

Chester Youth Court Volunteers

Starting September 2010, the Chester Youth Court Volunteers (CYCV) student group at Swarthmore College has worked with Youth Court students at Smedley Allied Health High School in Chester, Pennsylvania. Collaborating with students, teachers, and education experts, we have developed lesson plans and activities aimed at building skills that are essential for students in successfully operating a youth court.

By posting these lesson plans here, we hope to not only record the group's institutional history but also make these resources available to other students and adults involved with Youth Court programs. Our group strives to better serve youth court students through feedback and continual reflection, so we welcome your suggestions. Each lesson plan has been revised before posting in order to address issues that arose during class.

If you would like to use any lesson plans published here, please contact us first at chesteryouthcourtvolunteers@gmail.com.

Public Speaking and Presentation

Lesson Plan for February 14, 2011

Objective:

By the end of the lesson plan, students will be able to deliver a polished Youth Court advocate statement that incorporates the public speaking and presentation techniques (eye-contact, enunciation, and confidence) as taught in the lesson.

I. Introductory Activity (15 minutes)

- a. Show students a funny video clip of various public speakers that demonstrates the strengths and styles of good persuasive public speaking:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6wRkzCW5qI>
- b. Divide students into two groups and within these smaller groups and discuss:
 - "What are some of the qualities of good public speaking?"
 - "What are some of your personal goals and ways in which you want to improve your public speaking?"

II. Eye-Contact and Enunciation Activity (20 minutes)

- a. Ask students to pick a partner and give them sample speeches, which they will read to their partner while maintaining good eye-contact.
- b. Pencil Activity: Have students then read the speech while biting a pencil or pen to improve their enunciation.

III. Presentation and Delivery of the Youth Advocate Speech (20-30 minutes)

- a. Have two college students present the same Youth Advocate Speech. One will speak, exemplifying some of the presentation mistakes that have been discussed previously during class. The other will present the speech with confidence, good enunciation, eye contact, and overall strong delivery.
- b. Ask the students, "What are the differences between the two speeches?"
- c. If there is time, break the students up into two groups again and have them each take turns delivering a pre-prepared Youth Advocate statement to their group.

IV. Conclusion (5 minutes)

As a "ticket out," students will, in the large group, volunteer aspects of good public speaking and explain why these aspects are important.

Constructing an Effective Youth Advocate Statement

Lesson Plan for February 28, 2011

Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- List the components of an effective youth advocate statement.
- Construct an effective youth advocate statement, while using the presentation techniques they have learned in the previous lesson.

I. Review: The Basics of Good Public Speaking and Self-Presentation (5 minutes)

- a. Introduce today's lesson as one on constructing an effective youth advocate statement.
- b. In the large group, ask students to name the components of good public speaking. Record their answers on the board.

II. Video and Discussion: Constructing a Youth Advocate Statement (10 minutes)

- a. Videos: Show a video of an actual youth court advocate statement from the East Palo Alto Youth Court: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgR67tisoyE>
- b. Have students count off into 4 groups with 1 college student leading each group.
- c. Discussion: Have students discuss the strategies used by the lawyer and youth advocate in the videos.
 - What did the youth advocates say to persuade the jury?
 - What information did they draw upon from their knowledge of the respondent? (respondent's personal life, their previous clean discipline record at school, their remorse, etc)
 - How long should the Youth Advocate statement be? Does it matter? (could be about a paragraph and should cover a checklist of components)

III. Handout and Practice (30 minutes)

- a. Distribute the handout listing components of an effective youth advocate statement.

- b. Within the 4 groups, each college student in each group will pretend to be respondents who have committed offenses (i.e: cutting class, name-calling, disrespecting a teacher, vandalizing school property, etc)
- Students will question them in order to obtain the necessary information to construct an effective youth advocate statement.
 - With the help of college students, students will construct their own youth advocate statements and, if there is time, present them in front of their small groups.

IV. Conclusion/Ticket-Out (5 minutes)

In the large group, students will discuss:

- What did you consider in constructing a youth advocate statement? What points did you include?

(See hand-out below)

Constructing an Effective Youth Advocate Statement

1. Begin with “May it please the court, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, my name is _____ and I represent _____, the respondent.”
2. Include information about the event: Who? What? When? Where? Why?
3. What caused the crime? Is there something happening in the defendant’s life that may have influenced their actions?
4. Include the respondent’s feelings about the crime. Do they understand the seriousness of their offense? Do they regret their actions? Have they learned their lesson? Do they promise to never commit the offense again?
5. Has the respondent taken steps to apologize or make amends with the teacher/school/fellow student involved in the offense?
6. Does the respondent have a history of getting in trouble at school or is this their first offense?
7. Can the jury relate to the respondent?
 - For example, if the respondent lost his temper: “We all have experienced losing our temper in stressful situations. Brian made a mistake by losing his temper and shouting at Mrs. Wright ...”
 - Does the respondent have goals for their future and want to put this mistake behind them?
8. Close your statement by reviewing some of the main points of the case.
9. REMEMBER:
 - Practice! Rehearse at least a few times.
 - Speak slowly and clearly.

- Have confidence in what you say.

Jury Questioning: Getting to the Heart of the Matter

Lesson Plan for Monday, March 21, 2011

Objective:

By the end of the lesson, jury members should be able to ask a respondent thoughtful questions that enable them to gain a fuller picture of the case and render a fair and constructive disposition.

I. Introductory Activity: Discussion (15 minutes)

- a. Divide the class up into small groups with four college students serving as group leaders for each group. The number of groups may be adjusted to fit class size.
- b. Discuss the students' questioning methods, reasoning, and experiences with questioning as jury members in previous youth court cases. Ask:
 - What kinds of cases or offenses have you seen in the past?
 - What kind of information was important in coming up with the disposition?
 - How do you find out what is the root cause of the problem with the respondent?
 - How do you get the person to tell you what you need to know?
 - How do you get them to give answers that go beyond yes or no questions? (I.e: Start questions with the key words "describe," "explain," "show," etc)
 - What examples of things that make you give lenient dispositions vs. harsher dispositions?
 - While deliberating, do you see things from the perspectives of different people involved or just the respondent? Does it depend on the kind of case?
 - Did you consider different options for what the respondent could have done in that situation?

II. Sample Case: Questioning in Practice (20 minutes)

- a. The group leaders will act as the fake respondents in each group. Another college student from each group will present the students with this case:

"Mrs. Heartner, a math teacher, said Student X, who typically falls asleep in her class, fell asleep again last Wednesday. She woke Student X up and he/she cursed her out. Mrs. Heartner sent the student to the principal's office."

- b. Youth Court students ask the fake respondent questions, trying to get to the heart of the matter and come up with a disposition that they think is fair and constructive. Have one youth court student from each group volunteer to present their disposition to the larger group and explain why they chose that disposition.

III. Conclusion (15 minutes)

- a. One student from each group presents their group's disposition in front of the class and explains why they felt that was the best disposition.
- b. Ask the student in the large group:
 - What are you trying to accomplish with the disposition and how does this help the student on a larger scale?

- What kinds of questions did you feel prompted the respondent to tell a story or give more than just a "yes" or "no" answer?
- What did you learn from the questions that you weren't able to know by just reading the referral?

Creating a Youth Court Mission Statement

Lesson Plan for April 4, 2011

Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the purpose and importance of a mission statement.
- Describe how to create a mission statement, and the questions that should be answered by a mission statement.
- Articulate the values and purpose of the youth court.

I. Introductory Activity (10 minutes)

- Break the students into 4 small groups with a college student leading each group.
- (Handout) The students will take turns reading mission statements from various organizations and will match the mission statements with the organizations.

II. What is a Mission Statement? (10 minutes)

In the small groups, discuss:

- What is a mission statement? (It describes the motivations behind the organization and describes its goal. It should answer the question: "Why does this organization exist? Why was it started?")
- Why are mission statements important? What does it do for those in the group? (Mission statements give the group members a sense or purpose, can help identify long-term goals, and can help group members keep those long term goals in mind)
- What does it do for those outside of the group? (It communicates the purpose of the group, helps get support for the program/organization)

III. What Should Your Mission Statement Be? (20 minutes)

- (Handout) If someone asks you these questions, what would you say?
 - What is the Allied Health High School?
 - What are the goals of the youth court?
 - What do you see the youth court accomplishing in its next year?

Based on their answers to these questions, students will write a draft of their mission statement.

*Group leaders: Remember to collect these so that they can be recorded for future lesson plans!

IV. Conclusion: Sharing Mission Statements (10 minutes)

- If there is time, students will come back to a large group and two college students will facilitate.

- b. Each group will present their mission statements to the class and it will be recorded on the board. If there is extra time, there will be a brief discussion on how the mission statements differ and what some of the similarities are.

Leadership and Politics

Lesson Plan for Monday, April 11, 2011

I. Introductory Discussion

Break students into two groups, guys and girls.

1. Girls' curriculum: Discuss women in politics to be facilitated by a college student.
2. Boys' curriculum: discuss the following questions:

What do you want to be in the future? What do you do outside of school? What are some issues that you care about in the community? Your school? What are some improvements that could be made? If you had a million dollars, how would you improve the community/school? How do some of these issues relate to youth court?

Have you ever thought about being president of the U.S.? What do you remember from the 2008 election? Were you aware of what was going on? What do you think makes a good presidential leader? What are Obama's strengths? What do you think he could do better?

II. Write platforms

Have students write about why they want to be president of the United States, can include what issues they care about, what personal characteristics they have.

III. Present Platforms (8:00-8:15)

1. Boys' group: Have them present their platforms.
2. Girls' group: Have them enter the Race to the Capitol contest with their platforms.

Completing the Mission Statement

Lesson plan for April 26, 2011

- I. Break the class into 3 groups, and have each write up a mission statement.
- II. Each group will look at other group's mission statement and discuss.
- III. Ask a volunteer from each group to present their mission statement to the class.
Some Questions to ask:
 - What are the 10 most important things about youth court?
 - Are these things present in their mission statements?
- IV. Discuss the future of the youth court.