



Cooperative Class Meetings™

Philosophy

Open-ended, problem solving and educational-diagnostic are the three main types of classroom meetings described by Dr. Glasser. Hoglund and McClung (2012) adapted the educational-diagnostic meeting into Academic Content, Cooperative Class Meeting™ format.

Class Meetings provide an excellent format for teaching Responsibility Education. Although meetings appear to be time-consuming, they are critical to the success of the classroom. As a rule, such meetings require considerable time during the first week or so of the term, as this is the time for orientation, teaching, and re-teaching. However, the real payoff comes when meetings are scheduled regularly throughout the term. When class meetings are held regularly, they do not require as much time per meeting. Class Meetings are consistent with the desired outcomes of a school for quality learning. They provide a systematic way for students to:

1. Increase understanding and respect for the opinions of others.
2. Develop the social problem-solving skills needed to appropriately express thoughts and feelings.
3. Provide the opportunity for students to be heard.
4. Increase class participation and buy-in.
5. Develop or improve verbal, listening, and group skills.

Students of every age have trouble getting along with one another and find interpersonal problems difficult to solve. Without help in resolving these difficulties, "students tend to evade the problems, to lie their way out of situations, to depend on others to solve their problems, or just to give up. None of these courses of action is good preparation for life" (Glasser, 1969, p. 124).

Structures

The age of the students and the set-up of the room determine the physical structure of a class meeting. In general, K-2 students will sit on the floor in a circle. By third grade, chairs can be placed in a circle unless the classroom has a large space for sitting on the floor. If forming a circle is difficult or too time consuming, leave the students in their regular seats and conduct the meeting.

By middle and high school, moving to a circle is not as important. A major challenge is to get all students to participate. One strategy to accomplish such student engagement is a Cooperative Class Meeting.

Cooperative Class Meetings™ (Bob Hoglund)

1. Small Groups

- a. Assign roles (Reader, Recorder, Spokesperson, etc.)
- b. Limit resources (One set of directions, etc.)

2. Discussion

- a. Everyone participates
- b. Each group member speaks and listens to others

3. Spokesperson

- a. Assigned spokesperson reports on the group's answers
- b. Others may be involved in the group discussion

The questions to be discussed are handed to each group, only one paper per group. This allows for more cooperation due to the limiting of resources. Each group discusses the questions in the allotted time frame.

A few students who are not the spokesperson will still speak up in the whole group discussion. This is rarely a problem and usually adds to the discussion because new information from other group reports continues to spur thoughts in other participants. The people that don't speak up have already had their say in their cooperative group and do not feel left out of the whole group discussion.



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TYPES OF CLASS MEETINGS

Open-Ended

These meetings are to help students explore their beliefs and values and hear other points of view. Open-ended topics do not have “right” answers.

Examples of topics for a class meeting:

1. What is responsibility?
2. How do you decide what is right and wrong?
3. What does freedom mean?

Problem-Solving

The purpose of the problem-solving class meeting is to involve the students in developing class expectations, or to explore solutions for expectations that are not being met. Example topics are below.

1. What is our class mission and how will we accomplish it?
2. What is our plan for academic improvement?
3. What are appropriate ways to handle conflict?

Academic Subject Area (Bob Hoglund/Cindy McClung)

The traditional Define, Personalize, Challenge format, described under the Components section, may be adapted to any classroom assignment and is a powerful process to engage students in a more in-depth discussion of a concept, topic, book, etc.

Education is the process through which we discover that learning adds quality to our lives.

William Glasser M.D.

THREE COMPONENTS OF CLASS MEETINGS

1. Define the problem or issue.

Example: Write a definition of quality.

Academic: What was the Emancipation Proclamation?

2. Personalize the problem or issue.

Example: How has working for quality helped and/or hurt you?

Academic: How has the Emancipation Proclamation impacted the US?

3. Challenge thought.

Example: Is there an inherent “goodness” to the word quality? In other words, does quality apply to drug dealers, murderers and thieves?

Academic: How would you address equality today?

THREE TYPES OF QUESTIONS

1. Closed

What is your favorite book?

What city or country would you like to visit?

2. Directed

Identify three of the barriers that people faced moving westward.

What are the similarities/differences in the two chemical reactions?

3. Open-Ended

What does it mean if someone is educated?

How would you solve the problem of _____?

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