

**Democracy-Learning
in everyday school life
as part of Citizenship Education**

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Personal

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Citizenship-Education / Alternative Pedagogy

School observations in different countries in
Europe

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Citizenship-Education / Democracy-Learning - Personal view

John Dewey

Democracy: more than a form of ruling; form of co-existence , a common and mutual sharing of experiences

Hartmut von Hentig

School as polity

Gerhard Himmelmann

Democracy as a type of rule, way of life and social system

Peter Henkenborg

Democracy-Learning without corresponding school culture, without the possibility to participate and to take responsibility, remains an emotionally and socially empty metaphor

Celestin Freinet

Democracy-Learning by doing: „class-conferences and school-parliament“

Democracy-Learning in everyday school life

Personal view

Democracy-Learning includes the examination of catchwords like:

- Lifelong Learning
- Active Participation
- Global Learning
- Citizenship Education
- Acquisition of Key-Qualifications ...

Democracy-Learning in school means...

- internal and external communication
- solving conflicts
- discussing key issues as starting point for individual research
- cognitive knowledge of power, power structures and political systems
- insights into socio-political, historical, political, economic correlations within a society

Preconditions for the success of Democracy-Learning in everyday school life

Tasks of school

- mission to qualify
- mission to integrate
- mission to select

- mission to fulfill education of responsible members of society

What do students/pupils need?

- self-, social- and professional qualifications
- ability for self-reflection
- communication skills
- ability to work in teams
- problem solving
- responsible participation

Research at Grundschule Harmonie

Research partner

Research partner

www.grundschule-harmonie.de

Elementary School Harmonie / Germany
quite ordinary, non-elitist elementary school
9 classes, 9 teachers, 2 scientific personal, 13
other personal
classes including different age-groups

one of Germany's best schools in 2006
several other seals of quality and distinctions

**Every single child has the right to individually
arrange learning-, school- and living-phases**

I have personally observed this school as an
external observer for more than 12 years

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Research at Grundschule Harmonie

Research field

Research field

observation feedback of
students
teachers
trainees

Basic question -

Which concrete democratic structures are observable in everyday school life and in which way can the observed results help to promote changes in contemporary teacher education?

Questions about...

individual understanding of democracy
reason of school-observation
evaluation & possible comparisons with other schools they have observed

Research at Grundschule Harmonie

Research method

Research method

mix of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection
feedback sheets were analysed including cognitive, affective, psychomotor, communicative, methodologic and interpersonal areas

- ? Which concrete democratic structures were realised?
- ? How and in which way do democratic elements have an effect on school-life?
- ? As a matter of fact, how is Democracy-Learning done?
- ? Which elements of Democracy-Learning are not only transferable to one's own sphere of action, but also to one's own school or even in teacher education?
- ? Why did the observation take place? What did it cause?

Research at Grundschule Harmonie

Research results – opinions of the observers

Democracy in school:

- right to have a say
- active participation in class- and school-life
- to make decisions (circle-meetings, presentation-circles, class-parliament, school-parliament, daily morning-conference of teachers)
- self-government, self-organization by co-decisions, co-management, co-responsibility as generic features of participation in democratic processes
- inclusion of all partners who are integrated in the process of finding a decision (circle-leaders, planning-circles, school-council, school-parliament)
- self-responsible, individual and differentiated learning
- from communication to planning and cooperation –
- work on common, individual tasks and projects
- pupil's interests are respected and their work relates to real-life situations

Research at Grundschule Harmonie

Research results – opinions of the observers

Self-competences

pupils work self-acting and sustained
work together quietly and do not disturb others
anywhere (in school, outside of school)
pupils work, play theatre, make music, do not let
adults interfere in the working-process
write their own stories...

Social-competences

are very high and 200 kids come and attend
school-parliament without fight / quarrel
pair-work, work in different groups
individual and common projects = arrangement
with teacher and pupils begin or continue their
work without admonishment
absence of aggressive attitude
social life and democratic arrangements function
without visible borders

Research at Grundschule Harmonie

Research results – opinions of the observers

Communicative competencies

friendly, clear, appreciative communication
emphasising the listening aspect, to find
arguments, to ask critically examine, to present
working-results in different ways
children regulate themselves concerning social or
communicative problems
pupils are able to discuss topics in the class-
parliament, which would otherwise not be
discussed in *traditional* classes or schools
govern themselves during discussions

Research at Grundschule Harmonie

Research results – opinions of the observers

To work as a teacher – challenge and chance for professional work

Level of pupils – teacher...

create a supporting and helping learning-situation for meaningful activities

attend and observe learning-processes of pupils

differentiate and individualize

insist on working-results

communicate and control

are fair and appreciative

talk to colleagues about needs of pupils

cooperate in a respectful way

Level of parents – parents...

are part of daily school life

are very welcome and integrated in educational-processes

Research at Grundschule Harmonie

Research results – opinions of the observers

To work as a teacher – challenge and chance for professional work

School-atmosphere

feedback of all observers: positive school-atmosphere and hospitality
architecture and design of the building (schoolgarden, printing room, staff-room...)
co-determination of children
positive relation between teachers and headmaster
circle-talks
classes including different age-groups

Research at Grundschule Harmonie

Research results – opinions of the observers

Transferability to own doings in class / school

ideas of Celestin Freinet (circle-conversation, class- and school-parliament...)

classes including different age-groups

alternative form of examination / evaluation

cooperation between parents, teachers, pupils, headmaster

work on common and individual tasks

promoting of self-esteem of pupils

assumption of self-responsibility of children...

Transferability in teacher education

a wider range of opportunities for students to experience progressive classes /

schools and a better combination of theory and practice, more open teaching

methods

trainees should be more involved in decision-making concerning the content of their

curriculum

increased need of students to incorporate of values like humanity, dignity, teamwork,

motivation, democracy, tutoring system in their teaching careers

End of presentation



Thank you for your attention!

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