

## EDSS428- Assignment 1 Exposition on Social Issue

By learning through Humanities, students are developing to be active and informed citizens. This is developed through focusing on highly valued social issues, such as Water Usage, in conjunction with the skills of collaboration, communication, reflective thinking, self-direction, flexibility, and creativity. This encourages students to be actively engaged in the world around them (**Reynolds, 2014**). In terms of pedagogy, an integrative approach is arguably most effective in order to form meaningful and authentic student learning.

The social issue of Water Usage is relevant to the teaching of Humanities on a local community, national, and global level, as well as to Primary school students. Whether this be related to drought, flood, access to clean water, or the cost, Water Usage is relevant to these levels, as according to **Gilbert (2014)**, it explores the geography, economics, and civics and citizenship components of Humanities. For instance, at a global level, students would investigate water accessibility around the world, and how developing countries compare to developed countries. This connects to Australia's recent circumstance of drought (2002-2007), and areas of flooding in Queensland and New South Wales in 2013, and how this has affected our environment and actions. **Gilbert (2014)** supports that as part of an authentic Humanities curriculum, it requires to be integrative, meaning it draws on various human experiences including current events both global and local examples, and students' own lives. This would lead into the exploration of Australia's water conservation, infrastructure, growth of population, and the cost of water. At a local level, this links to where our water comes from, how it reaches the tap, and initiatives in the local community to save water. In relation to Primary school students, they would investigate where our water comes from, how we use it, and whether Australia has changed its attitude towards its water usage, and if so, why. According to **Reynolds (2014) and ACARA (2013)**, students need to develop intercultural competence in order to make

connections between their world and others, which helps students to engage in diversity and encourage values of tolerance, understanding, and respect.

Water Usage is not only relevant to the teaching and learning of Humanities in Primary schools, but also has various applications across the range of the curriculum. As previously stated by **Gilbert (2014)** an authentic and engaging Humanities curriculum is integrative, this is further explored by **Hart (2015)**, who argues that a 'discipline-based learning enables cross-disciplinary learning' that enhances the student's learning. This is encouraged by **AusVELS (2015)** which aim for students to effectively develop skills, knowledge, and understanding to engage in the wider world and current issues by learning through the cross-curriculum priorities. The social issue of Water Usage covers several Disciplinary-based Learning areas, including; Geography, Economics, and the Domain of Civics and Citizenship (**AusVELS, 2015**). This is especially relevant in teaching the upper years of primary school, particularly Year 5, as students becomes more active and engaged citizens, and develop these skills in aforementioned learning areas. In regards to Geography, this is evident as students are expected to investigate natural processes in Australia, such as rainfall, droughts, floods, and how people respond to and impact the environment. This is further explored through environmental issues and considering possible solutions to current and future problems in a goal to provide a sustainable future (**AusVELS, 2015**).

In relation to Economics, students will understand scarcity in terms of our needs and wants, yet recognising that our resources are limited. Students explore how these resources are used and learn about consumption, production, and distribution of resources in connection to us as consumers (**AusVELS, 2015**). This is particularly relevant to Australia's water usage in the last decade, due to drought, which altered Australia's views

and actions towards how we use our water, which led to water conservation initiatives. As consumers, the cost of water is an issue that impacts our actions and further encourages us to conserve water.

In the Domain of Civics and Citizenship (**AusVELS, 2015**), students will understand how we are influenced by local, national and global decisions and movements, including issues of sustainability. Through this, students investigate and explore ways to protect the environment together as a society, and work together to influence positive change in the environment. Similarly to Geography, students explore possible solutions to current issues.

However, while this issue has been planned for upper primary levels, it can be adapted for middle and lower primary levels. For example, at Level 2, students observe and think about environmental differences at local, national, and global levels, and how we manage our resources. Also, students take responsibility for school activities such as water usage. At Level 4, students understand how to improve their local environment such as water saving. Additionally, students develop awareness of human impact on the environment and their lives through investigating water resources and consumption (**AusVELS, 2015**).

Naylar (**2014**) explains that the curriculum content should be used as a foundation for schools to adapt for their contexts in order for students to develop into confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. Therefore, various teaching and learning strategies can be implemented to effectively engage students to learn and understand the issue, Water Usage. The first learning strategy that will be explored by students is the K-W-L-H Chart (**Facing History and Ourselves, 2015**). First of all, this will act as a pre- and post assessment to evaluate students' learning and progress, as well as for them to connect new understandings. A second strategy that can be implemented in

the context of Humanities and the issue of Water Usage is, Word Wall (**Facing History and Ourselves, 2015**), that would help students to understand meaning and terminology in context. For instance, terminology such as reservoir, treated water, drought, water conservation, irrigation, and consumption, help students create meaning as they comprehend and interpret new ideas. Another strategy, Think-Pair-Share (**Facing History and Ourselves, 2015**), gives students opportunity to discuss possible solutions to the issue Water Usage, and articulate their understandings and engage in meaningful learning. For example, students will respond to a covered sub-topic of drought, and discuss and reason when, where, and why the drought occurred, and how Australians reacted. These strategies can be used as informal assessment of anecdotal records to measure students ability to comprehend and communicate their understandings.

It is evident that Water Usage relates to many areas of the Humanities curriculum. Therefore, it can be adapted across the Primary school levels by manipulating objectives and using teaching strategies for students to effectively understand and connect new ideas to become active and informed citizens.

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