

Outline of Suggestions for Presentations for Law Weeks 2024

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Greetings!

SOURCE: these suggestions come from a long-time friend and colleague of mine who quit lawyering to become a high school teacher. Before last year I was about to stop participating because I was finding it difficult to engage the students. These suggestions worked wonderfully last year, resulted in class-wide participation and a very enjoyable experience. My friend updated them for me this week.

OVERALL: There are a few major things to keep in mind:

- 1) **Engage the students quickly-Demonstrate, don't dictate:** We'll lose them in a minute if we start off by lecturing. Some ideas include:
 - a. **Start right out with a role play/demonstration;** no explanation.
 - b. **Separate them into small groups for discussion;**
 - c. **Provide a "note sheet"** with spaces for notes on "What did you see? What did you hear? Was it right? Should it be allowed? Why? Why not?"
 - d. **Ask them to appoint a note taker;** give them a few minutes to discuss and be ready to report to the group.
 - e. **Walk around the room and listen in (only) on their discussions for about a minute or so each;** you'll get a good idea of what they already know and think about the topic.

Types of role plays will vary depending on what you're presenting. A few things to consider: make it something that will take a minute or two; *avoid using the school students* unless you have assurance from the teacher that they will play along; avoid any touching of students (for example, if you were thinking about using a student search as a role play; maybe work that out between the two presenters).

- 2) **For the Discussions Following Each of the Role Plays/Demonstrations:**
 - a. **Canvass them early for what they already know:** They will likely all have some familiarity with and understanding of the issues we present. Respect that ownership and use what they know to demonstrate the problems. **Caution: avoid questions like "Have any of you ever . . . " or "Did any of you ever experience . . . ?"** It's best to avoid putting any student in the position of having to share a personal experience. The better questions are **"Does anyone know any stories about . . . ?" or "Has anyone ever heard stories about when . . . ?"**
 - b. **After hearing what they know or have heard relative to what you're trying to demonstrate,** get them to tell you how it was done in their view. Especially if their reality was different from what you just demonstrated. For example, in the search example, have them tell one of the presenters how to position the other one for a search, etc. In other words, the more you let the students own the presentation and direct portions of it, the more engaged they will be.

c. **Use hypothetical questions to guide them through the levels of analysis.** This will also vary with the information you're presenting and the level of understanding you've already seen in the students. Examples, when talking about a search of a backpack, could be to ask them if the school can search Student Smith's backpack when:

- i. Student Jones told the principal that he heard that Student Smith was planning to smoke dope after school that day.
- ii. Student Jones told the principal that he saw a joint in Student Smith's backpack at lunch.
- iii. Student Jones said he was told by Student Thomas that Student Smith owned a gun.
- iv. Student Jones told the principal that he heard from another friend that Smith's family owns lots of guns.
- v. Student Jones told the principal that he (Jones) saw a gun in Smith's backpack on the way to school that morning.

At each of these, ask Should the school be allowed to search; why, why not? What's the difference between each one?

d. **Wrap up/The Law:** Have a short handout to review and leave with them on the bullet points summarizing school, parent, and student rights as you've covered. Make it "user-friendly", such as "A school can search a student's backpack without a warrant when . . ."; or "Student lockers can only be searched without a warrant when . . ." or "A student has an expectation of privacy while on campus in their personal effects unless"

e. **Wrap up/Who You Are:** The SCBA likes us to save some time to describe where we are in the legal system, so have a few sentences prepared for that. We should save time for questions here, too, about the program and our careers.