How to Do a Mock Trial with a Crime Reenactment

George Sikes
Rhea Faeldonea-Walker
Administration of Justice Academy
Montgomery High School
San Diego, CA

California Career Pathways Consortia and California Partnership Academies
Educating for Careers Conference
Hyatt Regency, Orange County  March 1, 2010
Objectives of Mock Trials

- exposure to a wide variety of law-related careers
- deep understanding of law-related concepts
- critical thinking skills
- strategic thinking skills
- listening and speaking skills
- preparation and organization skills
Types of Mock Trials

• **Scripted**
  • Reads like a play with students assigned to read specific parts
  • The only part not scripted is the jury deliberation

• **Role-Play**
  • Not scripted apart from the statement of facts, statement of law, witness statements, and exhibits
  • Informal to formal (e.g. competitions)
Crime Reenactment

Student Roles

- Victim
- Witnesses --- to be interviewed, to testify
- Suspects
- Police Officers --- conduct interviews, photograph scene, arrest suspect, complete police reports
- Psychologist
- Coroner
Mock Trial
Student Roles

• Attorneys
• Witnesses
• Jurors
• Bailiff
• Clerk
• Reporter
• Judge
Prosecutors and Defense Attorneys

- They control the presentation of evidence at trial and argue the merits of their side of the case.
- They simply introduce the evidence and question witnesses to bring out the full story.
- Conduct direct examination.
- Conduct cross-examination.
- Do the necessary research.
Attorney’s Preparation

• work with all attorneys and witnesses for their side
• study evidence
• outline opening statement
• develop witnesses’ questions
• rehearse direct examination of witness
• practice cross-examination
 Witnesses

• Supply the facts in the case.
Court Clerk, Court Reporter, and Bailiff

- They aid the judge in conducting the trial.
- Keeps track of court records.
- Calls the court to order or session.
- Swears-in the witness who will testify.
Jurors

• Explore the role of the jury
• Review the case presented
• Deliberate
Tasks for the Prosecution Team

• opening statement
• direct examination (prosecution witness)
• cross-examination (defense witness)
• closing argument
Tasks for the Defense Team

- opening statement
- cross-examination (prosecution witness)
- direct examination (defense witness)
- closing argument
Objection sustained or overruled?

- Irrelevant Evidence
- Leading Questions
- Hearsay
- Lack of Personal Knowledge
- Opinion
- Argumentative Question
- Speculation
Debriefing Process

• Review the issues
• Discuss strengths and weaknesses
• Does the system assure a fair trial?
• Are some parts of the trial more important than others?
• How important was the role that each played in the trial process?
Match the trial to the **skills** and **sophistication** of your students!
Sample Mock Trial and Crime Reenactment

by George Sikes
Teacher
Criminal and Civil Law courses
• Crime Reenactment
  • DUI
  • Vehicular Manslaughter
• Mock Trial script
Mock Trials in English Language Arts

- Scripted Mock Trial
  - “Big Bad Wolf v. Curly Pig: A Civil Case” (K-6)
- Role-Play Mock Trials
  - Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone (5-9)
  - Middle School Mock Trial (6-8)
  - Mediation and the Adversary Process (5-8; 9-12)
  - Small Claims Mock Hearing (Secondary)
  - The Case of Galileo Galilei (Secondary)
  - US Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review in the Matter of Toni Radcliffe (Secondary)
Other Sources for Role-Play Mock Trials

- Law in Literature: Legal Themes in Short Stories (Elizabeth Villiers Gemmette, ed.)
- In the Interest of Justice: Great Opening and Closing Arguments of the Last 100 Years (Joel J. Seidemann)
- Textbook selections
- Op-Ed pieces/Rhetoric courses
- Magazine articles and newspaper editorials
Thank you.

• Montgomery High School
  3250 Palm Avenue, San Diego, CA
  92154  (619) 628-3007

• Mr. George Sikes, AOJ Coordinator
  • gsikes@suhsd.k12.ca.us,
    (619) 628-3055

• Mrs. Faeldonea-Walker, English AOJ Teacher
  • rwalker@suhsd.k12.ca.us