

Unit Title

Rights and Responsibilities of Student Media

Description

A series of “flipped classroom” lessons that draw upon examples from Colorado student journalism to explore legal and ethical issues in media to demonstrate educational opportunities along with potential challenges to student journalism.

Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to

- Demonstrate an understanding of the law of Colorado pertaining to student media
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history of student press rights and responsibilities in America
- Analyze local policies compared to state law, and formulate a reconciliation plan if needed

Common Core State Standards/Colorado ELA Standards addressed

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1](#)
- The above are from Speaking and Listening - we probably can add some in writing., [choosing from the list here](#)

Length

Five to seven traditional class sessions of 50 minutes each (flipped classroom model may require fewer class sessions)

Materials/Resources

- Computer with monitor for individual student viewing (optional: in-classroom projector)
- Access to “Taking the Lede” documentary, through CSMA website (www.colostudentmedia.com) or YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZK9FXS-D_k)
- [Study Guide / Summary of “Taking the Lede”](#)
- Access to the Internet for student research
- Handout: [The Colorado Student Free Expression Law](#)
- PowerPoint: Quick history of student press rights in America (to be linked in Version 1.2)

Lesson Step-by Step

Class Session Day 1

Class watches the 44-minute documentary "Taking the Lede -- Colorado Edition" with first thoughts discussed immediately following.

OPTIONAL (for those exploring a Flipped classroom model)

Student Work Prior to Class 3 (may be assigned on day 1 of unit, or prior to beginning unit)

- Students view documentary during free time, evenings, weekend. The study guide provides a summary, plus some useful links to explore further.
- Students use study guide questions for discussion to write short reflections that they will bring to Day 3 class (optional: share reflections with instructor through GoogleDocs).
- Students are provided the link to school district publications policy (as mandated by state law), and should read through that policy prior to Day 3 class.

Class Session Day 2

1. Instructor leads class though PowerPoint with brief history of student free expression in the U.S. Depending on instructor narration and class interest, this slideshow may run for 45 minutes, or more. *OPTION: The instructor may choose to cover this PowerPoint over two class sessions.*
2. Student assignment is to browse www.splc.org, and to take the online diagnostic pre-test [located here](#), prior to Day 2 class. Students should know that the Student Press Law Center is the foremost supporter of student media rights in the nation, and all support services are provided free to the students.

Class Session Day 3

1. Groups of 3 students are given individual copies of the Colorado Student Freedom of Expression statute, along with one copy for each group of your local school district publications policy. Each group conducts an analysis of the two documents that compares content, noting discrepancies as well as any segments that seem confusing or warrant further discussion.
2. Groups report to entire class, with each group sharing one observation, in turn, until all unique observations have been shared. Instructor or designee records observations/questions on whiteboard or computer (with projector).
3. If time permits, begin class discussion on results of the pre-test on First Amendment. Optional: Each student creates a list of the Five Freedoms and one example each of seeing those freedoms expressed in his or her life, in or out of school.

Class Session Day 4

Students will bring their reflections on the documentary to class, with sharing by instructor preference (random participation, volunteers, draw cards...), until everyone has shared one unique insight, major point, or question for further study. Printed reflections (see the study guide) will be turned in as an assignment.

Class Session Day 5

Something needs to be produced (perhaps a suggested revision the class could share with the school district, if that were needed, or a personal essay on the importance of free expression in a democracy, or a podcast telling the story of one of the significant court cases pertaining to student free expression, or memorizing the First Amendment and reciting/performing/otherwise staging it for the class.

One specific outcome of this unit might be proposed change(s) to the current district policy, to better reflect the intentions and specifics of the Colorado State Statute **Section 22-1-120**. Students might edit the school district policy to better match and then share that with district personnel/attorneys'

OPTION: Ask students to take the pre-test again. [SPLC offers an extensive array of quizzes.](#)

OPTION: When unit is taught in conjunction with an op-ed writing unit, the topic of student expression could be the basis for the class to write opinion pieces (possibly published on a news website or in print).

OPTION: For those wanting to finish with a major test, or even a quest. A sample test, and a sample "quest," are still being developed.

Differentiation

- Students may be grouped with mixed experience and/or ability levels, providing support for those needing it.
- Students will be asked to use MUSE (Mainstream U.S. English) in their written assignments, but grading will not penalize MUSE errors in the reflection or any in-class writing.