aula

(re)form school together

What is aula?

aula is a completely new way of thinking about what participation means, offering young people the chance to play an active part in shaping the world around them. Our online platform and learning resources (click here) promote a better understanding of democracy and develop the skills needed to participate in it.

Preparing good, deliverable proposals and building majority support among your peers is the way to achieve real change. By doing this, young people learn that, by taking responsibility and showing commitment, they can be creators and influencers of their own (school) environments. aula brings together learning about the media and politics and lays the foundations for responsible political participation in a digital world.

aula was developed for schools, but has also been adapted to other contexts outside education, such as community decision-making.
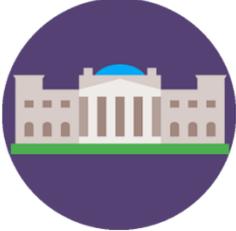
aula goals

Strengthen competencies that are important in the future: **Communication**, **collaboration**, **creativity** and **critical thinking**

improve the **school or community** and strengthen acceptance for rules

Understand **democracy** and acquire skills that are important for democratic participation.

Reflective use of **digital media**

Prevent **racism** and prejudice and bridge **language barriers**

Understand oneself as the **creator** of one's society

Participation in practice

aula was originally designed for use in German speaking secondary and high schools with pupils aged 11–18. At the beginning, a contract is concluded between students, teachers, school management and parents which clarifies the freedoms and limits of participation in aula in a binding manner. Students can then put their own ideas on the platform, discuss and develop them, vote on them and implement them on their own responsibility.

An overview of the participation process can be found here.

Skill development

aula is a complex project which can develop a broad range of skills. To do this, students must have the chance to reflect thoughtfully on their experiences in a structured setting such as a lesson. The skills and competencies developed by working with aula are easily mapped onto other curriculum assessment objectives, particularly in subjects such as politics, English and PSHE/social studies. In addition to this, students develop a range of social and personal skills which transcend individual subjects, most powerfully in students' understanding of democracy and the media.

Practice and evaluation

The concept was piloted and evaluated at four pilot schools nationwide in 2016–2018. The evaluation shows positive results for the competence development of the pupils in the field of democracy learning and in particular for the experience of self-efficacy. This suggests that the participation concept should be further developed and used in other schools and other institutions or organisations. Another argument in favour of further development and continuation is that 76% of those surveyed would like to continue using aula. In 2018, aula was awarded the Theodor Heuss Medal for Democracy.

Next steps

Both the software and the accompanying didactic material are available as open educational resources. In order to ensure a sustainable dissemination of the concept, we want to integrate aula more strongly into the institutional structures of the school system and accompany this process with our expertise. This will involve costs for technology (setting up, hosting and maintaining the platforms) and initial support during implementation (training of aula multipliers, travel costs, material, support).

Detailed information in German and English at
www.aula.de