



Concepts of American

Law

EPS

Social Sciences, Civics

Social Science SOL for ALL programs: 7.2, 7.4, 7.9, 12.12, 12.13, 12.15

4 30-minute programs, 1 60 minute In-Service Program
Tape and Keep Rights for Life of Tape
No Duplication Rights

This series follows middle school/junior high school students as they create a student committee to organize a non-school dance, make rules for the dance, conduct the dance in violation of those rules, and then try to determine what went wrong. Subsequently, one of the committee chairs becomes the prime suspect when all issues of the school paper (carrying a hostile story about the committee) disappear. Although the primary focus of the series is on rules, it also addresses freedom of speech and press from the student perspective.

101. Rules in the Making

The program begins with a dance in progress. When the band plays music with sexually suggestive lyrics, the primary chaperone, a member of the city council, is surprised and angered. He convinces the council to revoke all funding for subsequent dances. Upset by the cancellation and encouraged by the local radio DJ, 'Hawkeye,' a number of students meet and decide to organize a dance committee to conduct a privately run dance.

At the meeting, the middle school age dance committee members elect Tom and Kate as co-chairs and agree to create rules for themselves and the dance. The rules include banning of alcohol and drugs, and an agreement not to have chaperones. This program focuses on the concept of rules as the fundamental framework of organized society. Using a scenario in which teenagers create rules in order to conduct a dance, the program demonstrates that rule making is unavoidable. It also introduces the concept of democratic rule making via majority vote and the authority which flows from it. The secondary focus of the program is freedom of speech and censorship. By illustrating adult dissatisfaction with teenage preferences, the program permits teachers

to deal with freedom of speech issues from a teenager's perspective.

102. Rules in Action

Tom and Kate meet with Mr. Presser, owner of a local Mercedes-Benz automobile dealership. He agrees to let them use the dealership for the dance but only on the condition that because of fire regulations no more than 85 people attend. He also wants the usual chaperones and a promise not to play the same music that got them into trouble the last time. Kate and Tom agree (despite the fact that their committee has agreed to no chaperones) and voluntarily commit to no more than 75 tickets. As they leave the showroom, they decide to sell more than 75 tickets because they don't expect every- one to show up.

Ticket sales prove a great success. The evening of the dance, over 100 people attend. A member of the committee not only lets ticket holders in, he sells more tickets at the door, even admitting Billy, a high school senior. When Mr. Presser arrives and asks where the chaperones are, Kate gets Billy to agree to be one. Billy smokes marijuana in the men's room and starts a trash fire with the match. Later another committee member slips the DJ a cassette with the same song that ended the earlier dance series. As it begins to

play,

Mr. Presser stops the dance both because Kate and Tom lied to him by having more people present than allowed and because they played music they had agreed not to play. As the program ends, viewers hear fire engines arrive in response to a call about the trash fire in the men's room.

This program focuses on the concept of rules implementation and compliance. Having agreed to a set of rules, some of which are unreasonable, the executive portion of the committee, the co-chairs Kate and Tom, in effect create new rules by agreeing to Mr. Presser's requirements about showroom use. The viewers then follow the committee's abandonment of many of their own rules as a result of a number of different factors.

103. Rules in Question

The program begins with students making derisive remarks to Matt, one of the members of the committee that conducted the dance. Disturbed at the student reaction and the consequences of the dance failure, Matt convenes the committee and urges them to find out why the dance was stopped and explain to the student body what had happened. Against the will of co-chairs Kate and Tom, the committee

agrees and a hearing type meeting is held at which the committee members review what they did and the consequences. In the process, it becomes clear, in part through video flashbacks, that a number of committee members failed to comply with their own rules or lied in whole or in part to Mr. Presser. The program ends with a discussion of giving refunds to the disappointed dance goers. This program focuses on the concept of rules revision and on systemic failure rather than individual accountability. By publicly examining their own conduct, the students attempt to determine whether the dance failed as a consequence of inadequate rules, of inadequate compliance with those rules, or through other factors. The academic focus of the program is on the need to periodically review rules to ensure that they accomplish their intent.

104. Rule Compliance - Individual Accountability

The school paper has printed a scathing issue. The paper embarrasses the school administration and a teacher and includes an expose of the dance committee's actions. The paper is particularly rough on Tom and Kate, who chaired the dance committee. Tom is asked to distribute the papers to the teachers' mailboxes. As he puts the first copy in a box, his curiosity gets the better of him, and he withdraws the paper and reads it. He then angrily moves the bale of papers toward the garbage can. Students in the hall passing by the office see portions of Tom's actions. The next day the paper is missing. Rumors fly as to who is responsible. Different people, each of whom has either some knowledge of the situation or at least a suspicion, voice differing opinions about the identity of the guilty party. The Principal, janitor, and Tom appear to be the primary suspects. A school television reporter confronts Tom and accuses him of dumping the papers. When Tom denies this, the reporter points out that Tom has lied previously. Whereas previous programs have focused on rule making, enforcement, and review and revision, this program deals with the procedures by which we determine who is responsible for rule breaking when it takes place.