

Exercise 6.2. – Attitudes to power⁵

Educational objectives	<p>The students can distinguish between concepts of power and their implications for democracy and human rights.</p> <p>The students develop active listening (teaching <i>through</i> human rights).</p>
Resources	Set of student handouts: “Statements on power and government”.

Procedure

1. The students form pairs. They study the statements and decide which statements they are in agreement with.
2. They make notes of the reasons why they support a certain statement.
3. The pairs present their results in class.
4. The students identify the underlying schools of political thought (transfer exercise); the teacher uses the findings and discussion in class to introduce the students to (selected) approaches of political thought (inductive approach, allowing different methods to be used – lecture by the teacher and perhaps the students; study of excerpts).

Extension

The students reflect on their individual value systems.

The students relate political ideas to the policies of parties and political leaders in their country.

Materials

(see next page)

5. Adapted from Claude Paris, *Ethique et Politique*, Editions C.G., Québec, 1985.

Student handout

Statements on power and government

1. In a government the role of the leader is paramount and irreplaceable.
2. Power alienates and must be eliminated in order to allow each person to realise his full potential.
3. A nation has only one dangerous enemy: its government.
4. Political power should be exercised by people chosen by the citizens.
5. Political parties are detrimental to the power of the state because they divide the people and cause futile confrontation.
6. The state is not a simple collection of individuals; it is a reality higher and more essential than the sum of individuals.
7. All forms of power have a tendency to become totalitarian.
8. The state is not an end in itself but the means necessary for the realisation of individual aspirations.
9. The state is an immense cemetery where all expressions of individual life end.
10. Strikes are a challenge to authority, which is why they should be forbidden.
11. Individuals exist only for the state and are nothing outside it.
12. Young people should take part in the decisions that concern them.
13. Only when the state has ceased to exist will we be able to talk of freedom.
14. The teacher should take the legitimate claims of his/her students into account.
15. Human beings have a natural tendency to do good; we should always have confidence in them.
16. The participation of all individuals in power should be a fundamental principle of the organisation of all human communities.
17. Political parties make it possible for the aspirations of citizens to influence the decisions of government.
18. Left to themselves without any control, human beings would kill one another.
19. Political power should not be at the mercy of public opinion.
20. Human beings have rights that power should respect and promote.