

Exercise 5.5. – Perspectives on justice

Educational objectives	The students understand that there can be different perspectives on issues of justice. The students develop an understanding of the balance between rights and duties.
Resources	Sets of worksheets containing perspective A or B.

Procedure

1. One of the rights to be examined is chosen.
2. The class divides into groups of four or six.
One half of each group receives sheet A, the other half sheet B.
Each subgroup prepares as many arguments as possible in defence of the statement figuring on their sheet.
3. The groups reunite. The members of subgroup A present their point of view to the members of subgroup B, who must listen attentively and take notes.
Then it is subgroup B's turn.
The presentation of arguments may be followed by a period during which the members of the different subgroups ask each other questions.
4. Subgroups A and B exchange roles. They must not be informed in advance of this part of the exercise.
They are given a few minutes to reconsider their arguments.
5. The groups attempt to adopt a common position in writing on the problem under debate.
6. Questions to consider:
 - Which difficulties did you encounter in trying to reach a common position?
 - Did the fact that you reversed roles make it easier or more difficult for you to agree on a common position?

Extension

The teacher (or students) find cases in which freedom of expression (or child labour) is a controversial subject.

- How can rights and duties be balanced?
- Are there duties – or rights – which impose limits on certain rights?

Information given in the media should be used for the case studies. The investigation could be extended to include other human rights, e.g. freedom of movement or the right of property.

Materials

(see next page)

Perspective A: Freedom of expression

In a fair society freedom of expression is a fundamental human right that should not be restricted. Consider the following points:

- the negative effects of censorship;
- the political implications of its limitation and of dissidence;
- the circumstances in which other countries restrict it;
- the importance of freedom of expression for democracies;
- any other relevant problem.

Perspective A: Child labour

Laws against child labour should be strictly applied so that the right of children to play, to learn and to become healthy adults is protected. Consider the following points:

- the lack of education which follows when children are obliged to work;
- the fact that children often work in unhealthy conditions;
- the way child labour is often exploited because children are not organised to protest against unjust treatment;
- any other relevant problem.

Perspective B: Freedom of expression

In a fair society it is sometimes necessary to restrict freedom of expression in order to protect people's rights. Consider the following points:

- the effects of racist remarks on minorities;
- the ways in which speech may be used to encourage violence;
- how in some countries freedom of expression is unrestricted and leads to the violation of rights;
- the need to promote duties as well as rights;
- any other relevant problem.

Perspective B: Child labour

In the interests of helping families to survive in difficult economic circumstances, and of helping children to assume an active role in society, children should be able to work and help support their families. Consider the following points:

- the fact that in some societies where employment is rare, children can be one of the only sources of income a family has;
- the fact that in many societies children traditionally worked longer than adults;
- the opinion that preventing children from engaging in productive work results in useless isolation of children from the world of adults;
- the fact that work can be a formative experience for children;
- any other relevant problem.