

materiały opracowane przez: mgr Iwona Kubas

DEMOCRATIC or FREE SCHOOL

Exercise 1: Think about the *traditional Polish school* and discuss the questions with your partner(s).

1. What time do the lessons start in this school? How many hours a day do students spend at school?
2. What is the key concept?
3. What are the rules? What or who decides about the rules? What happens if someone breaks them?

Exercise 2: Watch a film at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eP1JxqHFC5c> and be ready to answer the questions:

1. What time do the lessons start in this school? How many hours a day do students spend at school?
2. What is the key concept?
3. What are the rules? What or who decides about the rules? What happens if someone breaks them?
4. What is YOUR opinion concerning the topic? What could be pros and cons of democratic schools?

Exercise 3: Read the text below. The **highlighted** words are explained in the glossary below the text. Tell your partner what NEW INFO does it contain?

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_education, <http://wolnaedu.pl/o-szkole-2/dokumenty/>,
<http://wolnaszkola.org.pl/o-szkole/specyfika>

According to the cognitive theories, humans are naturally **curious**, and democratic education supports the belief that the **drive** to learn is **sufficiently** strong to motivate children to **acquire** necessary knowledge and life skills useful in adulthood.

The **objective** of a democratic school is to allow children to discover themselves before they will be limited and put in **schemes** from which it is difficult to break free.

In a democratic school children learn by doing - making activities (not sitting at their desks and reading books). Democratic schools are characterized by **involving** students in the decision-making process that **affects** what and how they learn. The teachers show students different **possibilities** of getting knowledge but it is a child who chooses what and how they will learn. This way children develop their self-confidence, assertiveness, creativity, **entrepreneurship**, satisfaction with their own actions, **insight** into themselves and the ability to learn from mistakes - which is a guarantee of success.

Some democratic schools have no obligatory curriculum, considering forced learning to be undemocratic. Most democratic schools officially offer **optional** courses, and many help interested students to prepare for national examinations so they **gain** qualifications for further study or future **employment**. The curriculum is individually selected according to passions, talents and **current** competence level of the student. For these, there are no compulsory tests, homework or grades.

The idea of democratic education goes back to 1600s. First Polish democratic school was opened in Poznan in 2013.

GLOSSARY:

curious – wanting to know more about sth

a drive to sth – force, wanting very much to do sth

sufficiently - enough

to acquire sth – to get, to obtain, to gain

an objective – an aim, what you want to achieve or get

a scheme – a format, a system

to involve – to engage, to absorb

to affect – to have an effect

a possibility – an option

an entrepreneurship /ɒntrəprə'neɪʃɪp/ – ability to run a business and be successful in it

an insight into sth – a look into sth trying to understand it or learn more about it

optional – opposite of obligatory or compulsory

to gain – to acquire, to get, to obtain

employment - work

current - present

Exercise 4: With your partner discuss the questions to the text.

1. According to democratic education what is sufficient to learn abilities necessary in adult life?
2. How do children learn in a democratic school?
3. In this kind of school who decides about what to learn?
4. According to the text what guarantees success in learning something?
5. How is curriculum prepared in this kind of school?
6. Do students write tests or exams in a democratic school?

Exercise 5: Discuss with your partner (s).

If I were a teacher I would like/wouldn't like to teach in a democratic school because...

What ideas of democratic schools would be worth introducing in our classroom?