

LRE'S BEST PRACTICES

1. Law-Related Content

- Civil, criminal, and constitutional themes
- Practical information about the law and public policy
- Concepts underlying a constitutional democracy
- Student rights and responsibilities
- Choices and legal consequences (not moral consequences)
- Citizenship
- Use of Power and Authority
- Justice
- Liberty
- Civil Rights
- Equality
- Illegal Drug Use
- Drinking and Driving

2. Interactive teaching strategies

- Strategies that foster true student-to-student interaction (are the heart of the session)
- Role Plays
- Simulations (Mock Trials, Moot Courts, model legislatures)
- Group Work Activities
- Group Research Projects
- Community-based learning (including service learning, lobbying, mentoring)
- Sharing outcomes with students
- Drawing on their existing knowledge
- Giving them appropriate time to answer questions
- Involving as many students as possible in all aspects of the class

3. Balanced viewpoint/presentation of information

- Balanced view of the judicial system & other aspects of the political system
- Provide students with multiple points of view
- Controversial issues should be discussed often to motivate student interest and broaden understanding and tolerance
- Community resource people must foster opportunities to allow for a safe voicing of viewpoints
- Debate and free flow of ideas are crucial elements of effective civic participation
- Many times there is no one correct answer

4. Focus on Real Life Issues & Situations

- Content should be relevant to students' lives.
- Topic Selection is based on demographics and school climate

5. Student Centered

- The ideal LRE classroom is student focused and acts as a forum where students can freely discuss conflicting ideas (ABA, 1995).
- Use cooperative learning strategies, simulations, and role-plays (including mock trials, moot courts, model legislatures, preparation of classroom constitutions, rules, and laws
- Use group work activities, including group research projects
- Incorporate community-based learning into instruction (including service learning, lobbying, mentoring)
- Use experiential learning strategies

6. Problem Solving Approach

- Provide students with a way to address a problem or policy
- Solution reached through student discovery
- Empower students to make change in their school or community

7. Opportunities for students to interact with Community Resource Persons (CRPs)

- CRPs offer expertise in areas that your are less familiar with, connect you to new community resources and ensure that your learning time is dynamic and continually fresh
- The community resource person is well prepared and integrated into the interactive session
- Content presented by the CRP is part of the course content
- Important component of best practices is to allow students sufficient contact with community resource people in order to bond
- Bonding takes place when students develop positive relationships with an adult
- Research in LRE indicates that this adult-student bonding is a key to overcoming risk factors

Sources: Caliber Associates (2002). "The Promise of Law-Related Education and Delinquency Prevention". McKinney-Browning, Mabel, Ellis, Al, Kaplan, Howard & Johnson, Seva (1995). "Essentials of Law Related Education". Street Law, Inc. & National Crime Prevention Council (1999). "Community Works: Smart Teens Making Safer Communities". Street Law, Inc. & Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention (2003) "Street Law for School Resource Officers"