

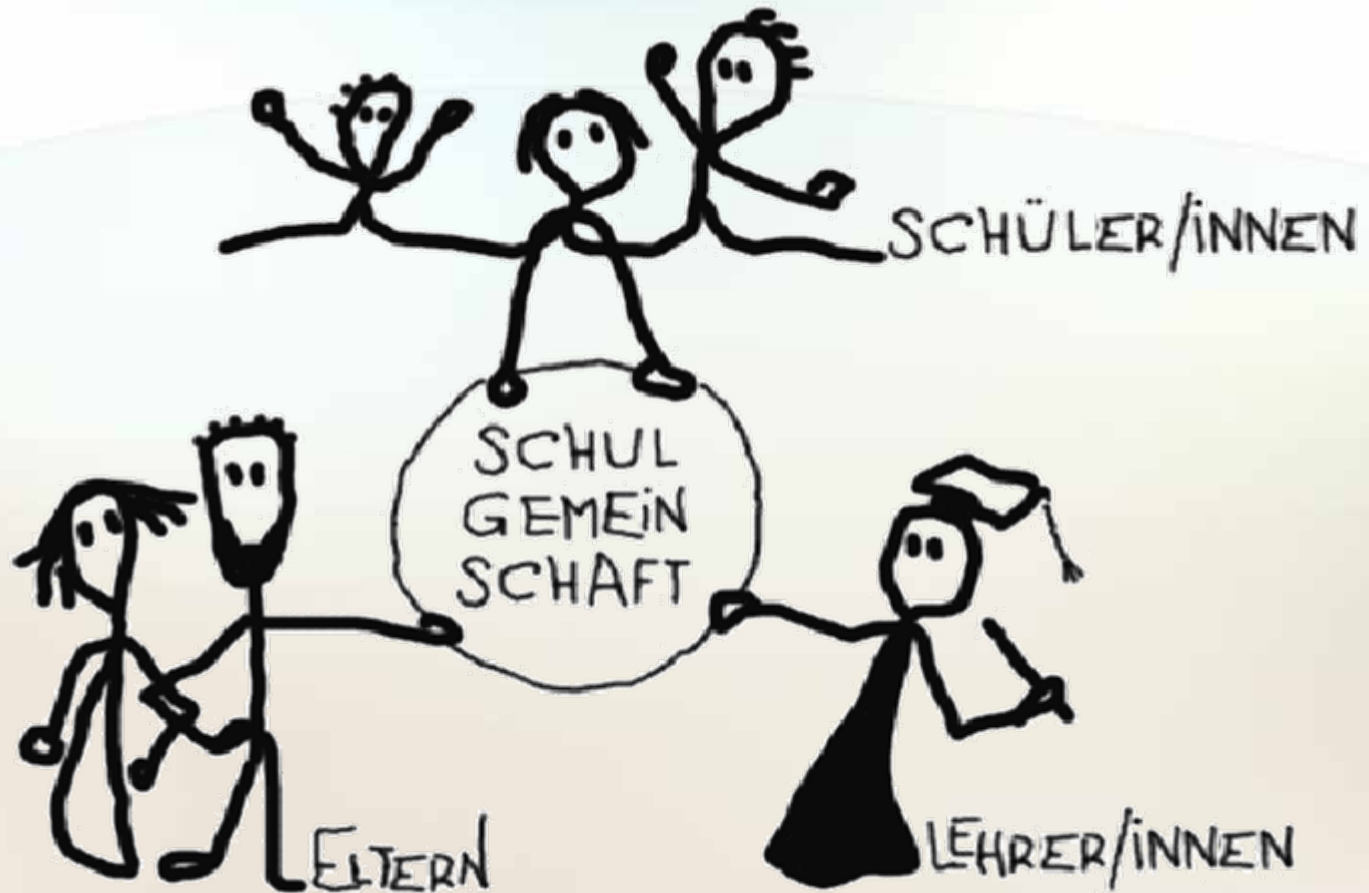
EMPOWERMENT of pupils' representatives

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PARTICIPATION



HISTORY

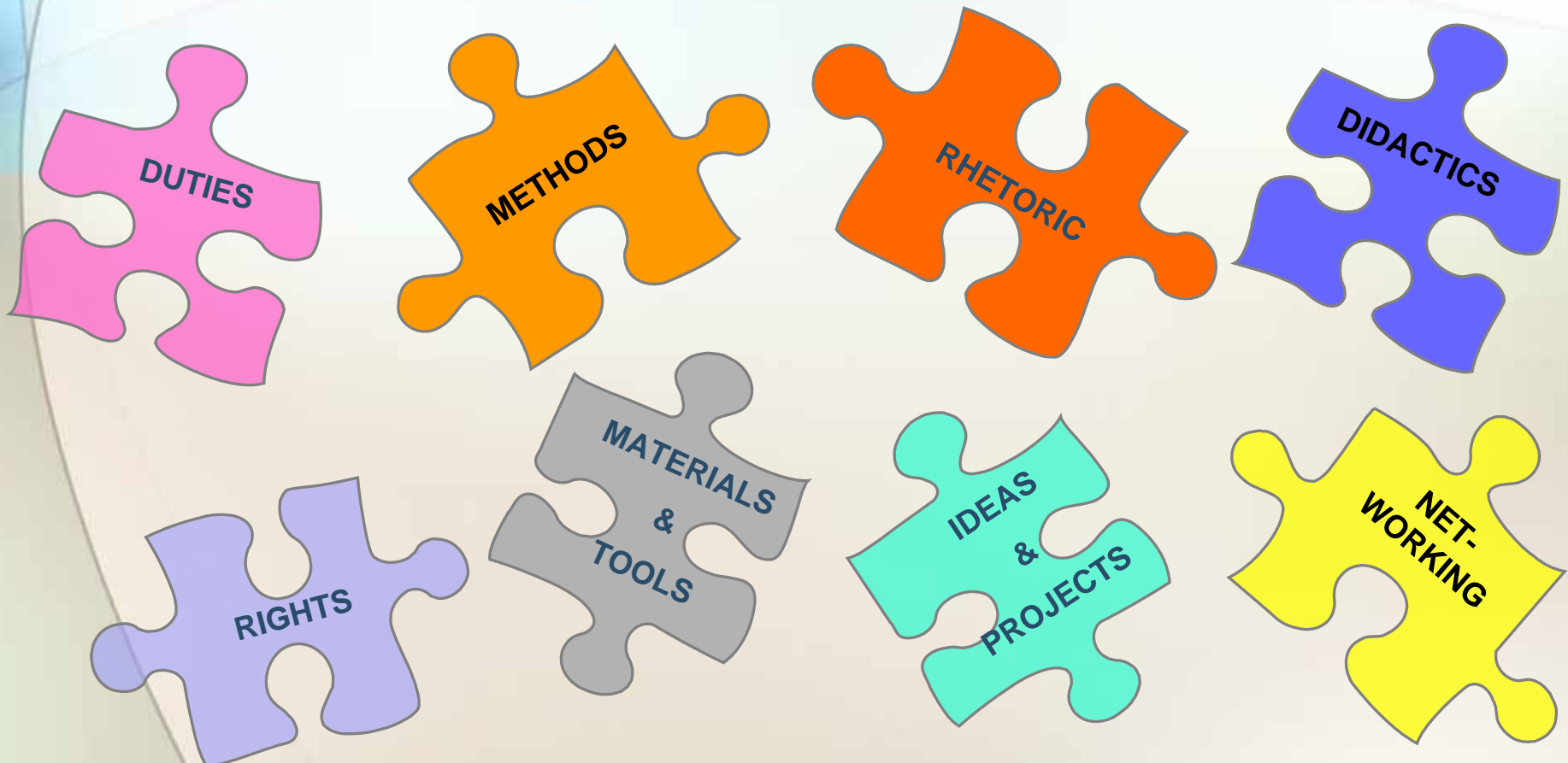
- 1990 UN convention: Rights of the Child
- 1997 Austrian School Act enlarges rights of pupils' representatives aged 10 – 14 years
- 1997 Initiative of Austrian parents for training courses
- 1998 Project start for pupils' representatives of general secondary schools
- 2001: Trainings for attending teachers
- 2003: Inclusion of pupils with special needs
- 2005: Trainings for pupils of grammar schools
- Project team: Vienna board of education, City of Vienna/Youth department, Parents' Associations

AIMS

- Active citizenship
- Political awareness and interest
- Practice of democratic rights
- Participation in school
- Political education
- Partaking in power
- Responsibility
- Training in a protected area
- Qualification (well informed, trained and motivated pupils' representatives in school boards)

CONTENT OF TRAININGS

- 15 basic modules of 3 hours all over Vienna
- 3 thematic workshops
- Final meeting of all participants in Town Hall



ROLE OF TEACHERS

- Information and transparency (available for ALL)
- Mutual confidence, acceptance, appreciation, empathy
- Open exchange of opinions (pros and cons)
- Willingness to compromise and to share power
- Commitment of decisions
- Confidentiality of information
- Implementation of conflict and complaint management

Good atmosphere in schools

- No disregards and prejudices
- School as open learning environment for democratic participation and citizenship

PUPIL'S RIGHTS

- Right to elect representatives
- Right of hearing
- Right of information
- Right of have a say
- Right to submit statements and proposals
- Right to participate in designing lessons
- Right to discuss about learning materials
- Right to participate in school boards (only for consultation, no decision)
- 5 lessons per semester dedicated for pupils' meetings (of class representatives)

PUPILS' REPRESENTATIVES

Practical hints for

- How to gain information from the school mates
- How to plan a meeting
- How to chair a meeting
- How to delegate tasks
- How to find partners to realise an idea
- How to organise a project or an event
- How to find support and resources
- How to communicate with the school head, officials etc.
(argumentation and rhetoric skills)

METHODS

- Questionnaire
- Interview
- Post box for proposals, requests and complaints
- Sign-up lists
- Working groups
- Mind mapping
- Cluster sampling
- Opinion poll
- Voting
- Games (who wants to be a millionaire, rumour mill, two minutes – two sides, atoms – molecules etc.)
- Feedback and reflection

EXAMPLES

- Organisation of events, parties etc.
- Organisation of competitions (music, sports, cooking)
- Organisation of social and prevention projects (discrimination, violence, bullying, mobbing, drugs, alcohol, smoking etc.)
- Installation of coke, juice, milk vending machines
- Menu planning of the school buffet
- Design of the school yard, class rooms etc.
- Use of library and IT-facilities
- Edition of pupils' magazine
- Agreements on behaviour (being late, use of mobiles, regulations on clothes)
- Installation of lockers and boxes for waste separation

BENEFITS FOR PUPILS

- Guiding principle: expert ship of pupils concerning the school setting
- Political consciousness
- Culture of agreement
- Incentives
- Training of key competences of LLL
- Adoption of qualifications in informal and non-formal pathways (see EQF)
- Project management
- Different manuals for pupils and teachers
- Motivation and attitude

GLANCE BEYOND SCHOOL

- Participation in the community
- Participation in other associations: Red Cross, fire brigade, music groups, sport organisations etc.
- Participation in a political party
- Participation in a religious institution: Scouts, Catholic or Protestant youth etc.
- Participation on the regional level
- Participation on the national level