

Tips and Preparations for Classroom Visits

The Justice Teaching Program has relocated to the beautiful campus of Florida Southern and we continue to create new lessons and activities for your use throughout the year. If you experience any changes in your partnerships that we are not aware of or if you desire a new assignment throughout the school year, please contact our office at justiceteaching@flsouthern.edu. Explore our website regularly to see the new programs and activities. This year, we have provided additional options for you to consider. We have new as well as traditional lessons. Many have experienced a facelift over the summer. If you are working with a middle school class, you may want to discuss the middle school mock trial program. If you elect to do this, you will be a great help to the class. All our new program elements are part of the Justice Teaching Center for Civic Learning.



Contact Your Partner

The centerpiece of our efforts is the Justice Teaching Program partnerships. If you already have a teacher/attorney or judge partnership, the best way to begin or reinitiate a partnership is to send an introductory email to your partner. Teachers, attorneys, and judges are the most difficult people to reach by phone, so it is important to maintain contact first through email. Introduce yourself and let him/her know you are eager to meet and plan upcoming school visits.

Ideally, you can schedule a time to meet, visit the school, and plan for your classroom visits. It is important to meet the teacher if possible and see how the classroom is set up. If this is not possible then share as much information as you can and perhaps schedule a phone call. Here are some questions you will want to ask.

- How many students are in each class? How are students seated? For example, are they already seated in small groups?
- What type of technology is in the classroom? Let the teacher know you will have a PowerPoint or other technology needs, so he/she is aware and prepared for future visits.
- What is the name of the course? Generally, most partnerships involve Civics, Government, or Law classes.
- What is the schedule of the classes you will be partnering with? Each class will likely average approximately 50 minutes depending on the type of scheduling the school utilizes.
- Review the program with your partner and look at the website together. You can look at the featured lessons to determine the best ones that cover the materials important to

the classes you will be working with. Look at the other programs as well to see if the teacher is interested in doing any of the new programs such as mock trial, if your time permits.

- Set up a schedule and topics that you will address throughout the year. Do not worry if you do not see a lesson or activity that fits with every topic. We can always develop new activities within a couple of weeks. Identify the topics the teacher would like you to address and drop us a note to determine the best activities to fit your partnership if needed.
- Every time you schedule a visit, be sure to ask how many classes you will address during the visit. If you can only stay through one or two classes, be sure to mention this so the teacher is aware of your preferences.

In Advance of the Classroom Visit

After you have made your initial contact, begin reviewing the lessons and materials for your visits. Before each visit, be sure to print out the lesson and all handouts. Print out a copy of the PowerPoint for reference if needed. The notes section of the PowerPoint may include helpful information as well as the lesson itself.

Save the PowerPoint on a flash drive or email the PowerPoint to the teacher in advance so he/she can have it ready for you upon arrival. Based on the number of students in the class, print out the handouts or materials that will be needed for the presentation.

You may want to bring a classroom set of pocket Constitutions to distribute depending on the lesson you are presenting. Contact our office at justiceteaching@flsouthern.edu to request copies. Your local Justice Teaching contact may have copies locally as well.

Find out the best location to park and the process for checking in to the office before going to the classroom.

The Day of the Classroom Presentation

You will need to bring your driver license when you visit the school and report directly to the administration office. You will need to present your license and receive an identification badge.

Arrive 10 minutes early to ensure you have time in the office to check-in. Let the office know the name of the teacher you are working with. Bring all the handouts and items you will use with the presentation.

Tips for the Classroom

Here are a few tips to help ensure you have a successful classroom visit.

- **ENGAGE** with the students during the presentation.
- **Walk around** the room and connect with the students.
- Be **conversational** and ask questions so the students interact.

- **Pace yourself** to accomplish your lesson objectives within the time period allocated. Remember when the bell rings, the students leave!
- Build in **small group** interactions during the presentation.
- Be **NEUTRAL**. The goal is to help students build their own critical thinking skills. Remember this is about teaching students how to think, **not** what you think.
- **Be prepared**. Students may have some very interesting questions.
- **Involve the teacher in your presentation**. It is fun to have a tag team effort.
- Let the students know you will be seeing them throughout the year and partnering with the class.

Here are few recommendations for what **NOT** to do in the classroom.

- Do **NOT** stand behind a podium or read a presentation
- Do **NOT** make disparaging remarks about political parties, politicians, or government officials or processes. Do NOT share your political affiliations or preferences.
- Do **NOT** discuss topics that are inappropriate for the grade level. Stick with the lesson guidelines and review the state standards and grade-specific benchmarks for the subject area.

I am eager to help you implement successful partnerships this year! Let me know how I can help you! If you have difficulty locating a lesson or just need me to walk you through how to implement this in the classroom, please let me know. My office number is 863.680.4664. Thank you again for your service.

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