

First-aid

I had only been teaching at La Sierra High School for a couple of years when I borrowed a moulage wound kit from the Army National Guard in order to increase the realism in my first aid course. The moulage kit had some very realistic wounds with many set up so that they would bleed with artificial blood under the control of the "wounded" patient. In some cases the blood just flowed out of the wound simulating bleeding from veins while others spurting blood as if an artery had been cut. The simulated bleeding was controlled by squeezing a small rubber bulb placed in the patient's pocket.

After a week's worth of classroom first-aid training consisting of discussions, demonstrations and application, I administer a practical quiz using the moulage to see just how much the Cadets in my class had learned.

My junior and senior Cadets took turns putting on wounds and then coming into or being brought into the classroom to be given first aid. The freshman Cadets in the class performed the necessary first-aid procedures on the wound while my sophomores evaluated the treatment. This provided very interesting and realistic multi-level learning experiences for everyone in the class.

Two of my best seniors, Cadet Captain Carl Smith and Cadet Lieutenant Roger Bolt were having a wonderful time being the injured patients. After each one was treated, the results were critiqued with the entire class. I could tell by the enthusiasm, first aid procedures applied, and corrected mistakes that real learning was taking place. Everyone in the class, including my more "difficult" students, was actively involved.

With about 15 minutes left in the class period, we were ready for the final first aid patient. But, no one came into the classroom. I went outside and discovered that Carl and Roger were nowhere to be found. Since there were two of my best students I assumed that they had gone to the restroom to wash off some of the artificial blood from the previous wound. I had two of my sophomores quickly put on simulated burns and enter the classroom. The class quickly went to work correctly treating the burns.

The next thing I knew, the shop cleanup rang indicating that class was coming to an end. I went outside and looked for Carl and Roger. They were still missing. No one seemed to know where they had gone and I was beginning to get a little worried. At that point, the dismissal bell rang and principal's secretary came on the intercom and directed me to come immediately to the front office.

I forgot about Carl and Roger and quickly locked up moulage kit in my classroom. As soon as I had everything secure, I headed for the principal's office. When I got there, I was surprised to see Carl and Roger through the window sitting quietly in the principal's office looking just a little bit worried. The principal secretary told me that Mr. Johnson wanted to see me as soon as I arrived and to go on in to his office. I opened the door and entered not knowing what to expect. At that point, the two boys were told to wait outside. They left and closed the door.

Mr. Johnson then told me what happened. Evidently, Carl had worn the "amputated hand" wound and Roger had taken him down to the school nurse's office with blood spurting out of the stump. This particular nurse was one of the most disliked members of the faculty because she thought every sick kid was actually faking it (and many were). Roger said something about wood shop and a power saw while Carl pumped the artificial blood out of the hand. The nurse stood panic stricken for a few seconds and then screamed. Mr. Johnson said that the scream was so loud that he heard it from his office and came running. When he arrived, Carl had taken the wound off and was trying to explain to the nurse that it was only a fake wound.

Mr. Johnson told me that he had to administer "discipline" to my students but said that he thought it was the funniest thing that ever happened at La Sierra. He said that it could have and probably should have given the poor nurse a heart attack. I explained the first aid training we had been doing and that the fake

wounds were part of the day's class. He responded by saying that if today was any indication of what went on in my classroom on a daily basis I was doing a truly superior job. He clearly understood what real teaching was all about. But, he said in the future whenever I had this kind of realistic first-aid training; I had to inform the nurse and the front office before I began.

He asked me to go back outside and bring Carl and Roger back in. He then read them the riot act and told them that that they had let me down and that he expected more responsibility from Cadet Officers at La Sierra High School. Next, he then told me to go down to the nurse's office and apologize for what had happened and pick up the "wound" that had been left there. He sent the two boys were sent home and told them to think about what could have resulted from their not so fully practical joke. As far as I know, that was the extent of the discipline that he administered. The punishment I applied was probably worse. I simply turned away from them without saying a word and walked slowly to the nurse's office with my head down. They watched me all the way. I apologized for my students actions and promised her that it would never happen again. She had recovered from the event but I could tell by the way she looked that she did not consider it in the least bit funny. When I came out of the nurse's office the two boys were gone.

The next day, both Carl and Roger apologized for their actions. I never told them about what Mr. Johnson had told me that day when they were waiting outside of his office. Any mention of it would have undermined school discipline. I often wonder what would have happened in today's high school environment if this event were repeated.

Post Script:

Roger and Carl were actually put to the test after this first aid training. They administered first aid and rescued a civilian who had shot himself in the lower abdomen with his 22cal rifle down by the banks of the Sacramento River. They stumbled upon this fellow, about their age our age coming out of the brush begging for help. They were off to the rescue like a shot. Carl stayed and stopped the bleeding while Roger flew over a couple of fences and phoned for an ambulance from a local horse ranch. They were recognized in the local paper and received congrats from Mr. Johnson. This time he meant it. They later visited the man in the hospital. His parents were there and it was very heart warming experience for everyone involved to know the California Cadet Corps training in realistic first aid had saved the life of another human being.