

HSIE Curriculum Support

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Planned Assessment in HSIE

Teachers are seeking further guidance and support in the assessment and reporting of student learning in HSIE. Teachers have made considerable progress in addressing the new reporting requirements and it is now possible to delve more deeply into the relationship between school planning, teacher programming and the role of assessment and reporting. The following considerations are based on discussions with teachers seeking to clarify the array of information around assessing and reporting requirements. The Department of Education and Training policy *Curriculum Planning and Programming, Assessing and Reporting to Parents K – 12* provides the basis for the advice in this article.

The following sequential considerations provide an outline that will allow teachers to locate assessment and reporting into a K-6 school framework. Good school planning supports and guides teachers' programming and provides a foundation for systematic planned assessment that will ensure that teachers are able to meet the reporting requirements more easily and in a time efficient way.

Developing planned assessment leading to sound reporting practice involves a number of considerations:

1. **School planning:** Does the school HSIE plan or scope and sequence address components of the four HSIE strands: change and continuity, cultures, environments and social systems and structures in each year of school?

A sound school HSIE plan includes aspects of each of the 4 HSIE strands in each year of schooling. The school plan should document the syllabus contexts for teachers to reference when developing teaching and learning programs that include assessment tasks. Schools can choose to use the Curriculum Planning Framework (COGs) model found at:

<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/timetoteach/cogs/index.htm>

Schools using COGs will still need to organise the units of work into a sequence of learning, documented in a school plan for each stage. A sound school plan provides the necessary framework for the development of teaching and learning programs that allow students to show what they know, understand and can do in all 4 HSIE strands in each year of school.

2. **Teaching and learning programs:** Do the teaching and learning programs, topics or units of work address the syllabus outcomes and the related syllabus subject matter?

Teachers need to develop teaching and learning activities that address the learning in different stages as documented in a sound HSIE school plan, as described in (1). Developing teaching and learning programs is a process that

needs to be cross referenced to the outcomes and subject matter in regards to the learning of students. Often the development of teaching and learning programs relies on being able to source suitable resources in a variety of forms.

The syllabus defines the 'standard of learning' and identifies the context for teaching and learning activities. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning activities as this provides feedback to students on what they know and can do. Developing quality teaching and learning programs tasks can be enhanced by referring to *Quality teaching in NSW public schools: An assessment practice guide*, accessed at:

<https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/profcurr/qtp/docs/asspracg.pdf>

Quality Teaching provides support for teachers to develop teaching and learning programs that allow students to show the broad range of what they know, understand and can do in regard to different learners.

3. **Teaching strategies:** Do the teaching and learning activities engage students in a range of learning activities that support different learning styles in the context of syllabus requirements?

Students learn in different ways and providing a variety of teaching and learning initiatives and strategies allows them to develop and express their understandings in a way that is fair and equitable for all. In a providing a range of opportunities students can demonstrate improvements in their learning in different contexts. Providing a broad range of teaching and learning activities also improves student achievement in HSIE. The Board of Studies HSIE units of work provides a glossary of *Teaching strategies and practices* pp 151 – 210 that includes ideas on 45 different strategies that teachers can refer to, many of these strategies can be referred to when developing assessment tasks. Consider:

- consequence charts,
- debates,
- diagrams,
- flow charts,
- mapping,
- developing a matrix;
- contributions to a brainstorming session,
- contributions in a values clarification activity or a component of a larger strategy can be used such as the questions students have developed for an interview.

4. **Assessment tasks:** Are there assessment tasks identified in the teaching and learning programs which provide open ended responses that the teacher can develop specific assessment criteria for?

Assessment is about providing opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in relation to the syllabus outcomes in the context of the syllabus subject matter. Being able to identify a relevant assessment task is a skill that teachers are becoming more confident in.

Developing quality assessment tasks can be enhanced by referring to *Quality teaching in NSW public schools: An assessment practice guide*, accessed at: <https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/profcurr/qtp/docs/asspracg.pdf>

Quality assessment tasks allow students to show the broad range of what they know, understand and can do and provide the context for the teacher to give students feedback on their learning. However if the topic does not use the syllabus outcomes and related subject matter then the student learning is not able to provide assessment that can be judged against a 'standard of learning' described in the syllabus.

5. **Assessment criteria:** Has the teacher developed explicit assessment criteria to support the evaluation of student achievement?

Explicit assessment criteria provide the detail of what students know and can do analysed by the teacher. Teachers reference the criteria when reviewing responses from students to gauge the student's level of achievement. The explicit criteria determined by the syllabus standard should directly relate to the specific understandings required of the students. Using explicit criteria is one way of ensuring that teachers can manage a limited number of assessments, without the need to over assess.

Students should know and understand the explicit criteria by which their learning is being judged. Clear and explicit assessment criteria allow students to show a depth of intellectual quality related to the learning they have been engaged in.

6. **Moderating student work:** Can the student responses to the task be moderated by the teacher in a way that reflects both the syllabus standards and align with the five point achievement scale using A-E or word descriptors?

The purpose of 'assessing for learning' is to inform teaching. Assessment of learning also provides feedback to students against criteria. In HSIE it is a good idea to initially differentiate students work into 3 levels – At, Above or Below, where 'At' aligns with the 'Sound (C)' performance standard description. Over the course of a semester teachers will collect additional information, when undertaking assessment for and of learning in a variety of contexts about individual student achievement. Teachers use a range of evidence to allocate student achievement to identify students who are achieving at outstanding (A), high (B), sound (C), basic (D) or limited (E) levels twice a year, at the time of reporting.

7. **Writing report comments:** Can the teacher use the planned assessment tasks to support the writing of students report comments?

Writing student reports occurs twice per year. Individual student comments for reports can be developed by teachers using the report comment starters. The comment starters have been developed using the syllabus subject matter that supports the HSIE outcomes and are available on the *Time to Teach* website and included in the *School Based Student Reporting (SBSR)* software. Using the report comment starters helps to minimising the time taken to develop student comments.

The report comment starters support the learning identified in the HSIE syllabus for each stage of learning. Teachers should be able to identify the comments that directly link to assessment for and of learning undertaken in a reporting period. The comment starters are organised according to the syllabus strands to facilitate ease of use. A HSIE school plan organised using the syllabus strands will facilitate the use of the comment starters. Teachers can identify the comment starters for the specific strands addressed during the reporting period.

However teachers teaching topics or units of work that do not address the HSIE outcomes and related syllabus subject matter will have trouble identifying and developing stage appropriate assessment with explicit criteria. Student achievement for these topics or units work will not be able to be judged against a syllabus standard making any reporting ranks or comments of little value.

And so we are lead back to the importance of what is in the school plan or scope and sequence.

Additional information on developing and moderating assessment tasks is contained in three PowerPoint presentations linked below. It is necessary to save the presentation to view the notes that go with each slide. Use the active links in the headings below:

1. [Implementing the HSIE K-6 syllabus](#) which provides information about using the HSIE syllabus.
2. [Using the HSIE Syllabus for consistency of assessment](#) provides information about developing assessment tasks related to programming.
3. [Using the HSIE Syllabus for consistency of moderation](#) provides an example of moderating student work.

Alternatively these presentations are available within the *Consistent Teacher Judgement* web site at:

http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/consistent_teacher/index.htm

Teachers continue to build expertise in planning, programming, assessing and reporting. Expertise is continuing to evolve as teachers add further layers of understanding over time.

The seven steps outlined above are but a summary of the process for leading and managing the HSIE curriculum. For additional information please contact: Anne Southwell, Anne is the senior curriculum adviser HSIE K-6 and can be contacted on (02) 9886 7156, or anne.southwell@det.nsw.edu.au