

# Trainers Times

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## What Can Trainers Learn from Teacher Reflections?

By Laurel Singleton, CRFC VOICE Trainer

*Our school resource officer was very helpful and even discussed case law. This made a positive impact on students. My students cheer now when it is civics/social studies time. Students are so eager to conduct research via the Web and in library time and to show the officer their research findings. Having students take a risk and attempt communicating their understanding of the Preamble through drawing was a challenge, but expression and courage were big assets that came about from this lesson.*

Fifth-grade Teacher, Phoenix, Arizona

*One of my goals was for students to gain knowledge of the Preamble. The kids worked with their groups to find pictures that represented their phrase in the Preamble. They also explained the meaning of their phrase to the class. A few of the pictures selected did not fit the meaning of the phrase. When I asked how the pictures related, the students couldn't say, so I was disappointed. I should have given more guidance.*

Fifth-grade Teacher, Anchorage, Alaska

As professional developers in law-related/civic education, we encourage teachers to reflect on their practice, believing that a reflective teacher will be a more effective teacher. We also use teachers' reflections as an authentic way to document implementation and its impact on classrooms. Such documentation is important for funders and for schools. But teachers' reflections are also



Teacher reflections are a core component of CRF professional development activities with Youth for Justice.

data that we should be considering in examining the effectiveness of our own work and deciding how we might better meet teachers' needs.

For the past two years, I have had the opportunity to consider what I can learn from teacher reflections, as I have read written reflections from elementary teachers who have participated in several institutes focused on the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago's VOICE (Violence-Prevention Outcomes In Civic Education) and Primary VOICE curricula. So what have I learned? This article addresses just a few of my "lessons learned" from reading teacher reflections.

### LRE Lessons Modeled in Training Are the Lessons Taught in the Classroom

This "lesson" may seem entirely commonsensical, but I think it's very important. When we introduce teachers to an LRE/civics curriculum, we select as demonstration lessons those we think will work well in a workshop setting and, we hope, will pique teachers' interest so they will delve more deeply into the curriculum. Of course, we

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also try to choose lessons that illustrate particular strategies and/or engage learners with particular content. We are actually loading up each lesson with a multitude of purposes.

How many of those purposes are we achieving? VOICE teachers' reflections show that the most-often used lessons are those demonstrated in training. Some teachers do indeed delve into the rest of the curriculum, but many others do not. Similarly, some teachers report having applied modeled strategies to other content, but many others do not. Given the time pressures teachers face, this is not surprising. Teachers have seen the modeled lessons work and have confidence they can replicate that success. They do not have to devote a great deal of time to planning.

If we want teachers to delve further into the curriculum or apply modeled strategies to other content, we need to do some rethinking. Talking to teachers about what would help them take their implementation to this higher level would be a good first step.

### **Teachers Often Use LRE Lessons for Very Different Purposes than the Curriculum Developers Had in Mind**

The reflection form CRF uses (see pages 10-11) asks teachers to identify essential civic knowledge/skills the teacher expected students to gain as a result of participating in the lesson. Often, the outcomes teachers list are quite different from those identified in the curriculum. Take, for example, the classic LRE lesson "No Vehicles in the Park." In my mind, the lesson has several purposes: to help students (1) think about what makes a good law, (2) identify how the intent and the letter of the law may be different, (3) consider how a law applies in different situations (i.e., to interpret the law), and (4) appreciate the challenges in writing a good law. (A search of the Web shows that other law-related educators have somewhat different takes on the lesson's purpose, but we're in the ballpark.)

When I look at teachers' reflections on this lesson, I see some of these same outcomes, but I also see some that are quite different. Two examples are:

- Understand how government and geography interact.
- Understand the role of the executive and judicial branches.

Some of these variations seem to reflect teachers' need to adapt lessons to address their particular situations—a need that is made clear in myriad ways when reading teachers' reflections. When combined with other outcomes, these "new" outcomes may make the lesson all the richer. For example, students could certainly learn about the geographic concept of place and about human interaction with the natural environment as they take part in "No Vehicles in the Park." On the other hand, some of these outcomes seem to reflect a misreading of the lesson. Certainly, one can imagine a version of "No Vehicles in the Park" that would address the role of the executive and judicial branches. But is that lesson the best way to help students understand those two branches? And what about the legislative branch?

Perhaps I'm overanalyzing, but seeing these outcomes has caused me to think more carefully about two of the things my mentor when I first began doing staff development always emphasized: (1) clearly identify your goals for every piece of a workshop and (2) debrief to those goals. The time pressure in most workshops has made me sloppy about doing those two things, but I've now been reminded how important they are.

### **And Another Thing About Time. . . Interactive Lessons Take a Lot of It**

I cannot even count the number of times I've heard or said the following in a workshop: "I know you haven't had enough time, but let's move on." We keep the pace fast to hold teachers' interest, to permit coverage of lots of different pieces of a curriculum, and (perhaps) to support our collective delusion that interactive lessons do not take too much time. Teachers' reflections tell us over and over that interactive lessons require lots of classroom time: "I could have spent twice as much time on this lesson." "I didn't have enough time to cover the material as thoroughly as I would have liked." "A 45-minute class was not long enough for this lesson."



Youth for Justice is the national coordinated law-related education program supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the United States Department of Justice and is a collaboration of the American Bar Association, the Center for Civic Education, the Center for Education in Law and Democracy, the Constitutional Rights Foundation, the Phi Alpha Delta law fraternity, and Street Law, Inc. Youth for Justice provides national leadership for sustainable, high quality LRE programs for at-risk youth and their communities. It provides program models, materials, training and technical assistance to educators, students, and parents in schools and in community and juvenile justice settings. Youth for Justice delivers these services in cooperation with its national network of State LRE Centers.

By downplaying the time-consuming nature of interactive lessons—a critical element of law-related/civic education—we’re doing ourselves and teachers a disservice. It won’t take long for teachers to figure out how many class periods a lesson really takes—so why not “tell it like it is” from the beginning. By not acknowledging that interactive lessons do take time, we are missing the opportunity to convince teachers that interaction is worth the time investment. So I’m resolving to stop rushing teachers, acknowledge the time a complex interactive lesson can take, and be as persuasive as I can be about the value of interaction—all while maintaining a lively pace!

## Lots of What We Know Is True

When I’m doing a lot of professional development and not spending enough time in classrooms, some of the things I say over and over start to ring hollow. While I still ought to get into classrooms more, teacher reflections do affirm some of those “truisms.”

For example, I’ve often exhorted elementary teachers to expose their students to controversial issues, saying “Even the youngest children can discuss controversial issues if you give them a structure and pick an appropriate issue.” A reflection from a second-grade teacher in Denver reaffirmed my belief in the truth of that statement: “Creating rules became controversial for my second-graders. Not swearing, yelling, and being polite and focused are controversial for students whose parents don’t follow these rules. Students also disagreed about whether to talk to a

friend or risk offending them by continuing to work. Really this came down to ‘What is a good friend?’ We had wonderful discussions of these issues.”

Another statement I’ve made countless times: “When you use literature to advance social studies goals, remember that students need to be able to enjoy the literature as literature—it has to be savored as a good story before it can be a social studies lesson.” A fourth-grade teacher in Denver provided evidence that this statement is true when she described her students’ reaction to the book *Pedrito’s Way*: “At first, the students got sucked into the story as a story and forgot to decide if he was being responsible. So I stopped and read the story to them so they could enjoy it. Then I had them close their eyes and listen to the story again. As they listened, they had to raise their hands when Pedrito faced a decision. Then we stopped to discuss if he made a responsible decision.”

Finally, teachers’ reflections affirm that “Preparing citizens is hard work.” Teachers tell us about their struggles with students who don’t want to take part in group work and have no models of civic engagement. They report on the challenge of addressing civic education while facing intense pressure to focus on tested parts of the curriculum. They describe their worries when students do not seem to transfer learning from one situation to another and wonder how they’ll find time to improve their own knowledge. As I read about their attempts to address these challenges and struggle to provide ideas that might help them, I am reminded that there’s a lot more work to be done.

## CRF, CRFC Commemorate *Brown v. Board of Education* On-Line

The Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) and the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago (CRFC) have each posted commemorative web sites devoted to the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court of the United States’ landmark decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*.

### **Brown v. Board of Education: 50th Anniversary**

[[www.crf-usa.org/brown50th/brown\\_v\\_board.htm](http://www.crf-usa.org/brown50th/brown_v_board.htm)] commemorates the decision in the context of America’s complex struggle toward equality. It provides a wealth of lessons on race in America, the efforts of African Americans and others to promote equal justice under law, and decisions regarding equality since *Brown*.

**Brown at 50** [[www.crfc.org/Brownat50.html](http://www.crfc.org/Brownat50.html)] features a specially prepared curriculum, designed for high school students, on the history, legacy, and meaning of *Brown*.

In addition to lessons, both sites feature comprehensive sets of links to U.S. Supreme Court cases and to additional resources.



*George E.C. Hayes, Thurgood Marshall, and James M. Nabrit, congratulating each other, following the Supreme Court’s Brown v. Board of Education decision. (Library of Congress)*

# Providing Ongoing Support and Development for Teachers

By Barbara Miller and Laurel Singleton, Center for Education in Law and Democracy

Youth for Justice, the national coordinated law-related education project funded by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, recently sponsored a three-year initiative related to best practices in professional development. In this article, we look at a question that has engaged participants in the initiative: What are the most effective and workable ways to provide “ongoingness,” the sustained follow-through that helps teachers make real change in their classrooms?

One of the most important findings from the research on professional development is that teachers need ongoing support and development as they work to improve their practice. While one-time events can be an essential component of professional development programs, combining them with follow-through support increases the likelihood of achieving change. Among the activities that provide for ongoing, reflective work with teachers are study groups and coaching.

## Study Groups

A study group is a small cadre of teachers with one or more common interests who meet regularly to solve problems and extend their understanding of the topic or issue under study. After three years of working with study groups—work that has been rewarding both for the teachers and for her—Carolyn Pereira of CRF-C reports that she has as many questions as answers: Who should participate in a study group and how should they be selected? How do you determine the focus for the group? What kind of leadership does a study group need? How much does it cost to run a study group and what are the sources for funding? What formats for study groups are both effective and workable? How long should a study group stay in existence?

The authors of this article developed the following tips for working with study groups based on their own work and the Illinois experience. These tips are a work in progress, and we invite input from readers.

## Tips for a Study Group’s Initial Meeting

- 1. Introductions**—Have teachers tell about some or all of the following: context in which they teach, successes, challenges, most important outcomes, content interests, strategies they want to improve their use of.
- 2. Creating an anticipatory set**—Prior to the first meeting, teachers might conduct some sort of discussion, survey, focus group, or selective interviews and bring data from students to help provide direction.

- 3. Reading and discussing something** (a short story, essay, or article) to provide an adult experience with pedagogy that teachers will use with students. With her study group, Carolyn has used the short story “Jury of Her Peers” and an article about patriotism to model what CRF calls a civil conversation.

- 4. Deciding what the focus of the study group will be.** This can take a big chunk of time—and it is important to do this part thoughtfully. In selecting a content focus or an activity or series of activities, the group should think carefully about the reasons for the content focus. The selection also needs to make sense in terms of the school calendar and when you are meeting. Some models that we have tried or know of include:

- **Pedagogy**—In one study group, we spent three sessions trying three different types of discussion. Following the session in which a model was introduced, teachers tried it in their classroom; the next session was then devoted to reporting on their experience in trying that strategy.
- **Like-minded group**—We the People teachers of the same grade level in the same district created agendas for a series of meetings to meet specific needs—brainstorming follow-up questions that students might be asked to answer, background on content that’s hard to teach but needed for most units, viewing videotapes of student work, discussions of how to manage and lead student work groups.
- **Selecting and Analyzing Content/Pedagogy**—Teachers from different settings selected the equal protection clause (and eventually one court case) and looked at the related background knowledge, use of precedent, and a moot court strategy. In working with this slice of content, they addressed several aspects of the teaching/learning process, observed each other, collaboratively solved problems, and discussed such issues as the difference between assessment and grading and how to engage students in reflection.

- 5. Understanding of what a study group is and what it is not**—Study groups provide an opportunity for teacher talk—but it is not only about what the teacher does. What students learn should also be a focus. Study groups provide a safe place for teachers to collaboratively problem solve, reflect upon how to improve their practice, and bring questions that do not

have clear answers—but they are not support groups where individual teachers gossip about other teachers or bring their grievances against students.

Part of understanding what a study group is will be learning about some of the activities that will occur as part of the study group, including analysis of student work and classroom visits/observations. Teachers may not have experienced these activities previously, so helping them understand the purpose and benefits of these “risky” activities will be important.

## Tips for Planning Subsequent Study Group Activities

- 1. Address content**—Teachers often find that, when they start to delve into how they are teaching a topic, court case, or issue, they want to learn more themselves. For a subsequent meeting, invite in a content expert to speak or have the group read something by a content expert and then set up a conference call so the teachers can interact with the expert. The conference call idea comes from Diana Hess, assistant professor of education at the University of Wisconsin, who uses this format in her graduate class. She says that the idea of speaking with an expert causes the students to prepare more thoughtfully. Experts can also be used to stimulate thinking about pedagogical issues. For example, Carolyn asked Diana to model for her study group, using a “think-aloud” process, how to decide what cases should be taught.
- 2. Analyze student work**—Teachers have different values and processes for evaluating what good work looks like. By analyzing student work, teachers can exchange ideas about the outcomes that they value and how they might modify what they do to help students reach complex outcomes. The use of protocols can give the process focus, make the activity feel “safer,” and keep the discussion on track.
- 3. Classroom visits**—Opportunities to observe other teachers provides a rich setting for learning and collaboration. For such experiences to be successful, teachers need trust and respect for each other, skill in observing and in giving and receiving feedback, and an ability to reflect on the meaning of what they saw. Working as a group to create a set of questions that will be used in reflecting on/discussing observations may help get the process off to a good start.

## Tips on the Role of the Facilitator

We have always dreamed of study groups that would be totally teacher-run, but we haven’t been really successful in getting that to happen. Teachers don’t have the time or the inclination to do the “dirty work” of running the study group, plus they value their participation as learners and

## The Youth for Justice Best Practices Initiative

In 2001, Youth for Justice, the national collaborative law-related education project funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice, launched its best practices initiative. The initiative provided a focus on research-based practices through a series of small grants to state law-related education centers. In the first year of the initiative, YFJ looked at research in several fields—law-related education itself, prevention, and professional development.

In the initiative’s first year, seven states received grants for best practices work: Idaho, Illinois, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Washington. These experiences served as a clear reminder that good law-related education requires a teacher who has deep content understanding and is skilled in using a variety of interactive teaching strategies. In the second and third years, YFJ funded LRE projects in Alabama, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Oregon; these projects featured best practices in professional development, an area of burgeoning research. These practices include involvement of teachers in planning their own professional development; a focus on improving and deepening teachers’ content knowledge as well as their understanding of effective methods of teaching that content; provision of opportunities for meaningful analysis of teaching and learning; promoting coherence with teachers’ goals and state standards and assessments; adequate duration, including an element of “ongoingness”; and collective participation by teachers who can work together to create change.

Barbara Miller and Laurel Singleton of the Center for Education in Law and Democracy provided technical assistance to the best practices sites on behalf of YFJ.

don’t want to step out of that role to facilitate. So what does the facilitator do? It’s not a question we’ve satisfactorily answered, but here are some thoughts:

- 1. Handle logistics**—The facilitator sends out reminders, makes sure the meeting place is set, and provides the food (and study groups universally love food). It is the “dirty work,” but it is important.
- 2. Find resources**—Whether it is an outside expert, a reading, or a good introduction to a new teaching strategy, facilitators can provide resources that teachers don’t have time to locate.
- 3. Help teachers set and follow an agenda**—Teachers could be happy getting together and just talking, but they won’t learn as much as they will if the study group meetings have and stick to structured yet flexible agendas.

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4. **Ask the hard questions**—Many teachers do not have much practice asking each other the hard questions. They get so much public criticism from other sources, they don't want to be critical of their colleagues' work. So the facilitator can provide a model for asking questions that promote reflection in a way that is supportive.
5. **Wean the group from your leadership**—As the group develops, you want the teachers to have ownership; we're not sure exactly how that happens, but we think that the facilitator, while still doing items 1-4, takes a less verbal role in the group meetings.

## Coaching

Two people having a conversation about coaching may find they are talking about two distinctly different things. When you add to the mix the various types of coaching that are bandied about—cognitive coaching, technical coaching, collaborative coaching, mirror coaching, and peer coaching to name just a few—it's no wonder we're confused. Everyone seems to agree that a coach is someone a teacher might learn with and that coaching involves classroom observations; beyond that basic level, however, definitions vary widely.

We have found it useful to think about the people a teacher might learn with as falling into several categories:

- A supervisor who observes and evaluates the teacher's work and provides feedback.
- An expert consultant who could teach the skill or content the teacher needs and perhaps stay in touch via phone or e-mail.
- A mentor—someone who knows what the teacher wants to learn, has more experience than the teacher in implementing this skill or knowledge, and would observe the teacher's work and make suggestions based on observations. This person might be something like a personal trainer.
- A coach—someone who knows what the teacher wants to learn and has been trained in helping others achieve their goals by observing their work and asking the questions that will help the "coachees" reflect on and improve their practice. A teacher who is a coach may be observed by other teachers who want to see what works with students and may also observe the coachee as a step toward helping him/her become more reflective and improve his/her practice.
- A buddy—a colleague with essentially the same knowledge and skills who will learn with the teacher. By learning some coaching skills—for example, having a framework for observing each other's classrooms and initiating discussion afterward—buddies can help each other even more.

No matter which of these relationships a professional developer is thinking about using, it's important to remember that being observed is, for many teachers, a very uncomfortable process. Thus, taking part in a coaching, mentoring, or buddy relationship should be voluntary. Furthermore, an atmosphere of collegiality needs to be developed before classroom observations take place. Without mutual trust, observations are likely to produce more tension and defensiveness than reflection and growth. In addition, mutual trust establishes a climate in which it is expected that both the observer and the observed will learn from the experience.

Other preparation is important before any actual classroom observations occurs. One key piece is talking about the purpose of the observations generally: What teachers' questions might observations help them answer? How will the observers interact with students and why? What kind of debriefing discussion will take place and when will the debriefing occur?

In a consulting or mentoring relationship, debriefing a classroom observation likely involves provision of what we would think of as feedback. In a coaching or buddy relationship, however, debriefing is more truly a discussion. The observer describes what he/she saw in the classroom and asks probing questions about decisions the teacher made. Together, the observer and observed talk about their perceptions of what was effective, what evidence they have of that effectiveness, and how elements of the lesson that were less effective could be improved.

Coaching does not come naturally to everyone. A good place for professional developers interested in learning more about coaching and mentoring is the website of the Coalition of Essential Schools, which provides numerous tools that can be helpful in designing and implementing collaborative models of professional development. To find these tools, go to [ces.edgateway.net/pub/ces\\_docs/resources/sd/teach\\_coll/teach\\_coll.html](http://ces.edgateway.net/pub/ces_docs/resources/sd/teach_coll/teach_coll.html).

## Other Models

Study groups and coaching are not the only means of providing ongoing follow-through support for teachers. The professional development literature also mentions teacher networks, mentoring programs, internships, and action research. If you have had success using any of these models in law-related education, we would love to hear from you. We invite you to submit articles describing your experiences implementing these best practices for publication in future issues of *Trainers Times*.

# Legislative Staff: Another ORP Option

When planning workshops and institutes, calling those “old faithful” outside resource persons (ORPs)—whether favorite police officers, attorneys, or judges—can be the path of least resistance. Yet reaching out to new resource people can enliven trainings and spark teachers to think creatively about the ORP options.

At an August 2004 institute for Chicago-area middle school teachers, CRFC staff brought in two legislative staffers to help achieve an important goal—deepening teachers’ understanding of the legislative process. Recent research by political scientists has indicated that Americans do not understand or appreciate how legislatures work (see [www.ncsl.org/public/trust/casexesum.htm](http://www.ncsl.org/public/trust/casexesum.htm) and [www.cossa.org/trust.htm](http://www.cossa.org/trust.htm) for more information). Thus, CRF developed a simulated legislative hearing on a bill introduced in Congress during the past session. CRFC Program Director Jessica Chethik invited two legislative staff members to participate in the activity: Clarisol Duque, from the office of U.S. Senator Richard Durbin, and Reverend Stanley Watkins, a staff member in U.S. Representative Bobby Rush’s office.

Ms. Duque and Rev. Watkins coached teams of participants as they prepared for their roles as members of a Senate subcommittee or as citizens preparing to testify before the subcommittee. They observed the simulated

hearing and then conducted a debriefing in which they compared the simulation to an actual hearing in Congress. The debriefing segued into an extended question-and-answer period that left many teachers reflecting on how to improve their teaching about the legislative branch. Following the institute, Ms. Duque noted, “It was a pleasure to participate in the program. I was happy to participate and share my knowledge and experience on the legislative process. I was encouraged by the discussion and the positive effect I’m sure it will have in classrooms across Chicago.”

One participating teacher, Mike Blazer of St. Hyacinth School in Chicago, saw the benefits of using these ORPs and wanted more: “Hearing legislative assistants describing how a Congressional hearing takes place, how it is organized, who participates, and its political ramifications added considerably to the training process. I just wish we could have picked their minds some more.”

Another participant, Amy Katzman, a teacher at Beasley Academic Magnet School also in Chicago, commented, “Having the legislative staffers help with the mock hearing enabled me to more fully understand the complex negotiations that occur between politicians when trying to pass their proposed legislation. The teacher training gave me guidelines as to how to more successfully conduct this activity with my students—small groups, extensive research, and quick thinking on everyone’s part. It would

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## Refresher: Ideas for Using Resource Persons

- A. Interactive Strategies.** Have resource person participate in a lesson activity related to his or her job or area of expertise. Keep the lesson relevant to the students’ lives and avoid jargon.
- B. Question and Answer.** Have resource person respond to a series of student questions organized during a particular unit of study.
- C. Interview.** Have students interview resource persons as if they were reporters at a press conference. Students can write up an interview for school newspaper.
- D. Role Play.** Have resource people participate in a role play with students and/or debrief the role play (e.g., have police officers play roles of juvenile and adult offenders and students play roles of police officers).
- E. Mock Trial or Moot Court.** Have resource people help prepare for, enact, and debrief the activity. Lawyers can play roles of judges, attorneys, or witnesses.
- F. Moderator.** Have resource person serve as moderator for panel or debate.
- G. Simulation.** Have resource people participate in and/or debrief a simulation of a legislative hearing, town meeting, etc.
- H. Debrief a Film.** Have resource person react to and lead discussion of law-related films.
- H. Case Study.** Have resource person discuss several cases, either landmark decisions or cases pending before courts. Have resource person use the case study method by eliciting facts, issues, arguments and decisions.
- I. Field Trip.** Have resource person accompany students on a field trip to a courthouse, detention facility, etc. and answer questions arising from the experience.
- J. Hotline.** Consider establishing a “hotline” relationship between attorneys and a class or school. In addition to occasional visits, have attorneys be available by phone or e-mail on regular basis to answer student and teacher questions.

From *Law-Related Education for Juvenile Justice Settings* (Youth for Justice, 1999), p. 68. Available online at [www.crfc.org/pdf/lrej.pdf](http://www.crfc.org/pdf/lrej.pdf).

be fantastic if the staffers were able to come into the class to begin this experience with kids!" Clearly, Amy's interaction with these resource people prompted her to think about the substance of the lesson (the work of the legislature) and about new ways to use resource persons in her classroom.

Modeling uses of interesting resource people and giving teachers ideas for varied uses of resource people (see box on page 7) are two ways to stimulate teachers' thinking about using resource people in the classroom. Another is to have small groups of teachers in a workshop think about how to use resource people in particular situations. For example, teachers could be asked to consider what type of resource person they would use, how they would involve the person in the lesson, and how they would prepare the resource person for the lesson in such cases as the following:

- You are teaching a unit on responsibility to second-grade students. They have brainstormed what it means to be responsible, identified responsible behavior in several stories, created a list of responsibilities that must be performed to keep a pet healthy, and kept a responsibility journal in which they recorded ways that they are responsible at school, at home, and in the community.
- You are working with middle school students, teaching them about the Constitution and Bill of Rights. You are going to supplement the unit with a lesson called "Visitor from Outer Space," in which students are told that, from a list of 10 rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, they must agree on five to keep and five they will give up.

In response to these scenarios, teachers and school resource officers at an April 2004 workshop in Phoenix generated a wide-ranging list of possible resource people that included a veterinarian or volunteer at a humane society, who could teach second-graders more about the responsibilities involved in caring for a pet; custodians, cafeteria workers, and other school workers who could demonstrate the ways in which they are responsible for keeping the school running smoothly; immigrants who could talk about their experiences in a society where civil liberties are not protected; a civil rights attorney with deep knowledge of the Bill of Rights; or someone who had been wrongly accused of a crime and relied on the rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights to prove their innocence.

As these suggestions demonstrate, resource people who bring authentic "real-life" experiences to the classroom often provide the most powerful learning for students. A few minutes spent in "matching" the right ORP to a lesson magnifies the power of that experience for students.

## CRF Announces Second Annual National Teach-In For 2005



*Students at Sunnyside Middle School in Lafayette, Indiana learn about religious freedom in public schools using the CRFC lesson "Sacred Blade."*

The Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) and the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago (CRFC) will sponsor the second annual CRF National Teach-In, funded by Youth for Justice and OJJDP, as part of the 2005 National Youth Service Day.

The 2005 National Teach-in will feature eight new lessons devoted to core American issues: security, liberty, justice, and equality. Classes can either do one of these lessons or use a lesson posted for the 2004 National Teach-In. In 2004, the National Teach-In involved more than 9,100 students in 26 states.

Classes interested in participating this year simply need to complete and submit the National Teach-in Registration Form by **December 31, 2004**. Participating classes agree to: identify the lesson they want to teach and conduct a teach-in on or before National Youth Service Day; report their activity to the Constitutional Rights Foundation; and write to their U.S. Representative in Congress about their work.

The first 150 middle and high school classes to register and agree to these requirements will receive a mini-grant of \$150 which may be used to buy materials to conduct their teach-in, provide law-related education resources for their class or school library, host a teach-in conference with another school, or donate to a school club or charity.

Registration materials for the 2005 CRF National Teach-In will be available **November 15, 2004** on-line at [www.crfc.org/yfjteach-in2005.html](http://www.crfc.org/yfjteach-in2005.html). For more information, contact Margie Chan at the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago [800/801-9933 x208].

# National Symposium on Disproportionate Minority Contact Held in Chicago

Throughout the United States, a disproportionate percentage of racial minorities come in contact with the juvenile and criminal justice systems. The issue of disproportionate minority contact (DMC) raises difficult questions for the American criminal justice system and challenges the assumption that everyone receives “equal justice under law.”

To address these concerns, CRFC convened a national Symposium on DMC on June 9-10; the symposium was attended by representatives from a dozen states. At the day-long event, Dr. Heidi Hsia, the DMC Program Manager for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), discussed the nature and definition of DMC. Kinette Richards of the Colorado Foundation for Families and Children examined DMC in school settings and the extent to which minority youth are subject to disproportionate levels of suspensions and expulsions and possible explanations for this disparity.

Dr. Paul J. Hofer, Senior Research Associate of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, addressed the growing proportion of minorities, particularly Latinos, who comprise the adult population of federal offenders, by guiding participants through the great range of empirical research that has explored the reasons for the gap in sentences and discussing with them some conclusions for policymakers. The day ended with a working session on responses to DMC that was led by Judge Sophia Hall and Mike Roan, Juvenile Court of Cook County, Illinois, the nation’s oldest juvenile court.

A second day-long seminar was held for state teams from the Youth for Justice law-related education network, featuring training and supplemental information to help the teams disseminate the information in their own states. “Since the June meeting in Chicago,” said Lindsey D. Draper, a Judicial Court Commissioner with Milwaukee County, “we looked to other areas whose policies and practices have had an impact on DMC in Milwaukee County. Our statistical analysis had shown a hugely disparate representation of city of Milwaukee youth in both our referral and detention facility admission rates. We contacted the Milwaukee Public Schools and discussed possible collaboration with MPS on a violence prevention program, targeting schools that had significant numbers of office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions.” As a result of this meeting, Draper reports that his working group will be conducting a targeted program of outreach with designated schools that have records of prior year’s office-contact rates, with the goal of documenting the impact of their intervention by tracking a hoped-for reduction in school problems and court referrals.

In South Carolina, the Symposium attendees met with state staff and other interested parties to discuss next steps, and they will work with the Governor’s Office to raise awareness of the issue and identify an appropriate agency to institute a full-time position to guide and oversee the statewide DMC effort.

The Symposium on Disproportionate Minority Contact was conducted by CRFC as part of Youth for Justice, the national coordinated law-related education (LRE) program supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. Holland & Knight LLP hosted the first day of activities.



## Teacher Reflection Instrument

CRF and CRFC consistently use reflection in their work with teachers. Reflections on a common lesson or issue make a powerful preparatory activity for teachers in advance of professional development, as a subject of discussion during training, and as a window into post-training implementation. On pages 10 and 11 is a reflection instrument used by CRF and CRFC with teachers. CRF and CRFC encourage other professional developers in the Youth for Justice network to use or adapt this instrument to gain insights about how teachers are working in their classrooms.

# Teacher Reflection Form, page 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Used \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Students \_\_\_\_\_ Date Used \_\_\_\_\_

1. What essential civic knowledge/skills did you expect the students to gain as a result of participating in this lesson? What outcomes of the lesson were most important to you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What evidence do you have that students achieved or did not achieve the desired outcome(s)? Attach any student work or record of student discussions.

*The following have been identified as “best practices” in civic/law-related education. Note that it is unlikely that all will be well represented in any one lesson. The purpose of the exercise is to prompt and deepen your thinking about civic education—NOT to evaluate a particular individual or specific lesson. To what extent was each practice represented in the lesson as you taught it ?*

3a. The lesson raised controversial issues for students.

Well represented

Not represented

5      4      3      2      1

Comments [If represented, state the issue(s)]:

3b. The lesson was appropriate for their age, ability level, and was connected to their lives.

Well represented

Not represented

5      4      3      2      1

Comments:

## Teacher Reflection Form, page 2

- 3c. The issue was covered with both balance and depth. Students explored more than one perspective regarding the issue. Students had enough information and enough time to gain more than superficial understanding of the issue.

Well represented

Not represented

5      4      3      2      1

*Comments:*

- 3d. Students were engaged in active teaching/learning strategies. In particular, instruction fostered true student interaction—that is, students interacted directly with other students, including those with whom they do not regularly interact. Students were provided with the opportunity to practice skills and to draw on and connect their existing knowledge to the lesson.

Well represented

Not represented

5      4      3      2      1

*Comments:*

- 3e. Students had opportunities to interact with community resource persons who were prepared so that their involvement supported the goals of the lesson and linked to instruction that came before and after the lesson.

Well represented

Not represented

5      4      3      2      1

*Comments [If represented, please identify kind of resource person]:*

4. Were there other aspects of either the lesson or your approach to teaching it that represent your vision of exemplary civic/law-related education? If so, please describe them.

5. What problems or challenges, if any, did you encounter while teaching the lesson? How might you revise the lesson or your approach to address those problems/challenges?

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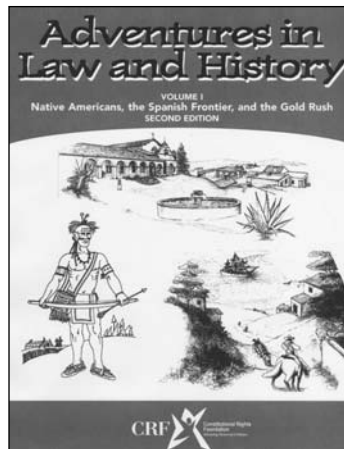


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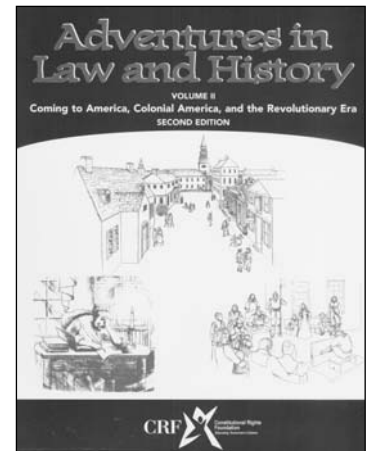


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