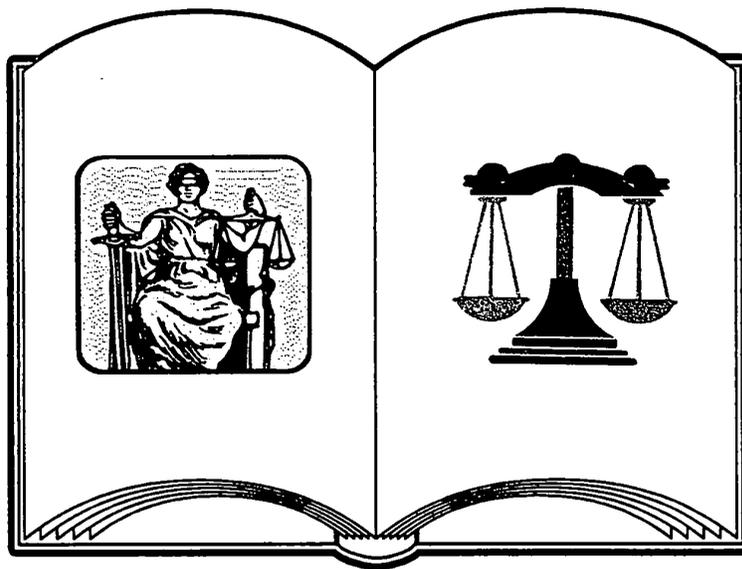


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# LAW-RELATED EDUCATION



**SOUTHEASTERN PUBLIC SAFETY INSTITUTE  
St. Petersburg Junior College**

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**LAW-RELATED EDUCATION**

**FINAL EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK**

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## FINAL EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Each of the three weeks of the Law-Related Education (LRE) sessions presented unique "problems" and "triumphs." The narrative below addresses the areas of Personnel, Curriculum, Facilities, Schedule, Participants, Additional Services, and Evaluations. Each section identifies comments and highlights suggestions for a future presentation of the LRE materials. In general, the comments are directed towards those which can be improved. Many things that are not mentioned worked well and provided the participants with good activities. The comments and suggestions are primarily based on observation, feedback sheets, and conversations with instructors, staff, and participants.

### PERSONNEL:

Instructors -- There was a wide variation in the ability of the instructors to handle this age group. Instructors with previous experience teaching this age generally felt more comfortable with the curriculum materials. In several cases, instructors were not able to handle the energy and the behaviors of the participants.

Variety of Approaches -- The competence of the instructors directly related to previous teaching experiences. One instructor had the participants in her class video tape some of the skits. Others made use of overhead projectors, the white boards, or flip charts. Since all rooms provided a full range of materials/equipment, it was a matter of personal choice as to use.

Participation for three weeks -- Because most of the instructors were volunteer or provided assistance, not all instructors were able to participate for each of the three weeks. Since there was such a variation in the characteristics of the participants each week, those instructors who only taught one week did not have the benefit of previous weeks' familiarity with the participants and/or the curricular materials.

**Select instructors who either have experience working with this age group and/or are comfortable working with them. Preferably have instructors present each of the three weeks. Stress the importance of visual aides-- transparencies can easily be developed for each unit.**

Americorps -- Americorps members generally felt that their primary function was to take the participants to the restrooms. Because youth possesses great energy, there was a lot of

frustration with some of the very active participants.

Numbers -- Each room needs to have at least two Americorps members. Special attention should be aimed at ensuring that one Americorps member of each gender is assigned to each instructor. Each room should have at least one male and one female instructor and Americorps member.

Responsibilities -- There was some confusion as to the responsibilities of Americorps members and the instructors. This was primarily related to the tickets and when and how they were taken away. On several occasions, there was a tendency for Americorps members to make spontaneous decisions to take away more tickets than called for within the guidelines. Several of the participants were upset about the change in rules; considering that the entire curriculum was about LRE, there probably needs to be more similarity and less capriciousness in the use of tickets.

Attitudes -- Several of the Americorps members seemed to lack the patience to work with the hyperactive, attention-demanding youth. Perhaps better forewarning of the Americorps members that the participants will be highly active and very energetic might help.

It would be almost impossible for the classes to function smoothly without the Americorps members help. The instructors and the Americorps members need to have an understanding of who is to take tickets, under what circumstances, and to what extent. An Americorps member and the instructor should represent each gender since certain participants tend to heed one gender over the other.

Administrator -- Given the personal situation of the assigned administrator, the overall operation of the three weeks ran fairly well; although there were times things seemed to flounder.

There is an absolute need for one individual to make all the necessary decisions for each week and to ensure the smooth operation of the entire series of activities. Defining roles and responsibilities along with delegation of authority would enhance the program implementation.

#### **CURRICULUM:**

Orientation -- The Orientation sessions for each of the three weeks differed significantly. One suggestion to limit the amount of time spent as a group is probably appropriate.

There was no use of the Preview for the topics to be covered that day or a Review of the previous day's topics as presented in the curricular materials.

**Shorten the Orientation Session on Monday, have students take the pre-test in their individual classrooms and have one person responsible for collecting the sheets. Use the morning orientation on successive days to Review the topics covered the previous day and introduce the subject and the objectives to be covered that day.**

Topics -- Although there was a "standard curriculum," there was in actuality little commonality between different instructors even on the same topic. This was due in part to the differences of the instructors themselves and to the additional instructor-provided materials.

Cultural Diversity -- Extreme differences existed between different instructors during each of the weeks. Cultural Diversity was the most frequently mentioned "like best" curriculum area and one of the two areas most frequently mentioned as an area that the participants would share with their families and friends. One scenario that was included in at least one session did not seem to fit with the objectives and the content of the curricular materials. Participants who were observing kept asking "What is the purpose of the scenario?" Much of the popularity and the success of this area was due to the instructors. An appropriate video would provide an alternative type of activity.

Decision Making -- The addition of videos (2 to 5 of them) definitely helped break up the monotony of the scenarios when they were all presented in successive fashion. Leaving the participants to merely read the script without supervising them or providing feedback on how they were doing does not work.

Law and Society -- There were extreme differences in the manner in which some of the worksheets were utilized. Some instructors used them as oral response from the entire group; others had participants respond in groups; others had each individual answer then as a group respond to the question/situation. In those sessions where the sheets were used as a means of obtaining oral responses from the entire group, they were not very effective; the activity did not demand active involvement and the participants did not pay as much attention.

Conflict Resolution -- This topic, culminating in the Mock Trial, actually had the least amount of time devoted to it. One video on "Negotiation Skills" (from the Juvenile Welfare Board) or "Conflict Resolution" by Sunburst Communications might provide some variety of methods. The instructors need to prepare the participants for the Mock Trial and their responsibilities as jurors.

Scenarios -- There appeared to be a wide range of the application of the scenarios. Some instructors used participants to read the scenarios only without providing feedback as to whether or not the role players were using the appropriate steps/methods; others provided feedback as to how the participants were doing and whether they were following the points made in the session.

**Have instructors in individual classrooms (or possibly the administrator of the morning orientation session) provide participants with suggestions for making role playing scenarios successful; have each instructor be certain that role players are following the points/steps presented in the day's lesson.**

Variety of Format -- Attention to a variety of activities in a variety of formats can help keep the participants actively involved. Too long at any one method will lead the participants to become disinterested or bored. Lectures for more than a few minutes will not work.

**Diversity of activities is a critical consideration with this group. Alternating role playing activities with video presentations or group activities is crucial. Cultivating a number of "games" or active involvement will help keep participants on task.**

Active Involvement -- Some instructors seemed to actively involve the participants more than others. In one case, about 20 students sat, fidgeted, and generally acted up while two instructors worked with four students in a separate room immediately after lunch. The participants can not be faulted for becoming disruptive in this case. Since there seems to be excess energy, one instructor had his class do jumping jacks and a couple other exercises. This provided the class with a tension-break, an energy release, and a chance to move; the class paid more attention afterward.

Off-site activities do not make a lot of sense given the behavior of the participants. Specific activities to keep the participants involved when things started to go slow would be a definite help. One possible activity would be to have "trivia questions" to answer. Candy or similar items could be provided as a reward.

Review -- There was little review in the large group sessions and sporadic review in the individual classrooms. It became obvious that the participants were missing some of the key points that were identified in the curricular material; this may be because there was uneven following of the materials--or because instructors skipped parts of the materials. In one situation, the instructor presented an excellent review of the course materials for the day and the participants later reported some of the main points he had stressed during the debriefing.

Mock Trial -- The first week's Mock Trial was not as successful as it could have been because the participants were not able to hear without the role players using a microphone. During the second and third weeks when the microphone was used, the Mock Trial was much more popular and well received.

Selection of participants to play specific roles needs to be made based on the participant's ability to role play situations (as previously demonstrated in class), to read the role player's sheet, and to be serious about the activity. In some cases, selection of Mock Trial players seemed to be more of a reward for good behavior and appropriate participation rather than role playing skills. Providing the list of roles for recommendations at the beginning of each day might lessen the disruption effect.

General Sessions -- The Review/Preview sessions were sporadically used. Primarily the afternoon general sessions were used to award prizes. Little review or preview of classroom sessions was conducted.

**Emphasize the preview/review aspects of the subject materials. Participants tended to lose track of what they were supposed to be working on or emphasizing.**

#### **FACILITIES:**

Arrangements -- The large general session/lunch room held all of the people. When there were attempts to speak to the entire group, a microphone was an absolute necessity; however, it was not always available and sometimes did not seem to be turned up loudly enough. Several participants complained of the small size of some of the rooms; however, with smaller class sizes that should not be a problem.

Be certain to always have a microphone available (and turned up) for sessions in the large room.

Size -- The size of the room and the number of participants per room is crucial. The fewer the participants, the better behaved they should be.

No more than 20 participants per classroom would be ideal. This would decrease behavior problems and the feeling of being cramped for space.

Court Room -- There must be several microphones or participants will not be able to follow what is going on. Additional chairs may be needed if many visitors arrive. Placing Americorps members strategically around the room may help with discipline problems.

#### **SCHEDULE:**

Lunches/Breaks -- At least one person suggested having lunch at 11:30. This might be a possibility if the morning break were eliminated and an afternoon break instituted. It is possible that if both a morning and an afternoon break (not necessarily with food) were included, the Americorps members would be able to do something besides continuously take the participants to the restrooms. The lunch time seemed to be too long for a majority of the participants. Perhaps having some activity that could involve some of the participants while the others finished eating would help. This is one time when the "trivia questions" could be effectively used.

Provide both a morning and an afternoon break to relieve the traffic flow to the restrooms throughout all the sessions. As part of the rules, inform participants that they will have to wait at least one hour before going. If breaks without food are staggered slightly, there should be no congestion in the restrooms.

#### **PARTICIPANTS:**

There appeared to be a wide range of types of participants. Some obviously were "problems" while others were well behaved. Participants who were court ordered appeared to create more problems than those who were voluntary.

Discipline problems -- The need for a constant, stable discipline

policy became evident throughout the three weeks. There appeared to be differing opinions among the staff/instructors as what was appropriate disciplinary action. Although a firm policy is definitely needed, compassion and concern for special situations is also appropriate. One participant who was a troublemaker during the first day of the first week was granted permission to return; he behaved acceptably after that.

**Include a section on appropriate male/female contact and conduct. Too many incidents occurred which had nothing to cover the activity.**

Prizes -- The tickets and the prizes seemed to work better during the second and third weeks when the participants had the chance to win prizes every day.

**Each day draw only the tickets from that day, but save all the others for the larger drawing on the final day. That rewards the individuals who were good on a particular day, but also allows everyone to have a chance on the last day.**

Rewards -- Some instructors very effectively used candy as a reward for participation and good behavior. Other instructors felt that the candy only served to increase the hyperactivity of the youth. A comparison of classrooms where candy was used as a reward and those where candy was not used showed similar behaviors. The candy did seem to

**Use candy as a reward for participation and insightful answers as well as a general motivating factor. The instructors who felt that the candy worked used the candy as rewards very effectively.**

#### **ADDITIONAL SERVICES:**

Bus arrangements -- Few participants used the provided buses.

**Reduce the number of buses as a means of cutting costs.**

#### **EVALUATIONS:**

Pre/Post tests -- The Pre-test used multiple choice questions exclusively. Only during the first two weeks were the Pre-tests collected. During the first week, it was evident that the open-ended post-test did not work. Subsequently, a largely multiple-choice form was provided.

Probably would be a good idea to provide each student with two copies of the pre-tests: one for turning in and one for keeping for review and discussion.

#### Evaluation Forms and Feedback --

By Instructors -- Some instructors were excellent when completing the Instructor Feedback forms; some gave only minimal comments.

By Americorps Members -- Although Americorps members did, in general, complete the session feedback forms, there were few comments on them. There were more comments on the first day of the first week; eventually people got tired of completing the forms every day.

By Administrators -- Only minimal feedback was obtained.

By Participants -- The participants grudgingly (in some cases) completed their forms. The feedback from these forms, although often conflicting, provides an overview of areas to consider for changes. (See Appendix A for a summary of all the participant feedback sheets by week.)

One example of conflicting feedback is related to the lunches/breaks. Of all of the participant responses, 18 wrote that they liked the Food/lunches best; while 14 wrote that they liked the Food/lunches the least; 30 participants did suggest changing the Food/lunches--some of these were just suggestions on content.

The largest number of participants indicated they liked the Mock Trial best, followed by the skits/role playing, the food/lunches, and the prizes. The specific things mentioned most frequently in terms of what the participants liked least included the food/lunches and that the sessions were boring. The most frequently suggested changes were related to the food/lunches and more activities/games. The things that the participants would most likely tell their family or friends were the topics of Law and Society, Cultural Diversity, followed by Decision-Making Skills.

Instructor feedback was valuable. To improve the input, have someone there to take notes or write down comments to obtain additional input. Having the instructors know that they are expected to complete feedback forms would be helpful.

Americorps members should be informed that they are expected to complete the Session Feedback forms and

provide helpful comments/observations.

Participant feedback yielded a variety of helpful observations which would be worth repeating. The simplicity of the questions provided an open-ended forum for responses and, while the numbers on specific activities may not be high, trends can definitely be seen.

APPENDIX A

EVALUATION SUMMARY

COMPARISON OF PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FOR THREE WEEKS

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
	<u>n</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>n</u>
Number of Responses:	41	39	69
Question 1: Liked Best			
N/A or Blank	3	--	3
Everything	7	3	5
Food/lunch	9	7	2
Skits/Role playing	8	6	7
New People	4	1	5
Fun	3	1	3
Topics:			
Cultural Diversity	3	1	7
Decision-Making Skills	--	--	3
Law and Society	2	4	4
Conflict Resolution	1	1	--
Drugs	--	--	1
Mock Trial	2	12	24
Attitudes	1	1	--
Prizes	1	8	8
Learning	3	2	1
Class discussions	--	--	2
Videos	1	2	6
Reading	--	--	1
Individuals Identified by Name	--	--	3
Activities/Student Involvement	--	4	4
Police Dog (1st week only)	5	--	--
Scholarship	--	1	--

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
	<u>n</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>n</u>
Question 2: Liked Least			
N/A or Blank	10	5	17
Liked everything	5	7	6
Food/lunch	3	3	8
Too long	4	3	--
Boring	7	2	5
Work	2	1	2
Topics:			
Cultural Diversity	1	--	1
Decision-Making Skills	--	--	1
Law and Society	--	--	--
Conflict Resolution	--	--	1
Attitudes	--	2	--
Sitting all day	1	--	--
People taking tickets away	--	--	1
Individuals Identified by Name	--	1	8
Disruptive students	2	2	--
Different Teachers	--	--	1
Bus Driver	--	--	1
Tests	--	--	3
Videotaping	--	--	1
Lectures	--	1	2
Class too short	--	1	1
Videos	1	1	1
Americorps	--	--	1
Cops	--	--	1
Trial	--	--	2
Skits	--	--	2
Groups	--	--	2
Large Classes	--	--	1
Cold Room	--	--	1
Writing	--	--	1
Tickets/Prizes	--	1	--
Getting up early	--	2	--
Rules	--	1	--
No hands on experiences	--	1	--

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
	<u>n</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>n</u>
Question 3: Change			
N/A or Blank	4	--	5
Nothing	10	13	24
Food/lunch	9	7	14
Make longer	3	2	4
Work	--	--	1
Don't know	1	3	--
More activities/games	6	3	2
Individuals Identified by Name	2	2	5
Make more fun	--	--	1
Bus Driver	--	--	1
Don't Videotape	--	--	1
Smaller classes	--	1	2
Fewer Cops	--	--	1
More free time	--	--	1
Room too cold	--	--	3
Behavior problems	--	--	1
Break in afternoon	--	--	1
More tickets	--	--	1
More breaks	--	--	1
More skits	--	--	1
Discipline plan/tickets	--	--	1
School-like activities	--	--	1
Larger Rooms	--	1	--
Rules	--	1	--
Time changes	--	3	--

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
	<u>n</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>n</u>
Question 4: Tell			
N/A or Blank	5	1	4
Everything	2	1	4
Fun	1	--	2
Topics:			
Cultural Diversity	14	12	8
Decision-Making Skills	4	9	11
Law and Society	18	14	30
Conflict Resolution	2	3	8
Drugs	--	--	1
Gangs	--	4	1
Prison	--	--	2
Racism	--	1	--
Mock Trial	--	2	3
Prizes	--	1	--
Roleplaying	--	--	1
You should come to camp	--	--	1
Don't come	--	1	1
Scholarship papers	--	--	1
How to be bored	--	--	1
Cooperation	--	--	1
Don't know	--	1	1
Respect for others	--	2	1
How to control self	1	--	--