

Jeannie Jorgensen Lew
Hinckley Institute of Politics
Huntsman Seminar
August 3-7, 2009

Roles of the People of the Court

Day 1

Time period: 50 minutes

Objective: Students will learn who is normally in a court room and what each person's role is there.

Procedures:

1. Lecture--Give background of the juvenile court room and who is normally there.
2. Explain in detail, by this I mean give a specific job description of what each person does in the courtroom and the role that job plays in the court process. The ones I want covered are: the judge, the court reporter, the officer, the attorneys, the plaintiffs and the defendants. Explain that there is not always a jury, parents, or social workers in a courtroom, but they may be present and explain their roles.

Materials:

Job descriptions of the courtroom people.

Assessment:

Orally quiz the students on who does what at the end of the period to make sure they have learned each person's role in the courtroom. As a teacher I might do a role play and ask "Who am I?"

Day 2

Time period: 50 minutes

Objective: Students will learn three main reasons that children end up in the courts.

Procedures:

1. Lecture—The first reason that kids end up in court is that of abusive or neglectful situations at home. They need help. Most times a social worker is involved in these cases.
2. Reason number two that kids end up in court I think is drugs. Either the child themselves or the parents are using drugs. Often social workers are involved. Often these are repeat offenders.
3. The third reason that kids end up in court is because they have committed a crime. These are often repeat offenders as well. To be in juvenile court the crime is usually minor. If a child commits a major crime they are usually referred to an adult court.
4. Discuss with students some of the interventions that a judge may order. Some of these include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Refer kids to a rehabilitation program in or out of the area
 - b. Put the child on probation
 - c. Another kind of facility to get help for a specific problem such as a detention center with counselors trained to help adolescents.
 - d. Judge checks up on them to see if they are making progress every 30, 60, or 90 days
 - e. Sometimes the judge visits the child where ever he/she may be
 - f. Assigns an adult mentor from the community to the child to try to replace the bad habits with good ones in an area the child is interested in
5. Play Jeopardy with the students. Divide them into teams. Let the students choose the category and the amount. The teacher will read the clue. In order for them to earn the points the student has to say what he/she would do if they were the judge in the situation given.

Materials: Jeopardy clues and \$ amounts on paper, whiteboard and marker to keep score.

Assessment: As to the rulings they give during the jeopardy game.

Day 3 and Day 4

Time period: Two 50 minute periods

Objective: Students will learn more about the juvenile criminals and the process they go through in the court system. They will create and perform a skit (role play) according to their understandings.

Procedures:

1. Lecture—Review lectures from the previous 2 days.
2. Talk about how some judges like to not only address the problem at hand but to really try to find out what is at the core of the problem so that child does not become or stay a repeat offender. They try to find out things such as:
 - a. Who are the child's friends and what do they do in their free time together?
 - b. What is going on at home? How often are the parents at home?
 - c. What is going on in the home?
 - d. What is the child doing in his/her free time?
 - e. How are their grades?
 - f. Are they attending school?
 - g. What are they doing in school?
 - h. How are they treated by their peers?
 - i. Does the student have a disability? Learning or physical?
3. The judge tries to gather as much information as he/she can about the case before making a decision. They want to do what is best for the child that will help them the most.
4. Answer any questions that may arise and discuss as needed.
5. Students will get into groups and role play being the people of the court. (Judges, attorneys, plaintiffs, defendants, social workers, parents). For our purposes of this activity we will not be using officers, court reporters, or a jury.
6. Some students may have to go into the hallway so their particular judge does or does not hear the others discussing whether or not he/she committed the crime.
7. Different students will make different rulings and role play different situations differently so after each skit we, as a class will discuss what happened and talk about how each person played their role.

Materials: Skit situations, students may choose their own if the teacher approves it.

Assessment:

Did they seem to learn about the juvenile court system and this will show in the skits they perform and through the discussion after the skits.

Day 4

Skits and discussion.

Day 5

Time period: 50 minutes

Objective: Students will gain knowledge from someone who is in the juvenile court system every day.

Procedures:

1. Have a juvenile court judge come to class. Discuss with him/her what you have been talking about in the last week. Have him/her talk about some cases (if they can). Have him/her talk about the people of the court and the court process.
2. Allow for discussion among judge and class.

Materials: NA

Assessment: Watch the students' reactions. Listen to their questions and comments.