

## Title

Weekly group discussion instead of form master class<sup>1</sup>

## Short description

Weekly group discussion is a way to observe and identify distress signals connected to behaviour as soon as possible.

## Detailed description of the tool and required materials, attachments

To notice distress signals connected to behaviour like being bored in the classroom, drastic behavioural changes (aggression, introversion, rhapsodic behaviour, bullying etc.) is only possible if we build a trust based relationship with our students and create situations when they are able to act and speak honestly.

It is sure that the one who first perceives boredom, changes of behavior and bullying of students are the classmates. Whether they share it with teachers or not, or rather the teacher perceives it or not depends on the teacher – student relationship. If the form master creates and maintains an atmosphere, relationships and forums based on mutual trust and caring for each other in the class community, he/she can have an up to date and accurate picture about his/her students' condition, problems, changes and so he/she quickly realizes the appearance of a distress signal connected to behaviour and can indicate it to the EWS team.

One way to create a relationship based on trust with students and to keep following their conditions and behavioural changes could be to organize weekly group discussions instead of form master classes.

What is a group discussion like?

- Held regularly, week by week at a fixed time.
- Students and also the form master sit in a circle without tables.
- Everybody can see each other.
- Main topics, questions are: „How do I feel? What happened to me last week?

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What bothers me? What are my pleasures? What makes me feel well or not well in class community, at home, among my friends? When do I need help? What can I not solve? What are my problems in the class community?"

- Everyone speaks in the first person singular, including the form master.
- One person speaks at the same time, we listen to each other.
- We do not classify or comment the announcements, the stories.
- It is a sharing, exchanging discussion, we do not find prompt solutions, do not give advice, but we give each other acceptance, active listening, attention.
- The role of the form master during the discussion is of a facilitator.

Group discussion is a big tolerance test. To speak honestly in a group is a demanding challenge for adolescents but also for adults. If you decide to start running group discussions do not give up after the first failure. Initially it will not work ideally. The first period will be characterized by great silences, parry, laughter, superficial chat, hiding. The perseverance of the form master is very important. Even if conversation initially seems to be not working let's keep managing it. Keep the ritual: sit in a circle, start a round question at the agreed time of the group discussion. After a certain time the members get accustomed to the situation and slowly feel the magic.

Group discussion has numerous advantages in the long run: we can get to know students deeply, follow their changes, class community and learning-teaching capacity develops, not to mention the personality development of students. Members of the group can feel to belong somewhere, to rely on classmates and the form master, to share here their troubles and joys, and to be interesting. Weekly group discussion also give a ritual to the community, develop solidarity and paying attention to each other, strengthen cooperation and create the possibility of feedbacks, reflection and self-reflection. The regularity of group discussions itself accustoms participants to express themselves in front of the group which is not an easy situation.

## User's guide, equipment

Equipment	Quantity
Chairs	By the number of participants

## Level of difficulty (easy, medium, advanced)

medium

## Tags

situation analysis, identifying at risk students, distress signals, student centered support, teacher-student relationship

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This tool can be found on the project website: [crocoos.tka.hu](http://crocoos.tka.hu)

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