page (use resources to prepare).³ Explain that today you will try to make an action plan for a school Facebook creation.

Group the participants

Step 3: (5 minutes)

1. Put markers of 4 colours on the tables. Each group, when constituted, will be at one table.
2. Distribute one image per participant.
3. Ask participants to find the other 2 or 3 colleagues who have the correspondent images in order to reconstitute the 'puzzle'

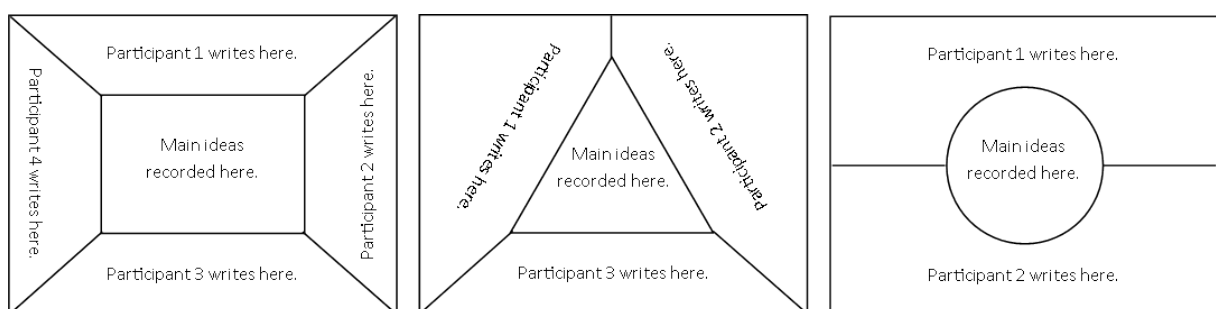
Step 4 (10 minutes)

4. Tell participants to pick up a marker. Put on the slide (or give the task sheet) with the 'group member roles' (the one below or adapted to your needs).
 - time keeper: reminds the group about time; responsible to finish the task on time, tries to give each group member equal time to discuss an issue
 - leader: makes sure all voices are heard
 - encourager: tries to encourage every participant to do their jobs, praise work which is well done, assure that every person in the group works; observe/note how the group works (important for debriefing)
 - presenter: presents the final product of their group (for a group of 5: connector: communicates with the teacher if needed)

Explain the roles. Make sure each participant has understood his/her role. For example ask "all tracers please raise your hand!" and have one tracer explain his/her role.

Important note: The roles described here are in no way a fixed rule of organisation but rather a tried and tested example of practice. Educators should create new structures if they need to.

Micro-group roles are always designed for the member of a micro-group to help each member of the micro group 'do', 'act' together rather than 'do', 'act' on his/her own.



³ How to create a School Facebook page

Procedure

Step 3: Prepare the micro-groups for cooperative learning in a Jigsaw structure.

- ✓ Participants are seated in their micro-groups of two, three or four and markers and flip chart paper (or any large paper) are distributed to each micro-group.
- ✓ Ask participants to create an individual writing area on the edges and a group writing area in the centre on the paper. The resulting “placemat” will vary according to the number of participants in each micro-group. The following is an example of a placemat for 4, 3 and 2 participants respectively.

Step 2 (5 min): Individual work

- ✓ Participants work individually on the question
- ✓ “How can I contribute to the creation and management of school Facebook page?”
- ✓ Ask the participants to record their individual thoughts and ideas in their respective writing area.

Step 3 (5 min): Share within the micro-group

- ✓ Each participant in the micro-group takes it in turn to share his/her conclusion with the rest of the micro-group.

Step 4 (10 min): Group work

- ✓ In micro-groups, participants discuss the ideas and choose those that should be presented as the group response and represent all groups in school. These responses are recorded in the centre section.

Step 5 (10 min): Plenary

- ✓ Each micro-group shares the main conclusion/similarities with the other micro-groups.
- ✓ Create a list of conclusions for the roles of all groups in Facebook page creation and management

Step 4 (20 min)

- ✓ In micro-groups participants create an Action plan for Facebook creation⁴ (appendix 2).
- ✓ Use cooperative roles during the process

Step 5 (15 min)

- ✓ Discuss with participants about reasons why in the process of creation some suggestions are accepted and some are rejected: E.g.: Concreteness, relevance, ability to implement (costs, is this under competence of school management).
- ✓ Discuss with participants about responsibility for actions, expressed suggestions.

Debriefing (15 min)

- ✓ Analyse suggestions and issues raised about using Social media and Facebook.
- ✓ Why is it important to be socially active in school/community?
- ✓ How can school management promote opportunities for student participation in school life?
- ✓ Does this activity offer opportunities for students to influence school management decisions?
- ✓ How does creation of a Facebook page offer further participation of school in local community?
- ✓ Are there similarity between management of school and management of country?

Tips for trainers

- ✓ In case of noticing inactivity of certain groups of participants (students, teachers) it's worth analysing reasons of inactivity and search for obstacles in developing democratic decision making and ensuring participation....

⁴ Appendix 2 <http://mashable.com/2011/04/26/facebook-for-schools/>

Activity 3: Evaluation

Duration: 45 min

<p>Expected outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To get the feedback from the participants
<p>Methods/ techniques used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inside Outside Circle
<p>Practical arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ open space that enables participants movement
<p>Procedure</p> <p>Step 1: Inside-Outside circle: ask participants to sit in a big circle. Every second person, then, makes an inner, concentric circle, facing their partners from the outer circle (if the number of students is odd, one person from the inner circle sits facing two participants). You will ask participants questions. For each question allow a two-minute-long discussion. After each question, participants from the inner circles rotate sideways to find new partner and then answer or discuss new question.</p> <p>Step 2: Ask participants the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did I learn about democracy and participation and school? - Can social media serve as agent of change in promotion of these values? - Who can benefit from this kind of workshop? - What was new for me?
<p>Tips for trainers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In case of student/teacher inactivity it's worth to analyse reasons of inactivity and search for obstacles in developing democratic decision making and ensuring participation....

References

Identifying the community power actors: A Guide for Change Agents
<http://www.soc.iastate.edu/extension/pub/comm/NCR59.pdf>

How Schools Can Use Facebook to Build an Online Community
<http://mashable.com/2011/04/26/facebook-for-schools/>

Appendices

Appendix 1

Identifying power agents

- A) Name the person in our school that has the most influence?
- B) Name the person that can make things get done in our school?
- C) Name the person that carries the most weight in actions in our school?
- D) Which decisions about school life can be decided for by the following actors
(tick a box):

	What is being taught	Organisation of daily school activities	How things are being taught	The role the school plays in the community
School management				
Teachers				
Students				
Power agent NAME				
Power agent NAME				

Appendix 2
Action plan for creating a Facebook page

Creating a school Facebook page	Pupils' role	Teachers' role	Principal's and school board role	Time (duration, frequency and date)	Other organizations and institutions involved (optionally)	What resources do we need