

Title: Street Law as a Civic Course

Abstract:

Street Law?

The term 'Street Law' refers to the law that people encounter in their everyday lives: law in action (rather than law in the books). During the Street Law course, the law is taken out of the typical university learning environment and brought directly to the layperson seeking legal assistance. Students who enroll in Street Law develop, in small groups, an interactive educational activity about a current legal issue or question for young people in secondary education (e.g., an educational activity on transgender athletes in sports for sports science students; an educational activity on the use of special investigative methods for students interested in how police evidence collection is regulated, while respecting the rights of suspects; or a 'murder mystery' and mock court for students with a particular interest in criminal law).

Objectives

Street Law has a twofold goal: on the one hand, to contribute to the multidisciplinary education of enrolled students, primarily in the field of pedagogy; on the other, to create societal value by increasing the legal literacy of young people. The primary aim of the interactive educational activities that Street Law students develop during the course is to raise awareness among secondary school students about their rights, the rights of others, and the importance of law in society. By creating educational activities for secondary school students, Street Law students help make the law more relevant, accessible, and understandable to society.

To make all this possible, the Street Law teaching team collaborates with various secondary schools in the wider Hasselt area. Students enrolled in Street Law first observe the classroom for which they will develop the educational activity, collecting input for possible themes. The students then systematically develop their educational activity, under intensive guidance from the teaching team and with peer feedback from other students. Finally, the students present their own educational activity to the young people in their class and school. Subsequently, they deliver the same activity to another class (in the same or another school).

The themes of the educational activities are determined through mutual consultation between the students, the pupils, and the teachers in the partner schools. The emphasis is on themes relevant to the lives of young people. Examples include: what are your rights and obligations when sharing private photos and videos online (e.g., sexting)?; what obligations do the tenant and landlord have under housing rental laws?; how is a murder case solved and argued?; how does the law deal with inappropriate behavior?; what are the rights of vulnerable patients (e.g., elderly people with dementia)?

Educational Philosophy and Process

The educational philosophy of Street Law involves extensive use of active and interactive teaching methods (e.g., creating case studies and holding mock courts; organizing debates with pros and cons; conducting murder mysteries in the classroom, etc.). An important learning goal of Street Law is that students learn to make the law understandable and accessible to the target group of secondary school students (e.g., using simplified language, explaining complex legal concepts in a comprehensible way, etc.).

To enable enrolled students to develop accessible and interactive educational activities about the law, they receive training in pedagogical skills during the third quarter and are supported in the step-by-step development of their educational activity. In the fourth quarter, the students refine their educational activity and deliver it to secondary school students.

Reading: "Street Law – It Is More than Just Another Class", *International Journal of Public Legal Education* 2018, Vol. 2, Issue 1.