



What is Justice ?- a reflection

77.61% of students felt <u>involved</u> in lessons most of the time or involved in the writing and performance of all of it.
72.06 % know much more or <u>know</u> enough now to be able to explain it to others.
77.61% of students put in quite a bit of <u>effort</u> or a tremendous amount of effort.
67.16 % of students found it quite <u>motivating</u> or extremely motivating.
Nearly all students felt <u>okay or happy</u> about the topic.
63 % said that the courtroom excursion <u>really helped them</u> understand and 33 % of all students agreed that the excursion to the courts <u>helped</u> .

Teachers response

From the responses given we can be certain that the majority of students benefitted from the visit to the court and the Mock Trial. As teachers we felt that it was an important way to connect with the idea of Justice.

As a literacy exercise a Mock Trial meant that the students could concentrate on the important skill of prosody a core component of fluency.

This includes :

Preparation for writing the text	Editing Phase	Performance Phase
<i>Recognising the intent of the text being written</i>	<i>Correcting the phrasing</i>	<i>Talking about emotions—how people sound when experiencing emotion</i>
<i>Putting words and ideas in the right order</i>	<i>Adjusting the text to achieve appropriate rhythm, phrasing and stress</i>	<i>Reading with expression</i>
<i>Modelling on other texts</i>	<i>Accuracy with spelling and grammar</i>	<i>Voice projection and dramatization</i>
<i>Planning</i>	<i>Ensuring sense is made by the audience.</i>	



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It took approximately 20 lessons to write the script. This included time spent planning, editing and re-writing. It was important that we did not write it for the students or select something pre-written. We had performed readers theatre scripts of trials but the ownership of the mock trial and performing it to an audience was essential.

Throughout the unit of work we all used differentiated approaches to teaching, learning and student assessment using multiple environments. Each class experienced the physical setting of the courts, we utilised an online chat forum with experts from the courts and migration museum and the mock trial was a simulated work space. This helped us to support students and ourselves to learn in ways previously not possible, and to practise different sorts of interpersonal relationships in various environments.

Independent projects offered students the opportunity to do some of their own research at home on topics such as the science of Crime Scene Investigation, biographies of historical figures, SA police, driving and gun laws and so forth. This also gave them the opportunity to learn in a way that caters for personal interests and strengths.

Focusing on the South Australian courts and linking it in with the local courts meant that students were making Text-to-Self Connections. The excursion to the courts enabled students to develop a deeper connection to the people involved in courts and a better understanding of the physical space and location of the Adelaide courts.

By using a fiction text (class novels *Holes* by Louis Sachar and *Once* by Morris Gleitzman) students made Text-to-Text Connections. Reading materials that we read together as a class supported these connections. We compared themes, events and messages that authors were trying to convey. The session we did with Rosa at the Migration Museum resonated deeply with the students after which they often spoke about the idea of perspectives most especially when using historical texts.

Many of the texts that we read aloud reflected issues and events taking place in the world beyond the classroom. (Text-to world) World issues and events were reflected in nonfiction and literature where a character is in conflict with larger societal issues, such as the prejudice depicted in stories of Aboriginal Human Rights (Mabo)and African-American issues (Rosa Parkes and Martin Luther King).

During the first few weeks students needed constant clarification about the technical terms used. However using similar words would have over simplified the learning and would have hindered our desire to create high expectations of our students. Not all technical terms were understood by all students however our at-risk students and our EALD students were using much of the vocabulary in their everyday language by the end of term.

Limited access to fully functioning IT at school was a barrier that we had no control over. Often websites were blocked and one slow laptop between two or three students a few times a week limits what we can do with Middle Years learners. The students really wanted to do their own research however we have limited access to texts suitable for every ability. Much of what the students found when doing homework for their independent learning was U.S based, therefore finding access to on-line, student friendly Australian content is something we hope will be addressed in the near future.



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The students have done some deep learning about Justice. They have connected emotionally to the topic and their world view on the topic of Justice has changed. Whereas at the beginning of the unit they spoke about Justice was a synonym for 'payback' the students can now consider that Justice has many forms and that the process for Justice is a complex one.

We were successful in achieving the main objective—to develop an awareness of the Justice System.

Learning about courts and the processes was quite complicated for the students and our advice to others would be to refine and establish the concepts students need to understand fluently in order to engage with the notion of justice and how the Australian Judicial system works based on the principles of fairness and equity for all.

Professionally this unit of work increased our capacity to teach Civics and Citizenship in a local context. The Professional Development sessions provided by Outreach Education at the courts, Parliament House and Art Gallery as a Professional Learning Community meant that we built up our understandings. As we taught the unit we became the learners alongside our students.

The idea of teaching the unit of work simultaneously with other classes reduced the stress of preparation. Having the resources of Outreach Education with Peter and Rosa meant that we could address our personal learning needs. The support of our own PLC meant that we could always discuss issues with each other and knowing that others would be using any resources we created made it even more worthwhile.

Being able to share the whole experience through a Professional sharing day for Outreach at the SA Art Gallery allowed us to take pride in what we had achieved to make it a worthwhile, positive experience. We would recommend working with Outreach Education to other teachers and hope to be able to use many more of their resources in the near future.

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