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HaSS SA Conference 2017 Report

The HaSS SA Conference 2017 was a great event to attend as a graduate teacher. Having just started my full-time teaching career after relief teaching in Term 4 of 2016, I was overwhelmed by the amount of content that I will be teaching in 2017. I had planned to have specific lessons dedicated to the teaching and learning of HaSS learning areas. I had planned my lessons based on an engrained passion about teaching and learning about history and geography. I believe that students need to be taught these subjects in a holistic approach that enable children to develop their understanding about local and world histories and issues. Although I had planned, what I thought was, engaging lessons, I hadn't planned to explain to my students the importance of learning history and geography to help them become passionate about it as I was.

Mr. Malcolm McInerney, the Keynote Presenter emphasised the need for teachers to be able to answer the question 'What is that HaSS thing?' to students through engaging experiences. He also explained that before teachers are able to do that, they need to question themselves and their motives for teaching HaSS. Another point that I found interesting was the challenge that we face as educators to develop 'well-rounded' individuals who possess the 'wisdom' not only understanding. While learning about facts about different places/ historical figures is important, we need to ensure that the students can relate this understanding to important events that had influential impacts on our modern world.

The following workshop 'Beyond my Personal World' enabled me to consider an effective strategy to engage my students and help them develop their knowledge more conceptually. Questioning is an essential conceptual development that allows students to investigate and present their main ideas to the class. When children are encouraged to pose questions about the world around them, they are also prompted to use their meta-cognitive functions, resulting in deeper understanding. One way of fostering this skill is by using real life images depicting people, food and other items, and inviting them to discuss what they notice and pose further questions that they would like to explore.

Another powerful idea that I learned from the workshop 'The Bush Classroom' was about the importance of exploring the students' immediate natural environments to learn about the

species that live there. With the overwhelming scientific evidence about climate change and the dramatic effects that have been appearing throughout the world, it is more crucial than ever to integrate teaching about our environmental sustainability. Teaching children to learn about how to best care for plants and animals is imperative for the survival of these living things into the future. This knowledge will equip children to become environmentally friendly and advocate for the safety of all living things.

Thank you for a great learning opportunity that enabled me to explore various ideas and strategies to help my students develop conceptual understanding and 'wisdom' to become responsible citizens of the world.