

Exercise 7.1. – The wall of silence

Educational objective	The students become aware of their concepts of democracy.
Resources	Pieces of flipchart paper fixed to the wall and markers (for groups of five).

Procedure

1. The students form groups of five. Each group is seated in a semi-circle facing a flipchart fixed to the wall. They are asked to write, in silence and within a time limit, a sentence of the type: “Democracy is ...”
2. The students respond to sentences or words already written down.
3. After the time limit for writing on the poster has been reached, each student chooses and reads out a sentence he/she has not written him/herself. The students share their results in class.
4. Thoughts are shared:
 - “I have learnt ...”
 - “I have discovered ...”
 - “I would like to discuss ...”

Variation

Instead of using posters on the wall, the students sit round a table writing on a large sheet of paper.

General information

“The wall of silence” is a brainstorming method that may be used at the beginning of a lesson sequence on key concepts such as democracy, dictatorship, justice, peace, education, equality, liberty, etc.

The method supports students who are less extrovert or wish to take some time to think carefully before saying something. Often these students are at a disadvantage in standard, that is oral and frontal class settings.