

Mock Trial—A Student Perspective

I participated in Mock Trial all four years of high school. While I had the unusual benefit of partaking in four of our team’s state championship rounds, Mock Trial was one of the most formational exercises of my high school experience.

“Mock trial is an invaluable asset to a complete liberal arts education.”

Mock Trial robustly reinforced the skills that were already practiced in the classroom, adding the element of competition to make it fun and encourage students to further hone their rhetorical skills, and whetting my appetite (for better or for worse) to the joys of “out-rhetoricing” an opponent on a topic that matters.

Mock trial was invaluable to me for 3 reasons:

1. It taught me to generate ideas and consider their implications.
 1. Though these lessons were introduced in the classroom, Mock trial was the arena in which they were truly developed and refined. The case served as a common construct with which the team could explore and connect ideas, and we built upon one another’s thoughts.
2. It taught me to articulate my ideas clearly under pressure.
 1. It can be hard to present with confidence in a silent room full of well dressed adults and sharp opponents, especially when you don’t have a script to rely on. Mock trial prepares students to do just that, and to do it with excellence. Especially at the national level, the incredible prowess of the competition sharpened my own rhetorical skills, far above what classroom exercises could.
3. It taught me to defend my ideas with poise, after considering all possible objections.
 1. To be successful, Mock trialers must anticipate objections, and defend them properly. On this subject, mock trial reinforced two life skills: viewing ideas from multiple perspectives, and anticipating objections. In order to anticipate objections, students must explore every conceivable angle of their thesis.

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