

Relating to Others in Groups and Teams

Rationale: Students bring a variety of misconceptions about power into communication classes. A more fine-grained understanding of power and its influences on people is helpful in a large number of real-world situations.

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Describe the variety of forms of power and situations involving power, including the societal fantasy of equal power.
- Apply the 5 bases of power described by French and Raven.
- Identify examples of times in their real-world groups when they had more or less power.

{video}

No visual aid is used for this lesson.

Outline of the Lesson

- I. Review of previous session's content
- II. Lesson Opening:
- III. Overview
 - A. How power works in groups and teams
 - B. Sources of power in human interaction

Body

- I. Power in groups and teams works differently than we think
 - A. Power is never equal. *Americans especially have a bias toward stating that there is equal power in relationships, especially in informal relationships, but that is basically never the case.*
 - B. Power differences are not necessarily bad.
 - C. Power is not monolithic: there are different forms.
 - D. Power is not constant: *Often it helps to think about how power can flow and shift within a relationship depending on specific situations and contexts.*
- II. Sources of power in human interaction. "Bases of Power" (French & Raven, 1959)
 - A. **Reward power** comes from the ability to dispense or deny positive & negative rewards to someone if they do what you want (or not reward them if they don't).
 - B. **Coercive power** comes from the ability to use force (physical, social, emotional, political, or economic) to make people do what you want.
 - C. **Legitimate power** comes from society's acceptance that people in certain social positions (being "the boss") are supposed to be "in charge."
 - The use of the word "Legitimate" here indicates that the power

relationship is a result of the generally accepted rules of the culture associated with the roles that the participants are viewed as occupying.

- D. **Expert power** comes from the value the receiver places on the source's education (PhD, MD, etc.) or their (generally relevant) experiences with a subject.
- E. **Referent power** comes from the receiver's liking or admiration for the source. Movie stars and celebrities have this power, but so do ordinary people who are very popular.
- F. **Informational power** (added by Raven in 1965) comes as a result of possessing information that others need or want.

Conclusion

- I. Review
 - A. How power works in groups and teams
 - B. Sources of power in human interaction
- II. Learning activity
- III. Lesson closing

References

- French, J. R. P., Jr., & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power*, (pp. 150-167). University of Michigan
- Raven, B. H. (1965). Social influence and power. In I.D. Steiner & M. Fishbein (Eds.), *Current studies in social psychology* (pp. 371-382). Holt, Rinehart, Winston.

Learning Activity

Complete one of these two class activity options.

In the Classroom

1. Divide into small groups
2. Identify two groups that you a member of.
3. Describe a time when you had more power in the first group than others.
 - What type of power was this? Why did you have it?
4. Describe a time when you had more power in the first group than others.
 - What type of power was this? Why did you have it?
5. Describe a time when you had more power in the second group than others.
 - What type of power was this? Why did you have it?
6. Describe a time when you had more power in the second group than others.
 - What type of power was this? Why did you have it?
7. Share the results of your discussion with the class

Remote

1. Download this document: [L06-relating-to-others-in-groups-and-teams-activity.docx](#)
2. Watch the activity walk-through in the lesson video
3. Record your relationships and the power dynamics in the document
4. Submit the completed activity document to this assignment

Variations and Accommodations

Follow guidance from local accommodation authorities. Please contact your instructor if any accommodations are necessary.