

AGQTP Implementing the Curriculum Planning and Assessment Frameworks

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Overview of HSIE

I am actually going to go back to talking about the connection descriptions which we see as the backbone of the whole model. It was from those connection descriptions which I think you have been discovering a little bit about, that the units of work themselves were actually developed. So the units came last, if you like, and everything else came before that.

All of the subject matter of the syllabus has been covered. It's much more balanced and spread out than the Board of Studies units of work. The strands themselves, are what has become the focus of HSIE and that's not exactly what the intent of the syllabus, but to find the links with the other key learning areas it was necessary to make that fairly tough decision. One of the outcomes that has actually been moved around is what is called the Democracy outcome which is the point 2 outcome of Change and Continuity has become a little bit of a floater. I've heard teachers say 'I don't know why that outcome is here because we've already done it' because you see it coming up more than once within the COG model itself. In actual fact that's not actually correct because in mapping the HSIE outcome,s the subject matter that aligns with those outcomes was also mapped and matched up and where you find that that outcome has been repeated the subject matter has largely not been repeated so even though it is the same outcome, the dot points of subject matter attached to it have not been repeated alongside it.

Occasionally there is one point, which is a key point that the others connect around, and it's not possible to leave that point out. It needs to be included more than once. The Culture strand has been addressed in some instances a little bit differently to the original units of work and that's largely because we've had the benefit of hindsight of quite a few years of classroom practice to draw upon in putting the COGs together.

COGs preferable to HSIE units of work

So people sort of say what's better COGs or units of work? From a HSIE point of view I am actually going to say COGs definitely because COGs enabled the correction of some imbalances in the teaching and learning activities. It also allowed the inclusion of Aboriginal History and Culture and Cultural Diversity which was largely left out of the original units. How do we know? We've mapped and checked everything. It has all been cross referenced, ticked off.

HSIE Skills, Knowledge and Understanding

Global and social issues was a fairly contentious unit, Stage 3, String E. Why was it contentious? because the other key learning areas thought that HSIE was going to do natural disasters. No, natural disasters is actually now a Stage 4 topic and again covered in Stage 5.



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So thinking about 'why does the learning matter', that classic quality teaching question, you actually have to think about what's the point in doing something on natural disasters in Stage 3, in Stage 4 and again in Stage 5. Does that really give students an accurate view of the world according to the aim of the syllabus which is:

To develop in student's the values, attitudes, skills and knowledge and understanding that enhance their sense of personal, community, national and global identity.

Secondly

Enable them to participate effectively in maintaining and improving the quality of their society and environment.

There's the Democracy outcome in it and then there's also the Environment outcomes in C. D is Roles, Rights and Responsibilities. E is Resource Systems. F is now HSIE. G is the Change and Continuity History and H is the Cultural Diversity.

COGs and HSIE scope and sequence

One of the things that I probably don't often get the chance to talk about is scope and sequencing HSIE using the COGs. And there's a couple of fairly simple rules that are rules for all of the key learning areas is that roughly something from each of the strands should be covered every year. We are not talking about outcomes here. The minimum organiser is actually the strands. So if you're talking English, usually when you teach English you're teaching something from talking and listening, reading and writing every term. HSIE, that means, in a year, not a term, but a school year you're covering something from Change and Continuity, Cultures, Environments and Social Systems and Structures. It also means that it is quite easy to then report on HSIE each semester and you are getting some balanced reporting against all four strands every year. That doesn't mean you're covering every outcome, it doesn't mean you are covering everything in a year because it is a two year stage syllabus. This means from a COG point of view that COG C has to be in the same year as F. Why? COG C is the only one that covers two strands. Remember I said there were seven HSIE units of work, locations within the COGs. The double up of two strands occurs in C all the others are covering one strand each. So that means it needs to sit beside F and that means you are still covering something from each of the four strands every year. The other, from a HSIE point of view, can be juggled around to an extent that juggling around to help you balance the other key learning areas as well.

Assessing Student Work

You need to have point 2 a general understanding of the performance standards implicit and explicit in the syllabus. To give you an idea of what that looks like, [referring to pages on screen] every page has a double page – outcomes – subject matter but what does that look like in the classroom is unpacked over here [referring to a different set of pages] and these are examples of what it looks like in the classroom for the teachers and the students so you've got some basis of what the expectations are looking like.

Part of what we need to do is to develop a shared understanding of what it looks like but so often I actually see that shared understanding being developed around what the task is rather than what is the intent of the learning in that task and what it is actually covering.



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One of the dilemmas that HSIE has is that we have the smallest number of outcomes of any key learning area. There are only eight per stage. That means that they are large and convoluted and you really need the associated subject matter and the skills and the values and the attitudes to actually unpack those outcomes. So when we say less outcomes, we've got to be a little bit careful of what we wish for, because it may not actually be making our lives easier by having less. We may be better off with more, smaller chunks.

So that means the planned assessment needs to be based on the outcomes and subject matter of the syllabus and those planned assessments are only small snapshots. You are not ever, in HSIE going to get anything that encompasses all of their learning and trying to do that will actually trip you up and you will become overwhelmed with the assessment agenda.

The dilemma is that the assessment is towards the end of the learning and quite often, particularly first time round, schools actually struggle to get through all that learning. Second time round, they say 'I did it' or 'I nearly made it and I can see how it all works together'. Then the assessment criteria actually provide the tick or cross of what it is that you are actually looking for and that's the key to a successful planned assessment, is getting your criteria right. That means the students can know the criteria in advance. This is not 'trick the student'. This is getting the best results you can. The criteria should be applied consistently. That's easier said than done sometimes and you can then provide feedback to students against the criteria.



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