

# McCormick Foundation Civics Program

## Simulations, Role Play, and Dramatization

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# Simulations, role plays, and dramatization distinguished

**Simulations**: focus on set design

- creation of an alternative environment
- students play a functional role
- students possess adequate information to make decisions and interact with one another
- students retain their own personality

**Role plays**: focus on actors' roles

- students act as someone different than themselves
- less emphasis on environment or situation
- usually brief, and audience is classmates

**Dramatizations**: focus on scripted dialogue

- students act in a given role, during a scene, and with a script

# Simulation terminology

<i>Appropriate Terms</i>	<i>Inappropriate Terms</i>
simulation, activity, event	game, drama, role-play, exercise
participant	player, actor, puzzler, trainee, student
facilitator, organizer	teacher, trainer, instructor
behavior, function, profession	playing, acting, staging
role (functional)	role (acting a part)
real-world responsible behavior	winning (losing) the game
real-world responsible ethics	point scoring, just for fun
professional conduct	performing the game or exercise

From Jones, 1995, p. 14.



# What do students learn from CHS Legislative Semester?

- Basic tenets of the left and right of the political spectrum
- Their values in relation to the political spectrum
- Federalism
- Political forces
- Civil discourse: respect of dissenting opinion, agree to disagree
- Respect of others
- Power of persuasion
- Danger of apathy
- Importance of leadership
- Power/ danger/ problems of factions

# What do students learn from CHS Legislative Semester?

- How government works
- Power of information
- Voting as a responsibility
- Current events/expanded exposures
- Legislative process
- “Like school”
- Active listening: ask clarifying questions, restate main point of the speaker, request the floor to add to the speaker’s premise
- Student empowerment: “we are in control” of an authentic experience
- The role of the teacher as facilitator and the different role of the student teacher as “engineer” and student as “driver”
- Citizens are responsible for creating a “safe environment” for democracy to thrive

# What teachers have to keep in mind

- Flexibility
- Loss of control
- Organization and preparation
- “Teachable moments”
- Depth vs. Breadth
- Assessment
  - Objective
  - Anecdotal
  - Student Self-Assessment
  - Reflection by Student
- Need for collaboration
  - With Peers
  - With Students

# In their own words....





# Civic Mission Coalition

## “Democracy Schools”

- Formal Instruction in U.S. government, history, law and democracy using interactive methods and opportunities to apply learning to “real life” situations
- Discussion of current events that students view as important to their lives; discussion puts formal civic instruction in context of current political issues
- Service Learning: research, advocacy, direct action, indirect action
- Student Voice in school governance



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Illinois Capitol Forum

Carole Cosimano  
Illinois Humanities Council

