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ILLINOIS STATE
BAR ASSOCIATION

LAW-RELATED EDUCATION

The Newsletter of the ISBA's Committee on Law-Related Education

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2013 HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIALS

The 2013 Illinois State Bar Association / Illinois Trial Team High School Mock Trial Materials are posted on our website at <http://www.isba.org/teachers/mocktrial> and at <http://illinoistrialteam.com/wordpress/>

The Mock Trials will be held at the University of Illinois Champaign Campus on Saturday, March 2nd and Sunday, March 3rd, 2013.

The Registration Deadline has been extended to Friday, January 11, 2013. Registration Fee is \$100, payable to Illinois Trial Team - 302 Buena Vista Dr, Apt E, Champaign, IL 61820.

Marley Nelson, Head Coach of the Illinois Trial Team will be administering the program along with the assistance of the ISBA and the Law-Related Education Committee.



Teachers wishing to participate will also find the 2013 Rule Handbook and Registration materials at these sites. If teachers want to contact a lawyer or lawyers to help them prepare students for the mock trials, check the Lawyers In Classrooms resource.

<http://www.isba.org/lawyersinclassrooms>

ILLINOIS SCHOOL SUCCESS STORIES

Creal Springs Students Make a Difference

Would you be proud of your middle school students if they saw a community need and found a way to solve it? How about if they found the money to repair and improve a board walk over the Cache River wetlands to make it accessible for those who are disabled?

It all started in 2009 when fifth graders at Creal Springs School near Marion IL took a field trip to the Cache River Wetland center. They proceeded to research the wetlands and the trees, animals, birds, and other creatures inhabiting the wetlands.

The Cache River wetlands have been designated a Wetland of International Importance, only the 19th wetland in the United States to receive the distinction. However, until recently, these wetlands were inaccessible to those with mobility limitations.

When the Creal Springs students became finalists for a Disney Planet Challenge Grant, they decided to commit \$15,000 from the grant to the re-construction of a long-damaged boardwalk to make it accessible. The students reached out to Friends of the Cache to match their funds and the boardwalk was dedicated in the spring of 2012.

As the students learned more about the wetlands, they became advocates for the Cache River Wetlands and gave presentations to the school board and to a symposium of middle and high schoolers held at Southern Illinois University. They also wrote letters and spoke to state and federal legislators and to Lt. Governor Sheila Simon about the importance of funding conservation programs.

Although these projects began as a science program, the students were also involved in action civics as they learned about government and making it work at the state and local level. They have been citizen advocates for their local community and brought about a significant improvement in their community. This project is an excellent example of an interdisciplinary approach to civics in which students in a science study learn how to access and reach their public officials. They also learn to research, prepare reports, write persuasively and speak effectively. They learn that active citizens can make a difference in their communities.

Their teacher Fran Wachter, has led the way using her own ideas and resources. She credits the various government agencies that were responsive and gracious to her requests for student involvement.



The Cache River projects have brought great publicity to this school of 175 pre-K-8th graders in far southern Illinois, where 50% of the children are eligible for free or reduced lunches and 89% achieve at or above the state norm on achievement tests.

Learn more at the Cache River webpage which is part of the Creal Springs School webpage at www.marionunit2.org. Learn more about the Disney Planet Challenge grant at disney.go.com/planetchallenge/

Submitted by Suzanne Schmitz

LESSON PLAN

LESSON PLAN ON THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

A LESSON ON THE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT AND CHECKS AND BALANCES

Goal: to introduce students to the first three Articles of the U.S. Constitution, to the concept of three branches of government, to the concept of checks and balances, and to identify the current occupants of these offices.

Materials needed: name tents (8 x 11 sheets of paper, folded in half horizontally so they can stand, with names such as President, etc.) as below and a copy of the Constitution for each student (I got them free from West Publishing Company but many textbooks will include the Constitution.)

Time needed: 50 minutes, could be less

Assign each student a name tent with a name such as President, Vice President, Secretary of State, U.S. ambassador, Ambassador to China, Army Chief of Staff, Supreme Court justice (three of these), U.S. Senator (four of these), and U.S. Representative (eight or so of these for a class of 20 – adjust the numbers as needed). Have the students move to tables or areas so that all the Senators were together and next to the Representatives, the executive officers were at another table, and the justices at a fourth table.

The students could now visualize the three branches of government in a physical setting. It would help to show them photos, either power point slides or physical pictures of the symbols of each branch (a photo of the White House, Congress, the Supreme Court or a photo of the current occupants of those offices). This visualization allows for a very brief lecture that there are three branches of government and that one of the Articles of the Constitution governed each of them. Also briefly comment on the make-up of the two houses of Congress, including a review of each state having two senators and having the number of representatives determined by population. If time, comment on the Constitutional Convention compromise that led to this make-up.



Distribute the Constitution to each student. Direct each table to look up information about their offices on such items as:

- Was the office mentioned in the Constitution?
- What is the term of office?
- How does one acquire the office?
- What are the requirements for the office?

Offer hints as to where to find the information but do not supply the answers.

Have each table report on what they learned.

Then direct each table to the part of the Constitution that listed the duties of each branch, and look up questions such as

Can the President appoint anyone he or she wanted to the US Supreme Court or as ambassador? What does Congress get to do about that?

Can the Congress tell the General what to do? Or the Ambassador? Or the Secretary? Would they do what the Congress said or what the President said? Why?

Suppose Congress passes a bill the President thinks is bad, what can the President do?

Suppose the Congress passes a bill the Court thinks is bad, what can the court do? How would a case get to the Court?

Suppose the Senate wanted to come up with funds to build a new space station? Could it do that? What would the House of Representatives think about that?

Suppose the President tells the US Army to invade China, will the General follow those orders? Where will he or she get the money to fund the war? What does the Congress think about that?

These questions lead to discussions rather than specific answers. Let the students raise questions about how to interpret the Constitution when it is unclear or when the answers are missing.

These activities should be enough to make the point about checks and balances. If possible, present a power point slide showing a chart of the concept, or write the concept on the board. Discuss the reason for checks and balances – to avoid consolidating too much power and corruption in the hands of one office - and the disadvantages –stalemate- as well.

If time, ask who the current occupants of these offices were. Again it would help to show slides of the current occupants.

Very briefly, review the lesson – three branches, separate but co-equal, and checking each other. Explain that the same idea operated at the state level; identify the comparable state offices and the current occupants. Explain that there is a comparable state constitution.



Finally, ask about the importance of the U.S. Constitution as the students experienced it in this class. That should raise issues such as the Constitution created the offices, defined the duties and some of the requirements, and created a situation where they depended on each other.

If time permits, ask each table to tell one thing they learned about the Constitution from our lesson.

I used this lesson plan in a GED class of about 20 students, with limited abilities, but great interest. I began by asking each student his or her name and something about each person. This helped me remember their names. Alternatively, I could have had them put their names of the name tents I gave them. In a class of 20, learning names was fairly easy, but not essential. Because this was a GED class, I was not sure of their level of attention or engagement and knowing their names helped me keep them attentive.

Submitted by Suzanne Schmitz

HOT TOPICS

History fair and law

Are you or your students looking for a project for a history fair? Consider developing a project around these American lawyers:

- James Adams (Pioneer attorney) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Adams_%28lawyer%29
- John Peter Altgeld (Illinois Governor/Haymarket Riots) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Peter_Altgeld
- Harry Blackmun (U.S. Supreme Court Justice) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Blackmun
- Myra Bradwell (First Illinois woman lawyer) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myra_Bradwell or http://library.law.columbia.edu/rise_of_women/practice/myra_bradwell.html
- William Jennings Bryan (Attorney in Scopes trial) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Jennings_Bryan
- Carol Moseley Braun (first, and to date, the only, African American woman elected to the United States Senate) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carol_Moseley_Braun
- Roland Burris (first African American elected to statewide office in Illinois) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roland_Burris
- Hillary Rodham Clinton (First Lady and Presidential candidate in 2008) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillary_Rodham_Clinton
- Paul Cornell (Founder of Hyde Park, Chicago) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Cornell_%28lawyer%29
- Clarence Darrow (Attorney for Leopold and Loeb) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clarence_Darrow
- David Davis (Friend of A. Lincoln) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Davis_%28Supreme_Court_justice%29
- Stephen A. Douglas (A. Lincoln debate opponent) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_A._Douglas
- Melville Fuller (U.S. Supreme Court Justice) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melville_Fuller
- Elmer Gertz (Civil Rights Activist) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elmer_Gertz
- William Herndon (A. Lincoln's law partner) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Herndon_%28lawyer%29
- Julius Hoffman (Chicago 7 trial attorney) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_Hoffman



- Henry Horner (Governor of Illinois) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Horner
- Robert Todd Lincoln (A. Lincoln's Son) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Todd_Lincoln
- Owen Lovejoy (Underground Railroad) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Owen_Lovejoy
- Lisa Madigan (Illinois Attorney General) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lisa_Madigan
- Edgar Lee Masters (Attorney and author) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edgar_Lee_Masters

Teaching about credit and debt

There are several resources available for teachers of consumer education or anyone wishing to teach about credit and debt, especially as our nation deals with issues related to debt.

Credit Abuse Resistance Education – CARE – is a program prepared by a bankruptcy judge who saw too many 18-24 years old in bankruptcy court due to credit card debt. Many lawyer groups have added materials. Go to www.care4yourfuture.org for ready-made power point presentations, other lesson plans, and videos. Great for programs for high school and community college and young adults.

Public Broadcasting Service – PBS – is not only the home of Big Bird but also of credit materials. Here is what PBS says: 'Fast paced and fun, Biz Kid\$ is a series that teaches kids about managing money and entrepreneurship. Each episode features compelling real-life stories about young business owners and philanthropists and reinforces the importance of budgeting, saving, and giving back to the community.' Check local listings for program times. Click on <http://bizkids.com/teachers> for lesson plans, videos, games and more.

Law and Civics in the classroom

iCivics, the interactive website started by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor to improve the teaching of civics, has added new games. One puts students in the role of jurors as they decide a case. Another helps students determine their constitutional rights. A third places students in the role of judges deciding cases.

In yet another activity, students must make choices needed to balance the federal budget and a county budget. Find these and lesson plans and more at www.icivcs.org.

Law Day

It is not too early to think about Law Day, May 1 each year. Contact your local bar association soon and ask them to work with you on Law Day, whether K-3 or high school or any grade in between. The ISBA website has numerous Law Day and other materials that would be helpful for guest speakers. Direct your guest lawyer to Law Day and Lawyer in the Classroom materials on the ISBA website at Public/Teachers.

Submitted by Suzanne Schmitz

ISBA LAW-RELATED EDUCATION COMMITTEE PAMPHLETS ONLINE

Becoming an Adult

<http://www.isba.org/sites/default/files/teachers/publications/Becoming%20an%20Adult.pdf>

Kids and the Law: An A-to-Z Guide for Parents

<http://www.isba.org/sites/default/files/teachers/publications/Kids%20and%20the%20Law.pdf>



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