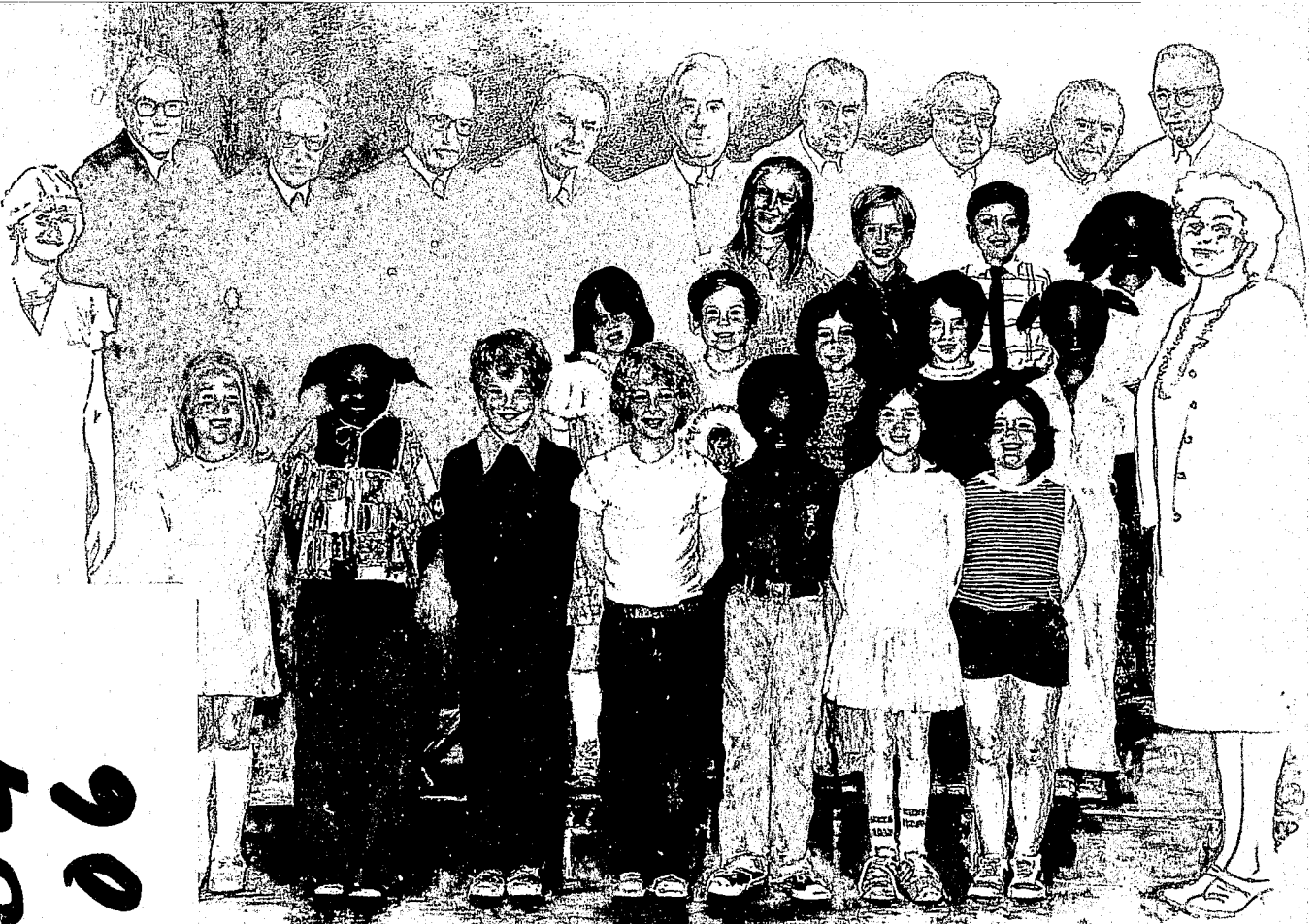


School Safety

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The National School Safety Center is a partnership of the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Education and Pepperdine University. NSSC's mission is to coalesce public, private and academic resources throughout the United States and provide a central headquarters to assist school boards, educators, law enforcers, lawyers and the public to ensure all our schools are safe, secure and peaceful places of learning.

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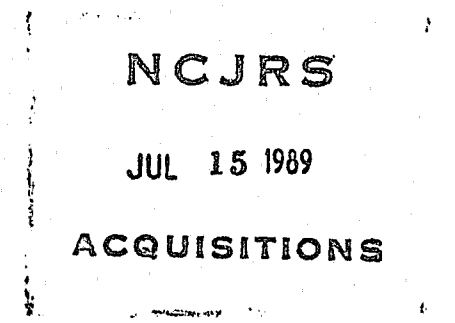
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Special insert

Missing children poster

Law-related education deters delinquency

By Charlotte C. Anderson

A reduction in delinquent behavior and an improvement in learning skills are just two of the benefits when students learn about America's legal system.

Law-related education (LRE) is widely recognized by educators and community leaders as a powerful tool for developing good citizens. It also serves as a "significant deterrent to delinquent behavior," according to a recent study for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice.*

The study found students exposed to LRE programs were less likely than others the same age to engage in delinquent behavior. For students in LRE programs, rates dropped for truancy, smoking marijuana, cheating on tests and felony crimes. These students also showed improvement in areas associated with law-abiding behavior, including favorable attitudes toward school and police and avoidance of delinquent friends.

What makes LRE succeed?

Several factors contribute to LRE success, the OJJDP study noted. Effective programs included some instruction by properly prepared law enforcement officers and other members of the justice system. Classes provided high student participation and interaction and balanced lessons reviewing both the justice system at work and case studies.

In addition, successful LRE instructors employed accepted good teaching methods, including opportunities for student practice, checking for comprehension of covered material, treating the topics in suitable depth and telling students the purpose of lessons.

While good teaching contributed to LRE success, the study indicated it was content, rather than teaching techniques, that made the difference in student growth. Three traditional civics classes were used for comparison, and their instructors used the same recommended teaching strategies as instructors in the LRE classes. There was a significantly greater reduction in delinquent behavior and improvement in most other outcomes measured for the LRE students.

In addition, the course got good marks from the students. They liked it. In 29 of the 30 classes studied, students gave their teachers "higher grades" than for comparison subjects. Two-thirds of the LRE students told their parents or other adults about useful material learned in school more often than comparison students. In every school in the study a higher percentage of LRE students than comparison students rated the course better than others they had taken.

What do LRE students learn?

LRE provides learning gains beyond practical knowledge of the law and justice system. Teachers in the study reported very positive effects on general student skills. Students participated competently in classroom activities, understood a variety of views and worked cooperatively with students of different backgrounds.

LRE curriculum introduces students

(Continued on page 20)

Charlotte C. Anderson, Ph.D., is staff director for the Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship, the American Bar Association.



Etan Patz
New York City, New York

Date missing: 5-25-79 - 13 years old, blue eyes, brown hair
Etan was abducted while walking to school.



Cherrie Ann Mahan
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Date missing: 2-22-85 - 9 years old, hazel eyes, brown hair
Cherrie Ann was abducted while walking home from school.



Equilla Hodrick
Bronx, New York

Date missing: 8-12-85 - 9 years old, hazel eyes, brown hair
Equilla was abducted while running after an ice cream truck near her house in Bronx, New York



Jeremiah George Huger
Bronx, New York

Date missing: 6-25-85 - 5 years old, brown eyes, brown hair
Jeremiah was abducted from the yard in front of his house.



Cassandra Lane
Liberal, Kansas

Date missing: 2-5-85 - 3 years old, brown eyes, brown hair
Cassandra was abducted by her mother.



Steven Phillip Curtis
Hoquiam, Washington

Date missing: 10-1-84 - 8 years old, blue eyes, brown hair
Steven was abducted by his mother.



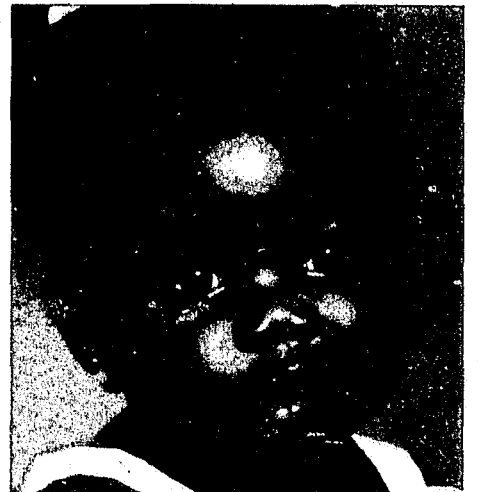
Angela Sue Udell
Beulah, Michigan

Date missing: 6-28-85 - 16 years old, hazel eyes, blonde hair
Angie was abducted while riding her bicycle near her home.



Michael Mayfield
Houston, Texas

Date missing: 1-10-85 - 7 years old, black eyes, black hair
Michael was abducted, with his sister Pamela, while walking home from school.



Abimola Fadeyi
Arlington, Texas

Date missing: 3-2-85 - 2 years old, black eyes, black hair
Abimola was abducted by her father

(Continued from page 17)

to the foundations of a free, democratic society, discussing the concepts of freedom, authority, justice, privacy and equality. Issues of direct interest to students are studied, including juvenile law, contracts, rights and responsibilities, police and courts. Students play an active role in LRE by conducting mock trials, studying court cases, visiting courtrooms and even riding on patrol with police. Students and teachers meet and learn directly from lawyers, judges, juvenile and police officers, legislators and other law-related professionals. LRE curriculum has been developed for students from the primary grades through high school.

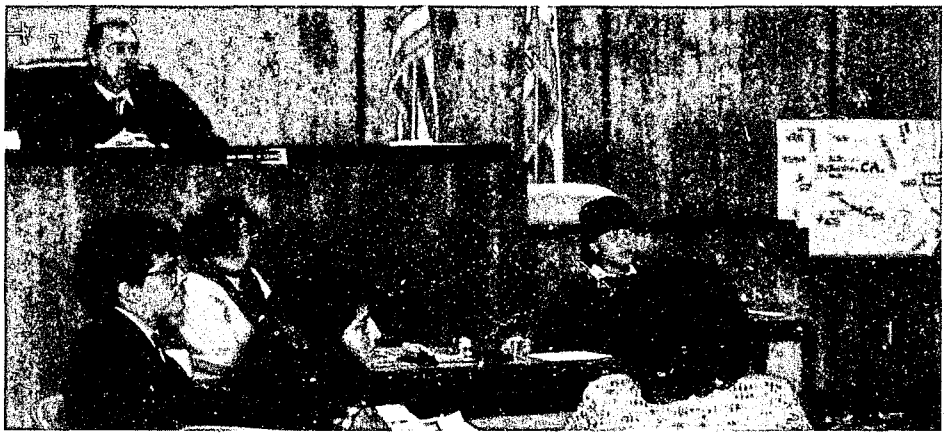
Part of LRE's appeal comes from topic presentation. The chapter on police from the LRE text *Criminal Justice in America* offers a balanced discussion. It describes positive and negative police images and does not pretend all officers are either always law-abiding or always corrupt. The chapter seeks to take students *behind the badge* through case studies. Students also conduct their own investigations of community police work. Teachers frequently invite police officers to come to school and take students out into the community.

One theory suggests young people turn to delinquent behavior because they do not feel connected with society. What better way to reconnect them than to provide structured learning experiences with opportunities to interact with adults who are responsible for maintaining order and justice in our communities.

Judges and lawyers also play important roles in this program. Across the country, judges have opened their courtrooms to LRE classes. Some judges and other court officials have met with students before and following sessions to discuss the proceedings and review the issues. These experiences provide significant enrichment to students beyond textbook learning.

LRE demonstrates America's legal system at work.

Students take from LRE classes a basic understanding of law and the American legal system. Perhaps equally impor-



LRE students in Sacramento, California, participate as attorneys, witnesses and jury in mock trial competition.

tant, they develop a respect for law and understanding of how they can participate responsibly in a pluralistic, democratic society based on the rule of law.

Teachers of even very young children find LRE an effective way to develop basic citizenship skills and instill a sense of social responsibility in students. A primary classroom teacher in Alexandria, Virginia, spends the first few weeks of each school year helping students develop a class constitution. The process is taken seriously by the instructor and students as they generate rules they will follow during the year. The teacher consistently asks students why suggested rules are needed and how they will help the class live and work together. When the last rule is adopted, a formal classroom constitution signing is held. The teacher and each child sign the document and agree to follow it. This lesson serves as an introduction to the U.S. Constitution. What better way to help students see the importance of living by constitutional principles than by having them live by constitutional principles they developed and approved themselves.

LRE generates school/community cooperation.

Introducing LRE can bring the school and community closer together. Brattleboro, Vermont, provides a good example. Beginning in 1970, social studies teachers from Brattleboro Union High School met with the local district judge, the state's attorney and the chair of the Vermont Bar Association's education committee. They developed plans to improve student understanding of the law. According to a Vermont

educator, "Out of this meeting grew some clear common goals and an effective course of action. The teachers began planning a semester course in criminal law with the help of the attorneys and the local police. Law professionals spread the word in the community about the need for students' learning about the law." The first course was a "stellar success," and LRE continues to be a strong component of the curriculum in 1985.

Support for LRE grows.

Over a year ago the OJJDP launched a major national training and dissemination program for law-related education. Under this plan several national LRE projects have joined together to work with state and local leaders to extend the program's impact in elementary and secondary schools. Public-Private Partnership Conferences, which bring together industry, business, community, school and justice leaders, have been held throughout the country to garner support for LRE. Participating states include California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon, North Carolina and Tennessee. This year additional states will join this important effort.

For more information on law-related education and this growing national program, write to: LRE Evaluation Project, Box 3578, Boulder, CO 80308; or LRE National Training and Dissemination Program, 605 G Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. □

* These findings are from a report by Grant Johnson, a principal investigator of the OJJDP Law-Related Education Evaluation Project, Social Science Education Consortium and Center for Action Research, Boulder, Colorado.