

## Amy Ross

***This paper aims to report findings from the South Australian HaSS Conference 2017, while highlighting how these findings will be corresponded and implemented in a primary school setting.***

On Saturday the 25<sup>th</sup> of February I was fortunate enough to attend the 2017 South Australian HaSS Conference. The opportunity to attend the conference was made possible by the Teachers Registration Board, who sponsored my attendance. As a recent graduate the conference was a fantastic chance to hear from and engage with HaSS enthuses. With an array of fascinating workshops on offer, I was given the opportunity to join three varied workshops of my choosing throughout the day. Allowing for an individualised professional learning experience.

The day began with an engaging presentation from keynote speaker Malcolm McLnerney. Malcolm spoke passionately about the imperativeness of the HaSS framework in students' present and future understanding, and its ability to foster critical and creative thinking in a 'real world' construct. Furthermore, asking educator to consider the validity of the consuming STEM framework when not equally coupled with the HaSS framework. Malcolm concluded his presentation by asking each of us to construct a 'sound bite'; a short answer that we could give when asked 'what is HaSS and why is it important?'

*My personal world and beyond* was the first of three workshops I attended at the conference. It concentrated on HaSS in the lower primary setting and the importance of rich inquiry based learning. During this workshop we discussed varying ways educators could foster student lead inquiry. Furthermore, how to build an environment that allows students to feel safe to question, wonder and even contend ideas.

The second workshop of the day *thinking in HaSS, all of HaSS* offered an informative insight in to all components if the HaSS curriculum. Malcolm McLnerney unpacked the foundation of the curriculum, particularly in the area of Geography, giving clear definition of the concept of place, space, scale, perspective and empathy. He again reiterated that through the HaSS curriculum conceptual understanding could give meaning in all other learning areas. In addition to this Malcolm shared a vast array of online resources that can assist in the planning for learning.

Furthermore, sharing tools that can be used to bring the world to the classroom or the past into the present.

The final workshop of the day was called *the bush classroom*. This workshop looked at engaging students with their local area by educating them about the plant life that surrounds them. In doing this it is suggested that students will take more interest in their local environments, additionally empowering them to become more actively involved in their local area. Touring native areas near to school, with an expert guide, will inform students of the natural diversity of their area. Such educative experience allow for student lead exploration permitting a unique learning experience.

As a recent graduate my employment currently consists of temporary relief teaching for two southern suburbs primary schools. As a history major at university and an educational HaSS enthuSES I often find myself in conversation with peers regarding how best to deliver that HaSS curriculum to students. The knowledge that I have gained from the HaSS conference this year will inform future discussions with colleagues. Furthermore, helping develop meaningful, conceptual learning experiences

In conclusion I would like to again extend my appreciation to the Teachers Registration Board for their sponsorship that permitted me to attend the South Australian HaSS conference. The experience has given me a more rounded understanding of the HaSS curriculum. Additionally, I feel it has developed a confidence within myself that will result in creating more innovative ways to creatively deliver learning experiences.

So in light of all that I have learnt I guess the question is what is my sound bite in reply to the question 'what is HaSS and why is it important'? The truth is I am not entirely sure. What I do know is that the HaSS framework imparts understanding of difference and change; it fosters empathy and builds resilience. The truth is we do not know what the future holds for today's students, but if we can equip them with the tools they need to be adaptable active informed citizens we are on the right track.