THE PLACE OF HASS IN THE CURRICULUM

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The purpose of the HumsRus blog is to provide a resource for HASS students and teachers interested in engaging with learning in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) learning area. This blog aims to be a repository of professional learning activities, presentations, resources and discussions to support the introduction of high quality HASS teaching and learning into our classrooms.

Wednesday, September 28, 2016

The Place of HASS at the ACSA Symposium

Click here to download the above HASS presentation by Malcolm McInerney at the ACSA Symposium on 14 October 2016
This workshop explores:

- The important place of HASS in the curriculum.

- Regarding critical and creative thinking, ‘real world’ application and future ‘usefulness’, HASS is often undervalued in the curriculum.

- The concepts for the four subjects of HASS (history, geography, civics and citizenship, and economics and business) provide a conceptual framework for students to make sense of the world they live in - to enhance thinking and in turn contribute to the all-around intellectual and societal development of students.

- HASS subjects provide a context for the contemporary world and a framework for students to critically and creatively assess possible, probable and preferred futures for themselves and the world in which they live.

- The potential of the concepts for across HASS subject and learning area connections (integration?).
Key professional learning questions

1. What does humanities education offer?

2. What is HASS thinking?

3. What is the potential of HASS thinking?
The need to articulate the nature of HASS – concisely but accurately for modern HASS.

Create an age-appropriate, engaging and student relevant sound bite of no more than two sentences for your students for when they ask “what is this HASS thing?”

A sound bite is a short clip of speech from a longer piece, often used to promote or exemplify the full length piece. A sound bite is characterised by a short phrase or sentence that captures the essence of what the speaker is trying to communicate.
Billions to be invested in Humanities Education in our schools

The Humanities revolution in our schools - utilitarian only education found to be wanting in preparing young people for the changing 21st Century world

Students protest demanding more Hums

A protest broke out at Eastern High School in Sydney today as students demanded at least 30% of the curriculum being dedicated for Humanities education.

Jobs galore from learning humanities in school

The Labor Party has verified that students gain employment as a result of the skills and understandings they gain by completing Humanities classes. They have backed the protest of students that Hums is undervalued in the curriculum.

Investment in Hums educations

The Federal Government has just announced an infusion of 2 Billion Dollars in humanities education. All schools will be provided with grants for purpose built Humanities classrooms and professional learning for teachers in the area of Humanities Education.

Universities back the Hums move

All universities will now be required to offer extensive pre-service courses in the area of history, geography, civics and citizenship and economics and business. Without passing these courses teachers will be considered unfit to teach in Australian schools.

Social futurist back plan

A group of eminent futurologists have put out a press release stating that for a "functioning healthy society in Australia these reforms must be implemented as soon as possible! Without the reforms, we are in for strife as a society."
“Geography is just physics slowed down, with a couple of trees stuck in” - Terry Pratchett

“HASS is easy, an intellectually soft subject!”
A need to challenge this perception. HASS subjects require different thinking and skills and have quite different aims ... but not easier!

"As a young man, my fondest dream was to become a geographer. However, while working in the Customs Office, I thought deeply about the matter and concluded that it was far too difficult a subject. With some reluctance, I then turned to physics as an alternative."

In the 1970’s a New York State University staff member posted the quotation on his office door as a joke directed at the Physics faculty.
Australians hold what appear to be conflicting aspirational and practical notions of the purpose and value of a schooling. Economists and corporate leaders refer to this function of education as the development of human capital. But what does this human capital look like? Many have a narrow view of such!
The story is never told about the standard and importance of Humanities in our schools?

Do we know? Do we care? What would we measure?
How would we measure – against what?

The plummeting performance of Australian teenagers in critical subjects like reading, mathematics and science is so serious it could affect the nation’s ability to compete globally for the next 50 years, a major new report reveals.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) report found 40,000 15-year-olds across Australia lacked the reading skills required for the workplace, while 57,000 were not up to scratch in maths.

It also said there has been a “long-term decline in the ability of 15-year-olds to apply what they are learning to everyday problems”.

ACER says the performance of Australian students has been going backwards since the Sydney 2000 Olympics while other countries have made substantial gains.

In mathematics the top 10 per cent of Australian students now perform at the same level as the top 40 to 50 per cent of students in Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, the report says.

Between 2000 and 2012 Australian students’ reading literacy declined by 16 points and mathematical literacy by 29 points while Germany increased its literacy level by 24 points.

ACER chief executive Professor Geoff Masters, who authored the report said: “It has been a steady decline and in maths it has been dramatic. “

“The problem is not that Australia is standing still relative to other countries – we are actually going backwards.”

The report, Five Challenges in Australian School Education, also singles out growing disparities in performance between schools and a serious decline in the attractiveness of teaching as a career.

Prof Masters said a number of top-performing countries had made high-quality teacher candidates a priority – South Korea and Finland drew from the top 10 per cent of academic achievers.

Prof Masters called for a national action plan to turn around the slump.

“The challenges we face are beyond the control of individual schools or classroom teachers but they are not beyond the control of governments,” he said. “They require changes in policy. We cannot keep doing what we have been doing and expect performances to improve.”

Prof Masters said Australia had “increased spending on schools and seen standards decline”.

The answer was to target resources on effective strategies.

“The challenges we face in school education transcend state borders, school sectors and political parties,” he said.

“They require a national conversation that includes parents and the business community about what we want from our schools followed by a sustained commitment over decades.”
PASSION FOR HASS

- Strong and barely controllable emotion - impetuous passion

NEED TO QUESTION WHETHER ... AM I BIASED AND REALLY JUST PUSHING THE HASS BARROW AS AN EGO-CENTRIC INDULGENCE?
Making sense of our world
Does it matter? 

FROM WHENCE WE HAVE COME? 

How much is enough?

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

How do you decide core knowledge?

Is Google a satisfactory alternative?
To think about and respond to issues requires an understanding of the key historical, geographical, political, economic and societal factors involved, and how these different factors interrelate – HASS provides this – where else in the curriculum do we provide such learning?

An interesting question: What would a parent say when asked:

“What would you like your child to acquire from their schooling?”

- passion for learning
- desire to serve and make a difference
- ability to see connections
- thinking divergently and creatively about problems/solutions
- ability to demonstrate empathy for others
- desire to act morally and ethically across all aspects of life

Literacy and numeracy are a given but in what order the others?

Where do students acquire these other aspects seen as valuable by parents during their schooling?
The case for Humanities in the curriculum

• “For students to be successful in today’s global economy, utilitarian and liberal education need to be tightly coupled, and that students’ academic, developmental, interpersonal and experiential lives are entwined.”

• Such questioning of the utilitarian trend in education around the world is critical when we consider the decrease in curriculum time for humanities in schools - perceived ‘non employment direct’ subjects such as history, geography etc (in fact these subjects do have significant and much needed career pathways but often not seen as direct and thus not promoted as getting a student a job).
THE CRITICS SAY...

Critics accuse the Humanities of lacking cultural or economic relevance.

They say the Humanities have no purpose.

They say our academic work is inaccessible to the public.

They say that Humanities students are not immediately employable.

They say in times of economic recession resources should not be spent on the study of the human condition.

They say the Humanities are in crisis.
Anecdotally the trend away from the liberal humanities in school education, towards the demands of a utilitarian education, in particular in senior secondary, is common throughout the western world and similar OECD countries to Australia.

Those involved in humanities education consider that the trend away from the humanities towards utilitarian education in our schools (and universities) is undermining and threatening the development of a ‘well-rounded, thinking, socially analytical young citizen ready for the demands of the 21st Century globalised world.'
In addition to a focus on literacy and numeracy, the 2016 education landscape is all about STEM or in some places STEAM.

I hear people say that there is a place for humanities education in STEM - I worry. Surely the conversation should be about a balanced curriculum and not about putting a square peg in a round hole to justify it!

But if we have to play the STEM card, then maybe we call it THEAMS and make sure that the STEM 'push' has the arts and humanities in the mix - not presuming all will see hums as part of the arts!

"... it is a mistake to try to separate STEM and the social sciences ... they are both stronger together. It also requires that arts be included in the curricula to capture the full potential of the whole brain. The future economic cost of not having a whole-brain education system that fosters creativity and innovation is immense."

American Academy of Arts and Sciences 2015
WHAT THE HUMANITIES DO

The Humanities are about what it is to be human.

They foster social justice and equality.

They teach empathy.

The Humanities teach us to deal critically and logically with subjective, complex, imperfect information.

They teach us to weigh evidence skeptically, and consider more than one side of every question.

Understanding others in the world through their LANGUAGES, HISTORIES, & CULTURES.

They reveal how people have tried to make moral, spiritual, and intellectual sense of the world.

The Humanities develop informed and critical citizens.

Without the Humanities democracy will not flourish.

Humanities students build skills in writing and critical reading.

The Humanities encourage us to think creatively. They teach us to reason about being human and to ask questions about our world.

The value of the Humanities is more often in the questions posed than the answers found; Humanistic study is not formulaic.

One only needs to turn on the news to see that we need the skills and knowledge of the humanities in:

- understanding other cultures,
- being able to communicate effectively,
- realising the ramifications of history, and
- analysing human behaviour.

UCL Centre for Digital Humanities
University College London
Why the humanities are important – an unfinished list!

The humanities:
• help us understand others through their languages, histories and cultures.
• foster social justice and equality.
• reveal how people have tried to make moral, spiritual and intellectual sense of the world.
• teach empathy.
• teach us to deal critically and logically with subjective, complex, imperfect information.
• teach us to weigh evidence sceptically and consider more than one side of every question.
• helps students build their skills in writing and critical reading.
• encourage us to think creatively. They teach us to reason about being human and to ask questions about our world.
• develop informed and critical citizens. Without the humanities, democracy could not flourish.
**But the evidence shows...**

A 2012 survey of 652 U.S. born Chief Executive Officers and Heads of Product Engineering showed almost 60% had degrees in the Humanities.

A study of 100 FTSE companies’ CEOs showed that 34% studied the arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and 31% had a Science and Technology background.

In 2011, of the 650 UK Members of Parliament 5% had a vocational degree and 10% had a scientific qualification. 65% had an Arts, Humanities or Social Science degree.

It has been estimated that the economic importance of UK universities amounts to £45bn annually.

On average Humanities graduates have a comparable employment rate to graduates with other degrees:

- 94.4% National Employment
- 94.6% History graduates
- 96.4% of graduates in Theology and Religious Studies employed

The underinvestment in language skills costs the UK economy a minimum of £25bn annually.

The total annual economic benefit to the UK from non-UK Arts and Humanities students is approximately £2.7 billion per year.

Over two thirds of Humanities and Social Science graduates enter the private sector, primarily the financial and business sectors, followed by wholesaling and retailing.

These sectors represent some of the fastest growing sectors within the economy.

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UCL Centre for Digital Humanities
University College London

Despite these benefits, in the USA in 2010, just 0.45% of federal research money went to the Humanities.

Between 2007 and 2013, European Commission Funding to the Social Sciences and Humanities was just 1.06% of their total research budget of £55.51 bn.
through studying Humanities and Social Sciences, students will develop the ability to question, think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, make decisions and adapt to change

- the key ideas of HASS helps students to learn:
  - who we are, who came before us, and traditions and values that have shaped societies
  - how societies and economies operate and how they are changing over time
  - the ways people, places, ideas and events are perceived and connected
  - how people exercise their responsibilities, participate in society and make informed decisions

It requires retraining teachers to educate about how to deal with ambiguities and nuances – how to think conceptually and creatively and how to construct or deal with abstract issues instead of so much of the emphasis being on teaching facts. Teachers will need to teach our students to ‘think’.

American Academy of Arts and Sciences 2015
WHAT DO YOU SEE?

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU ASK?

HOW WE SEE THE WORLD AROUND US
A WAY OF THINKING ABOUT HASS LEARNING

The vocabulary of HASS subjects

The geographical vocabulary is a means to an end and not an end in itself!

The grammar of HASS subjects

The conceptual understandings involved in thinking in HSS subjects
In 1995 Stoll in a Newsweek article predicted that the Web would be a font of misleading information and outright lies, that it would be oversold as a tool for education and governing, and that it would isolate people more than bring them together.

Data is not information, information is not knowledge, knowledge is not understanding, understanding is not wisdom.

- Clifford Stoll

I think we risk becoming the best informed society that has ever died of ignorance.”

~Reuben Blades
HASS THINKING THROUGH THE CONCEPTS

The grammar of the HASS subjects is what is most important in HASS – to develop understanding and hopefully potential for citizen wisdom.
“Concepts are to us like the air we breathe. They are everywhere. They are essential to our lives, but we rarely notice them. Yet only when we have conceptualized a thing in some way, only then, can we think about it.”

http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/thinking-with-concepts/525
Meaning making

“We approach virtually everything as something that can be given meaning by the power of our minds to create a conceptualization and to make inferences on the basis of it.”

http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/thinking-with-concepts/525
All "content" involves concepts. There is no way to learn a body of content without learning the concepts which define and structure it. There is no way to learn a concept without learning how to use it in thinking something through. Hence, to learn the concept of democracy is to learn how to figure out whether some group is functioning democratically or not.

http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/thinking-with-concepts/525
The concepts are the lenses through which students develop understandings in the HASS subjects. When we talk about the teaching of HASS subjects, it is not just about the content but how we approach the content.
HISTORICAL THINKING

- Empathy: Time and place, Difference, Individual, Perspective, Understanding, Role, Stories
- Perspectives: Compare, Differences, Contrast, Similarities, Influences, Stories, Power, Perspective, Place & Time, Commemoration, Celebration, Heritage, Effect
- Significance: Bias, Reliability, Power, Perspective, Place & Time, Commemoration, Celebration, Heritage, Effect
- Cause & Effect: Impact, Relational, Influence, Factors, Change, Reasons, Events
- Evidence: Bias, Sources, Reliability, Significance, Information, Primary sources, Usefulness, Opinion, Theories, Dynamic Development, Pace
- Contestability: Issue, Points of view, Perspective, Questioning, Discussion

- Continuity & Change: Then and now, Constant, Chronology, Short - long term, Sequence, Development
GEOGRAPHICAL THINKING
ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS THINKING

- Resources: Production, Sustainability, Natural/human capital, Producers, Capital, Trade-offs, Decisions
- Opportunity: Economic choice, Entrepreneurial, Markets, Finance, Work
- Choice: Opportunity

Diagram labels:
- Resources
- Consumerism
- Market
- Work
- Opportunity
- Choice
CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP THINKING

- Equity: Beliefs, Inclusion, Fair-go, Traditions, Diversity, Justice, Ethics
- Social order: Authority, Sustainability, Social control, Law enforcement, Rules/Laws, Power, Decision-making, Contention, Values, Fairness, Ethics, Courts, Legal, Diversity, Equity
- Diversity: Identity, Multi-faith, Culture, Inclusion, Secular, Community, Multiculturalism, Cohesion, Perspectives, Political, Media, Opinions
- Contention: Values, Justice, Beliefs, Media, Decision-making, Perspectives, Political, Opinions, Ethics, Legal, Courts, Legal, Diversity, Equity
Conceptualising HASS Learning by Studying the Topic/Issue of …...

1. Collect all the information you know about ……

2. View through the ………………. concepts of:

3. Based on the concepts pose the geographical questions for inquiry (can?, should?, what if? why not?)

Impossible to not integrate the concepts within and across the HASS subjects when studying a topic/issue.
It is getting harder and harder in conversation to raise one or other of the most basic subjects in geography, history, civics and citizenship and economics without a flicker of panic crossing the other person’s face. You are not talking about neutral subjects. 

New Economist 2010
Conversations are something machines/computers cannot do! How often do they occur in classrooms?
The connection touchstones
The potential connectors for a connected HASS

- Concepts
- Assessment
- Inquiry approaches
- General capabilities
- Cross-curriculum priorities
- Content (knowledge, understandings and skills)
An obvious synergy between the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities and the aims of HASS

Where do the Australian Curriculum: General Capabilities most comfortably live in the curriculum?
THE PROFILE OF A HASS TEACHER

- Fundamental knowledge in the discipline based on relevant humanities data, information, knowledge and understandings

- A sound understanding of the thinking in HASS – conceptual understanding in the four subjects of Geography, History, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business – knowing how to think like a …..

- Confidence and ability to lead/facilitate a conversation in the classroom

- Enthusiasm for learning in the humanities

- Unquenchable curiosity and inquisitiveness – encourages inquiry

- Up to date with current affairs and media – eyes wide open to what is going on in the world

- Prepared to be a learner with the students on a breadth of humanities topics - can never know it all!

- Is ‘logged’ into what is relevant and important to students

- Prepared to say, “not sure about that, let’s find out”

- A story teller of the highest order – willing to share and expand on experiences

- Prepared to leave the classroom to extend student experiences in society

- … and all the rest as would be expected of a great teacher.
Target: the resources
Program development and considerations from the ACARA Shape paper: implied pedagogy

The Australian Curriculum: Geography should:

• involve field work
• involve inquiry based learning
• be intellectually challenging
• focus on depth of understanding rather than breadth of content
• not be value-free: contestable and dynamic

http://www.geogspace.edu.au/support-units/overview/supporting-overview.html
The role of the media in a democracy - unit of work

TLF-ID M009612

This is a unit of work about freedom of the press and the influence of the media in Australia and elsewhere. Intended for middle and upper secondary students, the unit is organised around the factors that influence the role of the media in a democracy - media ownership, truth in media, political interference in the media and the impact of new media. The unit contains five separate investigations and an extension activity in which students use their research findings to devise a media policy for...
Resources from the UK Geography Association

recommended by AGTA

http://www.geography.org.uk/

http://www.geography.org.uk/shop/
The Spatialworlds blog is a repository of teaching resources, images, commentary and website links for those interested in spatial education, spatial technology and geography in schools.

The app opportunity for the geography classroom


Related links to Spatialworlds
Geogaction
Spatialworlds website
GeogSpace
Australian Geography Teachers' Association website
Geographical thinking Scoop.it
Spatial literacy Scoop.it
History and geography Scoop.it
Spatial Education and technology Scoop.it
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Introduction

AC History Units presents 8 units developed by the History Teachers' Association of Australia to support teachers in the implementation of the Australian Curriculum: History.

The development of these units has been guided by a number of ideas:

- Unit 1, Teaching History, is a foundation unit, providing a brief introduction to the discipline of history. It 'unpacks' the skills and concepts, surveys approaches to teaching and provides an essential framework for the other units.

- Units 2-8 focus on topics relevant to particular year levels and are designed to provide very practical support in the form of teaching programs, sample 'learning sequences', a wide range of resources and assessment ideas.

- A learning sequence is a sequence of lessons (as opposed to separate learning activities) designed to give students an opportunity to develop skills and understanding in some depth. At the end of a learning sequence students should be equipped to demonstrate their learning by completing a substantial task, appropriate to their year level.

http://www.achistoryunits.edu.au
A great South Australian history site focused on the work of the suffragettes in South Australia.

http://www.suffragettes.sa.edu.au/
Primary School teachers at Parafield Gardens R-7 School have collaborated to develop an innovative teaching and learning program which focuses on the Economics and Business strand of the Australian Curriculum Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) learning area. Weebly software provided an ICT vehicle for them to design and build an Economics and Business and Civics and Citizenship website.

http://adelaidelawcourts.weebly.com

http://economicsandbusiness.weebly.com/
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