

Model: Role Playing

Purposes:

To give students a feel for the courtroom setting. To exposed students to the thought processes and motives of a judge, lawyer, and jury member.

Context:

Students have been studying how to investigate a crime scene. They know what types of evidence is collected and their basic functions of a court of law. They have been introduced to the idea of a fair trial.

Phase One: Warm Up the Group

Review with the class about crime scene investigation and arresting procedures.

Ask class “Now what happens?”

Lead students to tell what they know about a courtroom, a jury, the lawyers, the judge.

Phase Two: Select Participants

“Lets say we want to set up a courtroom and select a jury. Who would be present? (What are the roles?)

Judge, defense lawyer, prosecuting lawyer, jury members (how many and how do we choose them?)

At this point I would lead the students through a discussion about how to select jury members. Then each student would put their name in a box and we would randomly select jury members.

“Is this jury acceptable?”

Have student outline why this jury may not be acceptable. (relation, bias, experience)

“Can we get the unacceptable members off of the jury? How? By whose authority?”

“How can we find out which members are unacceptable? Who ask these questions?”

“Are there acceptable members that someone would not want to be on the jury?”

Now choose a student for each of the roles of judge, defense lawyer, and prosecuting lawyer. [May choose a team of lawyers for each side]

Phase Three: Set the Stage

Inform the students we are about to role-play the jury selection process. Give the specifics on a case for which we need a jury. Then go over each person's role.

Phase Four: Prepare the Observers

Split the remainder of the class up into two groups. One group should watch the prosecution for proper motives and questioning. The other group should watch the defense lawyers for the same.

Phase Five: Begin Role Play

Let each of the lawyers question the jury. If the judge dismisses anyone, then replace him or her as normal.

Phase Six: Discuss and Evaluate

Stop role-play. Discuss, questions asked by each party, dismissals, questions which could have been asked, people we wouldn't want on the jury but could not get dismissed.

Phase Seven: Reenact

Continue Jury selection. We could start a new case, trade lawyers, trade judges, or get a new jury.

Phase Eight: Discuss and Evaluate

Same as Phase Six

Phase Nine: Share Experiences and Generalize

Ask students about their thought process, how they made decisions and come up with questions. Ask what type of person should be in each role. Relate to cases in our community or the high profile cases like O.J.