



SACE Implementation Workshop

Stage 2 Legal Studies – John McCall

Stage 2 Legal Studies



COMPETING TENSIONS



BIG QUESTIONS



INQUIRY QUESTIONS

Why?

- Critical thinking
- Evaluation
- The “un-googleable”
- You (the student) find out what you need to know (inquiry) in order to do what you want to do (answer the big question) and in doing so understand, reflect on and evaluate the complexity and the “grey” of the legal system (competing tensions)

Competing Tensions



competing rights
and responsibilities



fairness and
efficiency



the empowered and
the disempowered



certainty and
flexibility

Unpacking the 'Big Questions'

- What do we need to know in order to be able to answer a 'Big Question'?
- What are the competing tensions in play?

'Inquiry Questions'

- Which 'Inquiry Questions' will help students answer the 'Big Question'?
- Allocate these areas of inquiry to each small group
- Ask them to identify tensions within this area of inquiry
- Each group will report back to the class with their findings, including:
 - Relevant examples
 - Possible competing tensions
 - Any reforms?

Independent Activity

- Coming back to the 'Big Question'
- Construct a mind-map addressing the question
- Plan an essay response, including:
 - Examples
 - Evaluation
 - Reforms



For example

- Discuss a number of big questions with the class
- Vote to choose one
- Discuss, in broad terms, what we would need to know in order to address the big question
- Align responses with inquiry questions
- Collaborative activity to inquire
- Share findings with examples
- Evaluate in relation to competing tensions
- Independent activity (eg plan essay response) in relation to big question

A dark gray arrow pointing to the right, with the text "In practice" centered inside it.

In practice

So...

- “Are the institutions of government fair and efficient?”
- Broken down into:
 - Institutions (structure and processes)
 - Efficiency? Fairness?
 - Other governments? Other countries?
 - Rule of law
- Becomes:
 - “Why are the following underlying principles of the Australian legal system important?”
 - Rule of law
 - Separation of powers
 - Representative government
 - Responsible government
 - Judicial Independence

A dark gray arrow pointing to the right, with the text 'Think/Pair/Share' centered inside it.

Think/Pair/Share



Independent Activity

- Plan an essay response to the (big) question:

“Australia’s institutions of government are fair and efficient.”
Using examples, evaluate this statement.

Circular process



Circle a big question



Inquire (core knowledge)



Consider competing tensions (critical thinking)



Collaborate (Think/Pair/Share)



Practice (skills + essay/short responses)



Answer big question



My Hope

- Core knowledge and understanding of the Australian Legal System is covered AND contextualised in terms of relevance
- Critical thinking and genuine evaluation become part of the day-to-day
- Students challenge everything
- Increased agency, flexibility and breadth
- Increased engagement, energy, purpose...