



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Science and Training



Department of
Education

Commonwealth History Project

Learning Circle

Circle name:	Ballarat & Region History Professional Learning Circle
Venue:	Gold Museum, Ballarat
Date /time:	Thursday 13 th July, 1.00pm – 4.00 pm
Facilitator:	Marion Littlejohn
Minutes:	Peter Hoban

Present: Marion Littlejohn, Peter Hoban, Annemarie Kierce, (Sovereign Hill Education Service) Michael Spurr, (HTAV) Sophie Fiusco, (Sebastopol SC) Ann Kane, Tony Barrett, (Damascus College), Kathleen Thomas, Leanne McLeod, (Ballarat SC Wendouree) Jane Diamond, Liz

Kaistens, Monica Nicholls, Ian Martin, David Westaway, (Alfredton PS) Linda McDonald, Margaret Adams, (Loreto College) Sandra Sinclair, (Geelong HS) Tim Bennett, Kieran Baxter Karina Leon, (St. Patrick's College)

Apologies: Shannon O'Shea (Ballarat SC East Campus)

Meeting Minutes			
Agenda Item	Description	Facilitator	Action
1	<p>History 2006 - Where are we at?</p> <p>Michael gave an overview of the aims of the Commonwealth History Project and how it can help teachers.</p> <p>Interesting to note, none of school-based participants had heard of the C'wealth History Project.</p> <p>Mentioned the current focus on the importance of history in political circles and Julie Bishop's recent comment that history should be taught from Prep – 12.</p> <p>All states are being encouraged to develop a cohesive approach and the feeling history will be a core subject in the proposed Australian Certificate of Education. All asked to watch for an announcement from the Federal</p>	Michael Spurr (Executive Director HTAV)	<p>Distributed Commonwealth History Project flier <i>Your Hot Link to History</i></p> <p>Michael stressed he not a VCAA representative but would endeavour to pass on the concerns of the group</p>

Meeting Minutes

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	<p>Minister when she opens the National Conference of History Teachers in Perth in October.</p> <p>Felt we would not receive the Progression Points for reporting on History until October (possibly the 16th) along with points for other subject areas.</p> <p>Michael asked reps to report on state of VELS implementation in their schools.</p> <p>Alfredton PS: had just completed VELS reports on all subject areas</p> <p>All agreed the exercise was a <i>"nightmare"</i></p> <p>Had to report on 16 Domains – unrealistic, too onerous, created a huge amount of paper work for teachers.</p> <p>In general, teachers also felt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the process was far too time consuming• there was little relationship across Domains• worried the pressure to make judgements hurriedly can lead to mistakes		

Meeting Minutes

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the curriculum doesn't match the reports so had to gather a huge amount of data in order to report on the Standards• too many students got Cs• no incentive for above average students as only got C anyway. <p>Parents liked the written reports and large amount of information but didn't like letter grades A-D.</p> <p>There was concern as to what teachers were going to write in November for grade 6 students in the area "What our school will do for your students next year" when students leaving the school!</p> <p>Loreto College, Ballarat SC and Geelong High felt it was too hard to get an A. Some schools gave none as didn't feel any students at that level. Felt the present system discouraged students and gave them no incentive to try harder as they would get a C whatever they did.</p> <p>St Patrick's concerned that if you gave a year 7 student an A they might feel they had already achieved year 8 level and not try the next year. Fear giving an A would cause students to "slacken off". Also concerned too many students got C.</p> <p>Some schools said teachers not willing to give an A because of fear of legal</p>		

Meeting Minutes

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	<p>ramifications.</p> <p>Sebastopol SC wondered if it wasn't hypocritical to assess students on an A-E continuum while trying to promote engagement and individual differences as an ideal. They felt current middle-years research tells us adolescents make very little academic progress in Year 9 and this should not be the focus of school assessment. It goes against individual student learning plans.</p> <p>There was general confusion over progression points. Were they to be imposed or can schools create their own? If so, the aim of comparison and conformity across schools is lost.</p> <p>There was concern over who in secondary schools responsible for reporting on thinking. Michael felt as History teachers, we should be in an excellent position to report on thinking and reasoning skills as this a key feature of the discipline.</p> <p>General feeling the implementation of VELs had been botched. Introduced too rapidly before it was ready. Schools were being asked to do too much, too quickly, with too little guidance. Teachers were stressed, frustrated and very angry.</p>		

Meeting Minutes

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2	<p>Developing and Implementing an Inquiry based learning unit for Year 8/9 History students at Sebastopol SC</p> <p>Sophi presented a stimulating report on a history research unit where students had to respond to a challenging statement about life on the 1850's goldfields by creating a short film.</p> <p>Films were shot on location at Sovereign Hill and had to be historically accurate and have a message or theme. Students had to work in teams, research the historical background, create storyboards, delegate tasks and edit and produce a finished short film.</p> <p>The activity encouraged student participation, led to impressive results and met several VELS outcomes.</p> <p>It was interesting to hear of a way of engaging students, especially some non-academic students, in a non-threatening way by using film as the outcome and still achieving recognisable learning outcomes.</p>	Sophi Fiusco	
3	<p>Learning through Objects</p> <p>Marion ran a short hands-on activity using rubbish unearthed from a Ballarat garden to show how history is all around us (especially in Ballarat) and you</p>	Marion Littlejohn	

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	<p>can use simple found objects to stimulate students.</p> <p>The group had a short tour of parts of the Gold Museum focusing on how to use paintings and photos as Primary sources.</p>		
4	<p>Where to Now?</p> <p>The group wants help with implementing VELs.</p> <p>Marion to invite a speaker involved in writing the History progression points to speak (Possibly Annabelle Astbury from the HTAV) plus a teacher from a local school to speak on their VELs journey.</p>	Marion Littlejohn	Marion to organise time for next meeting, contact a guest speaker and inform group members
5	<p>Next meeting</p> <p>Thursday 7th September Gold Museum 4.00 – 5.30</p>		



Commonwealth History Project

Learning Circle

Circle name:	Ballarat & Region History Professional Learning Circle
Venue:	Gold Museum, Ballarat
Date /time:	Thursday 12 th October , 4.00 – 6.00pm
Facilitator:	Marion Littlejohn
Minutes:	Peter Hoban

Present: Marion Littlejohn, Peter Hoban, Tim Sullivan, (Sovereign Hill Education Service), Roger Trudgeon (Ballarat Gold Museum) Doug Bradby, (Ballarat SC), Julie Bradby (Black Hill PS), Jenny Dyer (Mt Pleasant PS), Michael Ward (Sovereign Hill School), Peter Rix, Margaret Adams, Linda McDonald (Loreto), Chris Gardner (Ballarat Grammar), Ann Kane, Sonia West, Trish Rowe, Molly Cleary (Damascus), Kerry Howard (Ballarat SC East), Pat Hincks (DE&T)

Apologies: Kieran Baxter St Pats, Gerard Mackling, Brendan Bawden, Nicole Burgess, Damascus, Beth Burgess Mt Clear SC, Marg Ferguson, Loreto.

Minutes

Progression Points

Pat Hincks, Curriculum Manager, Humanities. VCAA, spoke on the recently released History Progression Points.

Progression Points are for advice and are not obligatory, they are a guide only. The Standards are compulsory, not the Progression Points.

Pat gave rundown on history of their development but stressed implementation of Progression Points was a school decision.

Progression Points are:

- not a way to organise your curriculum
- the result of a long process involving much consultation
- not compulsory – teachers have to rely on their own judgements
- descriptors with examples
- only a guide
- a teacher's best guess of a learning continuum leading to the standards.

Progression Points are NOT

- indicative of progression of all students
- standards
- a checklist
- a syllabus.

Teachers need to assess according to evidence in students portfolios.

Assessment Maps

Assessment Maps were explained as a collection of annotated work samples to demonstrate what work at a particular level looks like. An example was shown.

National developments in history curriculum

Pat also spoke on national developments in history curriculum for Years 9 and 10, including the national push for standardised curriculum.

There will be nationwide sample assessment of Civics and Citizenship in 2007. No one attending had been involved in such sampling yet. We will get a National Statement of Learning for Civics and Citizenship soon.

National assessments will be done in Civics, English, Maths, Science and ICT.

Group discussion

There was a break for tea and coffee at 5.00pm, and then we broke into groups for discussion.

Primary teachers listened to Julie Bradby, from Black Hill Primary, explain how they have successfully integrated History into their new student centred learning curriculum.

Secondary groups discussed assessment issues with Pat Hinks.

Meeting concluded at 5.50pm.