

## **2017 HASS Conference**

My name is Geng Wang (Harry) and I am honoured to be selected as one of the few sponsored teachers by TRB to go to the HASS SA 2017 conference on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The following is my report featuring the highlights of the conference alongside the issues/quotes of interest to me, collected resources (both virtual and printed ones), and how attending this PD will benefit my teaching and learning as a teacher. There is an appendix at the end of this report with the list of photos that were taken in different workshops, showing the interactive activities in these sessions.

### **Highlights and Issues of Interest**

1. Leila Rankine Aboriginal Studies Award, 9:00am  
Phoebe Gordon the winner believes that 'Education has to start from somewhere'. She is impressed by the generosity of the Aboriginal people and by the dedication her tutor has shown to the cause. She argues that good work towards Aboriginal Studies should not stop but continue.
2. Keynote presentation by Malcolm McInerney: The place of HASS in the curriculum, 9:30-10:30am  
At the beginning of his speech McInerney posed some prompting questions to us: What is this HASS thing, what does it offer and what is HASS thinking. He challenged us to create a two-sentence soundbite to summarise our own understanding of what HASS is. Here is mine: HASS deals with who we are, what makes us human beings and what we would like our future to be.  
On one hand, there are hard skills such as knowledge understanding and skills that are easier to assess. On the other, there are soft skills like character traits, team spirits, assertiveness, trustworthiness, empathy and commitment that are more difficult to measure. McInerney argues that 85% of job success comes from being competent in these soft skills.  
He also advocates that teachers need to teach students to 'think'. To be fluent in HASS language, it is essential for students to be competent both in the grammar of HASS (understandings) and in the vocabulary of HASS (knowledge and skills) because knowledge is not understanding, and understanding is not wisdom.
3. The ethics of hunting Pokemon and other creatures of the imagination, by Martyn Mills-Baynes, 11:00am-12:00pm  
The presenter believes that as the world we live in is getting increasingly complex and ethically challenging, it is necessary and morally important for children to think ethically and to become a caring, empathic and ethically informed learner.  
To help us and children understand what ethics is, we ask ourselves two questions: Should we do it? What ought we do? These are the questions we can ask our students in the classroom to encourage their ethical and critical thinking.  
In this workshop session, we had a classification activity. We were given 12 pictures of animals/plants and were asked to arrange them into a line on the floor based on how plenty we believe they are. The photo of this line can be found in Appendix 1. There were discussions and

even debates on where to position one animal on the scale. Of course for each proposal, logical justifications were given.

4. Visiting you, visiting me: what would people see, by Katie Silva, 1:30-3:00pm

We were shown a campaign video from 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism. Also in this workshop we had a hands-on activity which is my favourite learning experience. It is called 'A Sensory Visit to Places'. We were given 8 glass jars in which a smell-rich object is stored and a recording sheet. We had to open each jar, guess what each smell is and record our findings. What I liked most about this experience is that it builds connections between the smell and my memory (the people I knew, the food I've eaten and the places I've been to). It is such a powerful learning to me because it contributes to my understanding of who I am, where I come from, what I have experienced and where I have been to. Appendix 2 shows the photo of the activity that was taken at the workshop. Surely this is the experience I can plan for my students in the future.

5. Nature-based learning within the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary, by Julian Marchant and Ian Falkenberg, 3:00-4:00pm

This presentation gives a brief introduction of the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary and the programs it hosts. Educator's kit and lesson plans are obtained.

The general knowledge of bird migration is also made known: Birds breed in Siberia and N China from June to July each year for 6 weeks. They start to migrate south to Australia and New Zealand in August. The whole journey takes 8 weeks and they need to make a stopover in Yellow Sea. Then they stay in the south from Nov till Mar/Apr next year before they make their way back to the north. To make this epic journey possible, birds' bodies adjust to this long travel by desizing non-essential organs (digestive) and enlarging essential ones (hearts and lungs). This story is a perfect example to teach students resiliency (keep-going-ness) and adapting to the environment for survival and development.

### Collected Resources

- History Now 1: Present and Past Family Life (The resource book to teach Year 1 history, the cover of the book is included in Appendix 3)
- [www.scoop.it](http://www.scoop.it) by Seth Dixon (The online resource to teach geography)
- [www.gapminder.org](http://www.gapminder.org) (The online resource to teach the understanding of our world through using data)
- [www.geogospace.edu.au](http://www.geogospace.edu.au) by Australian Geography Teachers Association (The online resource to teach geography to F-10 students)
- [www.achistoryunits.edu.au](http://www.achistoryunits.edu.au) (An online resource to teach history to F-10 students)
- [Humsteach.blogspot.com.au](http://Humsteach.blogspot.com.au) (An online community for teachers to engage with professional learning in HASS learning area)

## **How will this PD contribute to my teaching and learning**

This professional development training will benefit me and my community in a number of ways.

First in the following week of the HASS conference, my handwritten notes were copied and shared with my colleague at school.

Secondly upon completion of this report, it will be forwarded to my line manager at site who will then share with all colleagues. The online resources shall give them more ideas to plan HASS lessons and the interesting quotes/questions will surely provide some food for thought by re-examining our take on HASS.

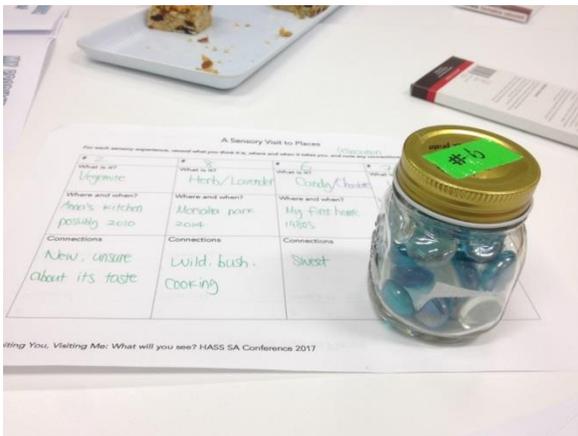
Inspired by the unforgettable sensory experience in one of those workshop sessions, with the help of my colleague, I have planned and delivered a series of history lesson for two year 1 classes. The planned activities is more hands-on than what I previously planned: students are given the chance to draw and to manipulate their drawings to make their family tree. A sample of student's work can be seen in Appendix 4.

## Appendix

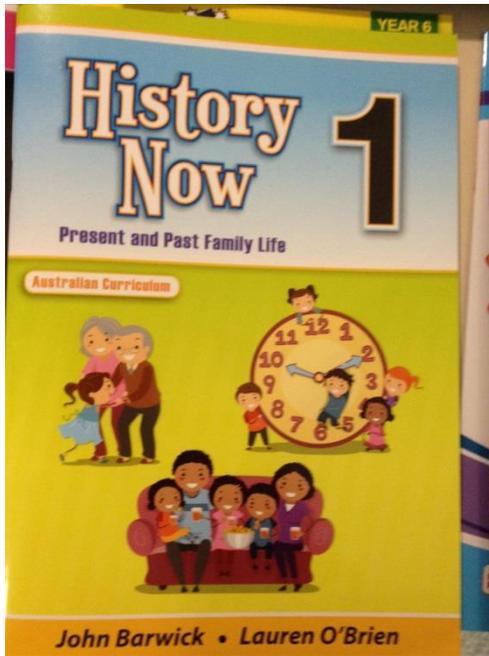
### Appendix 1: Classification activity



### Appendix 2: A sensory visit to places activity



### Appendix 3: The book of History now 1: Present and past family life



Appendix 4: The sample of a student's work

