2017 HASS SA Conference Report

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The 2017 HASS SA Conference at UniSA Magill Campus started off with a bang!! A tremendous welcome from Malcolm outlining "hot-topics" in the HASS discipline and displaying his immense life-long passion for this learning area, followed by a heart-warming speech from a young-historian; stating the importance of Aboriginal perspectives. This was followed by 3 sessions, of our choice, discussing new HASS teaching methods that can be used within the classroom to boost engagement, highlighting some significant topics relevant to HASS, or sessions designed to further develop an understanding of historical skills for teachers to improve their professional practice. The day was filled with numerous opportunities to network with others in our field, to discuss teaching ideas, and to improve our pedagogical practice through the clarifying of curriculum requirements and the development/improvement of HASS learning and teaching skills.

Highlights of the day:

There were many highlights from the conference, however the following few have been carefully selected from a long list for you;

Welcome speech from Malcolm:

- His passion for HASS
- Clear, yet highly-developed ideas on the importance of HASS in schools
- Resources for teaching HASS (HumsTeach and other websites/blogs)
- Importance of teaching basics, such as source-analysis, in detail in the classrooms to better develop their historical skills
- Importance of understanding how different people view the world; history teachers vs geography teachers as an example (photo of a house in a field activity)

History Games session:

- Timeline game
- Historic celebrity heads game
- Timeline game with images
- Engaging ways to include these in the classroom
- Connections to curriculum requirements
- Highlighting the development of historical skills
- Developing student passion for history- by making it fun

Voting in the classroom session

Networking with fellow teachers/leaders in this field:

- Improve professional practice
- Develop new ideas
- Develop new perspectives
- Build relationships within the HASS community in South Australia

Things that I learnt:

- History games; word timeline, timeline images, historic celebrity heads
  - o Effective and engaging classroom games that ignite excitement around the depth-study and develops skills of inquiry/analysis.
- Importance of task design for student outcomes
  - o Creating clear task sheets helps with clarity for students and can cause the "marking" of their work to be clearer as their work can be more structured and clearer visibility of hitting performance/achievement standards.
- How the voting system works in politics, and how to teach students about it in the classroom context

Things that I will take back to my school to discuss with colleagues:

- History games; word timeline, timeline images, historic celebrity heads
- Importance of task design for student outcomes; and to also promote consistency of task design layout within the school/faculty
- How the voting system works in politics, and how to teach students about it in the classroom context

Things that I will implement into the classroom:

- History games (especially the timeline ones)
  - o To use as an introduction activity for a new topic, as a conclusive activity for a topic, and as a fun and engaging activity to promote inclusiveness in the classroom and ignite a passion for history - I have actually already used this activity for my school's open night as a fun activity with parents/future students.
- Clearer and more scaffolded task design (task sheet)
  - o To assist students to plan/develop their work, and to also reduce the amount of questions received about a task/assignment
- Voting in the classroom
  - o As a fun activity to incorporate into the Civics and Citizenship HASS unit and to also teach students about the voting system
- Collaborating with peers for task design/implementation of lessons

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the HASS Conference and am already looking forward to the 2018 date!!