

Delaware Law Day in the Schools 2010 Lesson Plan on Cyberbullying

Background:

This lesson uses material from the *Deliberating in a Democracy* program developed by the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago, The Constitutional Rights Foundation and Street Law, Inc. which was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of the program is to “increase the knowledge, ability and dispositions of teachers and students to effectively participate in deliberations related to democratic principles . . .”

This lesson helps to meet Delaware’s **Civics Standard Four 9 – 12a**: Students will develop and employ the skills necessary to work with government programs and agencies.

NOTES TO THE TEACHER:

Please write the following on the board or on flip chart paper and post it on the wall. It will be used in the lesson:

Essential Question for the Deliberation:

Should our democracy allow schools to punish students for off-campus cyberbullying?

Student Objectives:

Discuss the role of school authority and freedom of expression in a democratic society.

Understand the implications of cyberbullying policies for schools, students, parents and the larger society.

Explore the influence of technology on the specific balance of values and legal protections in different democratic societies.

Analyze the reasons supporting and opposing schools authority to limit off-campus student speech

Decide, individually and as a group, whether the government should

permit schools to punish off-campus cyberbullying; support decisions based on evidence and sound reasoning.

Group Assignments:

In the lesson, students will be placed in groups of 4 or 6. Because you are familiar with the students in the class and to save time please make the group assignments the day before the volunteer comes to your class.

Homework Assignment:

Please copy and assign the **Cyberbullying – Reading** to the students the day before the Law Day Volunteer is to come to class. If you have a block schedule you might want to allow the students to read the Reading in class prior to the presentation.

Ask Administrator to sit in :

Because of the topic, it might be great to have an administrator observe the class and to participate in the discussion. If the school has a policy on cyberbullying, it would be good to share it with the students.

DIRECTIONS FOR
LAW DAY VOLUNTEER

Time to Present Lesson: **45 minutes**

Materials to bring to Class:

Please bring 35 copies of Handouts 1 -3 and the 15 copies each of the two “Deliberation Question with Arguments” for No and Yes. You may want to copy the “No” and “Yes” sheets on different colored paper, so that you can visually determine who has each side.

Procedure for Lesson:

Begin with Focus Question **5 minutes**

Read the **Essential Question** written on the board/flip chart paper. The teacher will show you where she/he has it written. Ask students pull out their copy of the Reading that was assigned.

Review each of the student objectives written on the board/flip chart paper. Ask students to give examples of things that schools have the authority to

do. Ask where they get the authority. (Laws, school board decisions, school administration.)

Tell students that the concept of “Freedom of Expression” comes from the First Amendment to the Constitution – the right to free speech, but that there are limits on free speech set by the Courts. These limits include defamation, commercial speech, such as advertising, and fighting words. Fighting words are words so abusive or threatening that they will likely lead to a fight.

Give out and review copies of Student Handout 1 – Deliberation

Guide.

5 minutes

Ask one student to read “What Is Deliberation”. Ask another to read “Why Are We Deliberating?” Ask a third student to read “What are the Rules for Deliberation?” Ask if there are any questions about the rules.

Group Activity:

20 minutes

Break the class into groups of 4 or 6. (Ask the teacher to help with this grouping) **Give each student a copy of Handout 2 – Deliberation Activities.**

Ask each group to discuss the Reading and, as a group, to fill out the first section in Handout 2 concerning the three most important facts in the reading. Expect them to re-read some of the handout. After they list the three facts, ask the students to complete the “My Personal Position” section. They can use the back of Handout 2. Give the groups **10 minutes** to complete these two portions of Handout 2.

Break each group into two teams, Team A and Team B. Give each team the appropriate “**Deliberating Questions with Arguments**” Sheet. **Team A will get the Yes Arguments and Team B will get the No Arguments.**

Using the chart on the Handout 2 sheet and their assigned “Deliberating Question with Arguments sheet, each Team should select the most compelling reasons to support or the most compelling reason oppose the Deliberation Question based on the team assignment. The two teams should work separately. Give the Teams about 5 minutes to complete this.

Team A and B of each group should join back together. Each side will have two minutes to explain their reasons for supporting or opposing the

question. Each side may ask questions, but not argue.

Explain that to demonstrate each team understands the reasons of the other team, they should reverse positions. They should identify what they considered to be the most compelling arguments of the other side. Each side will have two minutes.

Whole Class Discussion

15 minutes

- a. Ask students to now drop their roles and to deliberate the question as a group. They should take a position that they personally support.

Give out a copy of **Handout 3 – Student Reflections on Deliberation** to serve as a guide to the deliberation. Focus on the first three points

Go over the other points in top section of the Handout – Why deliberating this issue is important and how they might address the problem.

Ask students to complete the Individual Reflection portion and give it to their teacher. This should take only a couple of minutes. If you run out of time, ask them to do this as homework.