

OUR STREET LAW EXPERIENCE

When we signed up for Street Law, neither of us knew much about the programme but we both thought that it sounded like a fun and worthwhile way to occupy our time outside of the lecture theatre. We both have an interest in education and public engagement, and we were excited by the opportunity to make the law more accessible to young people.

At the training weekend we learned to think about teaching in a way neither of us had ever thought about before and gained key skills like interactive teaching methods, how to quieten a rowdy classroom and lesson planning. On the last day of the training weekend, we were tasked with creating a lesson plan for the very first time. We had the idea to create a lesson plan based on sentencing, challenging the students' understanding of how the process works. We thought this would be of interest to the students given the extensive media coverage of the sentence handed down to Cathal Crotty in the Natasha O'Brien case. We taught this lesson plan to the students of Mercy Secondary School in Inchicore and elements of the lesson also informed our more informal session with the young people in Oberstown Detention Centre.

When we initially got paired with the school we had to reach out and arrange dates with the school's co-ordinator, who was extremely helpful and accommodated us at every step. We had a very large class of 38 students although it was rarely a full class. Teaching at the school was a steep learning curve for both of us, we had to navigate the students' differing levels of interest in the topics in an attempt to keep everyone engaged. Ultimately, we believe it was a very worthwhile and interesting experience for both us and the students. When we taught in Oberstown, it was an entirely new experience for the both of us. We had to shift our teaching strategy entirely as we were dealing with a much smaller group of 5 students at a time. We also had to be more aware of the content that we were teaching. The different setting allowed for a much more in-depth discussion. We came away from the experience with a new understanding of the justice system and I believe that we learned as much from this experience as we taught.

We both walked away from the experience having developed our skills in teaching and also with a new understanding of the law and the importance of accessibility in legal education. Street Law is a reminder that the real power of law lies not just in knowing it but in being able to share that knowledge.

Elisa Carey and Stacey Dunne pictured at the Street Law conferral with Justine Carty, Vice-Chairperson of the Law Society Education Committee.



Street Law and Taskmaster participants receive Certificate in Public Legal Education - Congratulations to all trainees who were recently awarded the Law Society Certificate in Public Legal Education at a ceremony celebrating successful completion of Street Law and Taskmaster education programmes.