

# Secondary Student Achievement PLD

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## National Newsletter: Social Sciences

Information and resources for middle leaders in secondary schools | Term 2 2016

Kia ora, Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei, Kia orana, Talofa ni, Faka'alofa lahi atu, Ni sa bula, Greetings.

Welcome back to term 2! We hope that you all had a lovely and well-deserved break and that you are re-energised for another busy term ahead.

The SSA national workshops concluded for 2016 at the end of term 1 and have proved to be, overall, hugely popular and successful through the country. The resources and strategies that were used are available on the [Wikispace](#) or through either a Google Drive or OneNote platform if you were unable to download them on the day. To access these please contact [Lara](#).

In this newsletter we look at:

- The collecting of evidence for internal assessment; and
- The use of dialogue in the classroom through a classroom practitioner's eyes.

Please share this newsletter with your colleagues, and get in touch if you need any additional or further information, or you have some feedback for us.

Ngā mihi nui  
Lara and Gill

## Conference opportunity 2016

KA WHAWHAI TONU MĀTOU, AKE, AKE, AKE  
WE WILL FIGHT ON, FOREVER AND EVER



The 2016 NZHTA conference provides a wealth of professional learning opportunities for History teachers. This year Hana O'Regan, a highly influential New Zealander who speaks passionately about the importance of Māori heritage, features alongside Stan Howard and Dr Clarence Lusane, both highly acclaimed American academics speaking about Black civil rights.

There will be breakout sessions from notable historians on the topic of women's rights, disability rights, slavery and resistance in Nazi Germany; and hands on sessions which explore teaching approaches for Māori History, the Holocaust, Apartheid and Scholarship.

In addition to this, we will have sessions from the National Library and Digital NZ who will talk teachers through how to use these resources more effectively with their classes.

<http://www.nzhta.org.nz/>

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## Subject associations

[Commerce and Economics Teachers Association Inc](#)

[NZ Association for Classical Studies Teachers](#)

[NZ Board of Geography Teachers](#)

[NZ History Teachers' Association](#)

[NZ Association of Psychology Teachers](#)

[NZ Association for Philosophy Teachers](#)

[Religious Studies Teachers Association of Aotearoa NZ](#)

# Teacher understandings and promotion of dialogue in Social Studies classrooms

## Bringing research to life in our teaching practice

By Callum Green, HOD Social Sciences, One Tree Hill College

Using 'talk' is one of our main instructional tools as teachers. So the question is - are we using it as effectively as possible in the classroom?

Dialogue or discussion is a *mutually constructed* process where ideas are exchanged. It is a social process that is ideally suited to extending and supporting student thinking and learning. Using dialogue as a tool, students get a feel for their own understandings and whether or not these understandings make sense. Students can engage in dialogue with their teacher and other students. It gives them a chance to vocalise their thoughts and attain understanding they would not have gained individually. Mutually constructed, collective knowledge created by the group or class is greater than that of the individual.

### The research methodology

I researched three teachers from a successful Social Sciences department in Auckland. The research was observational and there weren't any interventions. I simply wanted to see; how teachers encouraged dialogue in the classroom; what they saw as factors that encouraged dialogue; and what factors they thought made dialogue challenging.

### What I discovered

1. For a majority of the time observed, teachers asked closed questions that didn't facilitate dialogue. This is called **IRE**. A teacher **Initiates** a question, a student **Responds** with an answer and then the teacher **Evaluates** the answer by saying 'yes' or 'no' (correct or incorrect answer). Questioning did not elicit alternate views.
2. While there were instances when students were asked to help each other with task completion, there was no group work observed within the lessons delivered.
3. Teachers dominated talk in the classroom. There were limited opportunities for students to contribute and, as a result, students were largely passive participants.
4. Teacher talk focused on task completion. All the tasks observed were individual, limiting opportunities for dialogue.
5. "Hands Up" was used all the time, which meant certain students dominated.
6. Teachers interviewed explained that they felt that they did not know how to teach for discussion and felt it was in the "too hard basket" as often discussion turned a bit "chaotic".

### Suggestions for incorporating dialogue in the classroom

- Complex tasks are an ideal opportunity for dialogue. If the task is easy, why would a student need to engage in dialogue?
- Open statements, as opposed to questions, require students to back up their viewpoint and opinions.
- Using 'hands up' often means calling on the same students. Removing this completely from the classroom means all students should be ready to contribute and be given the opportunity to do so.
- The traditional transmission of information or 'content-led' approach is still relied upon too heavily. The New Zealand Curriculum gives us the flexibility to create lessons and activities that engage and involve our students as active participants in their learning. Let's use it!

New Zealand teachers currently don't receive formal training in facilitating discussions. If you're interested in learning more, I'd encourage you to take up any opportunities you can.



Teachers at a national workshop in Whangarei wear their 'perspective glasses' to argue if Donald Trump is a threat to world peace. The workshop gave teachers the opportunity to explore the value of whole class discussions. The workshops explored and critiqued establishing the pre-conditions for effective classroom dialogue, teacher responses, as well as student activities to enhance the understanding of perspectives. A key learning was the role of 'authentic questions' in generating rich discussion – those questions where the teacher does not know the answer.

## National workshops

Thank you to all of the participants in our 2016 national workshops to date. As facilitators we really enjoy developing workshops that we hope will challenge and engage teachers and provide you with a platform to meet new people and take away new ideas.

This year our theme was around classroom conversations or discussion and how to run these, with some practical suggestions, strategies and templates for building student confidence in speaking up and some ways to develop more in-depth classroom discussions.

We are always interested in your feedback about these workshops and would welcome your ideas for possible workshops in 2017, so we would like to invite you to email us with these. A formal survey will be emailed out to people later in the year.

Some further activities and links to some of those referred to in the workshop, along with some readings, are below, and on the last page of this newsletter is a column with links out to the digital platforms that can be used for discussion.

### Philosophical Chairs

There is a nice wee clip [here](#) for setting ground rules for these.

### Five ways to make classroom discussion more exciting

This page has a further five strategies that could be adapted by teachers to fit their classroom.

### Discussion Wheels

This activity allows students time to think and formulate their opinion before contributing to a class discussion. As the evidence shows many of our students like to have this time before committing to an opinion.

### Jigsaw Classroom

This is an interesting strategy that could work very well in the lead in to discussion as it is co-operative, collaborative and all students get to have a say

### Discussion Webs

These provide a structure by which students can engage with text to consider the different perspectives around an issue prior to holding a discussion and drawing conclusions - again a task that could be adapted to meet the needs of individual classes.

If you have any additional feedback for us about these workshops please contact us.

## Thinking outside the square in the collection of evidence for assessment

The latest Conditions of Assessment from the Ministry of Education provide interesting food for thought. In the generic section at the beginning of each subject page it states:

*It is also recommended that the collection of evidence for internally assessed standards should not use the same method that is used for any external standards in a programme/course, particularly if that method is using a time bound written examination. This could unfairly disadvantage students who do not perform well under these conditions.*

How many of us sit our students down with an assessment booklet and get them to complete it in a given time frame under exam conditions? Yes – it ensures authenticity and ensures submission but can we think of other ways that provide a valid, authentic assessment of a student's understanding?

We asked some of our Social Science moderators this question. While there was not one method they said was more effective than another, they made a number of points:

- When students are given the choice about how to present they often see a greater depth of understanding.
- Using visuals can help demonstrate understanding of concepts. Digitally presented work allows students to easily insert maps, graphs and other visuals to support their ideas. (Be wary of PowerPoints on their own however, as these can sometimes be too simplistic to gain the higher grades).
- Oral reports with accompanying PowerPoints or other presentation tools can be effective, especially when the student includes responses to questions as well.
- In terms of contexts, the more local and connected to students' lives the more engaged they seem to be.

### Digitising the Collection of evidence

As the march towards online assessment continues to gather pace in externals, what does this mean for internal assessment, particularly in English rich subjects like those in the Social Sciences? Online collection and submission of assessment for external moderation is one means we may have for simplifying the moderation process.

Some schools are already addressing the issue of getting all evidence in digital format by having their students copy and paste relevant evidence into templates, in History for example, which include space for them to add source details and annotations. This ensures that the only evidence recorded is that which the student regards as relevant. Should the evidence selected be in hard copy, it is possible for students to take a photo of the extract, paste this into the appropriate space and annotate and source from there.

Both Google and OneNote provide the means for students to collect evidence for assessment now. Using OneNote's screen-capture tool allows students to grab the evidence being looked at onscreen, send it to OneNote, and once there, anything that is typed text can be turned straight back into editable text. This can then be sent to the likes of an evidence recording template of the sort referred to above. Google also has a screenshot tool that allows for images to be placed into editable documents and then annotated and sourced.

Online submission can be done via Google Drive and OneNote as well, so that if your students are submitting fully digital assessments these can be shared with the moderator. Information about this can be found on the website [NZQA](http://nzqa.govt.nz).

This is a topic we'd like to explore further, especially looking at ways evidence can be collected over time and ways one activity can be used to collect evidence for several standards.

If you've experimented successfully with some different methods of collecting evidence we'd love to hear from you and share it with others via this newsletter.

## Clarifications/Conditions/Specifications

The above terms can be confusing so it's worth repeating who has produced them and for what purpose.

**NZQA** publish the **Clarifications**. They are written by the external Moderators and give advice to teachers about each internal achievement standard related to their subject. They are the result of areas of weakness or confusion that the Moderator has noticed while moderating work from schools. Before writing any assessment, this should be the first thing you read!

The National Moderators also produce a newsletter four times a year which again draws people's attention to anything relevant to do with the assessment of the internal standards – changes in wording, common misunderstandings, upcoming workshops, modes of assessing etc. Make sure you check these out each quarter. The links are on your subject page.

The **Ministry of Education** publishes the **Conditions of Assessment**. These also support the internal achievement standards and should be read before writing any assessment. The introduction to the standards is similar now for all subjects but there is information specific to each internal as well. They focus on ways of gathering evidence of achievement and comment on authenticity. You can find these on your subject specific assessment resources page on **TKI** in the box titled Related Resources.

For the external achievement standards the important document is the **Assessment Specifications**.

These are published by **NZQA** at the beginning of each year and provide information about the examination of each standard at the end of the year.

They cover such areas as the format of the paper, specific content that may be examined and what students should bring to the exam. Again, the link is on your NZQA subject page.

Geography teachers should be aware of the changes to Level 2 and 3 identified in the latest Assessment Specifications.

All the Level 2 papers will have only one question with multiple parts. The Level 3 natural and cultural papers will have only one question rather than the choice of two as in previous years. In Level 1 students completing the Skills paper will need an understanding of Kaitiakitanga.

We welcome another teacher association to the Social Sciences fold. RSTAAANZ (Religious Studies Teacher Association of Aotearoa New Zealand) is now up and running. A website has been created and you are encouraged to register to join this association on the following link: <http://www.rstaanz.org.nz>

The objectives of RSTAAANZ are:

- To promote the study and teaching of Religious Studies;
- To provide a forum for those interested or engaged in teaching Religious Studies to express views, exchange ideas and share knowledge;
- To represent professionally the views of teachers of Religious Studies;
- To develop and promote professional learning opportunities for teachers of Religious Studies;
- To liaise with individuals, groups and other associations with an interest in promoting the study of religion and the aims of Religious Studies.

## Personal involvement in social action



Our Social Sciences curriculum asks our students to consider ways people make decisions and participate in social action. Students from Papatoetoe High School decided to experience this first hand, choosing to raise money for Sir Ray Avery's campaign to provide lifepod incubators designed specifically for use in developing countries.

Malcolm Neal, Head of Junior Social Studies at Papatoetoe High School, contacted Sir Ray wanting to get his school involved as soon as the campaign launched. "We teach our Year 9 and 10 students about social action, however the children don't usually get to put what they've learned to good use," says Malcolm. "The LifePod fundraiser is a fantastic opportunity to put these lessons into practice now."

The students raised \$4000, sufficient to buy two lifepods. These are destined for Nepal which is still recovering from the devastating earthquake.

If your school would like more information on LifePod Infant Incubators, and the Keep Little Hearts Beating campaign, you can send an email to [teamlifepod@gmail.com](mailto:teamlifepod@gmail.com)

## Useful tools, apps and links to aid dialogue

### [Todaysmeet.com](http://www.todaysmeet.com)

This is web-based backchannel that allows every student in your room a voice using a digital platform. All students can be actively engaging digitally using any device. You can use this for brainstorming, sharing group work, reviewing work, feeding back on reading or video, reviewing primary sources etc. Only those invited to be part of the discussion can access this, so it is private, able to be moderated by the teacher and has no advertising.

### [Peardeck.com](http://www.peardeck.com)

Peardeck allows teachers to display a presentation simultaneously through the data projector and on student devices. Within the presentation teachers are able to create interactive spaces where students can respond on their devices. These responses can then be then displayed through the projector in real-time or saved until later for teacher analysis. This allows for full class engagement in discussion and enables all students to participate.

### [Goformative.com](http://www.goformative.com)

GoFormative is marketed as a platform for formative assessment for use either at the beginning or end of a topic or lesson. However, it could also be used successfully to allow students a voice in discussion. By setting up an account teachers are able to add classes, and that then generates an access code for students. Once students are online they are given a text box for written answers or a white board for drawings. By selecting Live Results teachers are then able to see all the responses as they come in and are able to provide feedback and feed forward to students.

### [Kahoot](http://www.kahoot.com)

Kahoot allows teachers to create questions that can be asked online in real-time. While quizzes are the most popular use for Kahoot it can also be used as a discussion tool. By posing a single question, a discussion could be initiated based on a statement or question as posed by the teacher. Responses to the issue then appear onscreen and could be used as a lead in to a whole class discussion or conversation or debate.

### [Padlet](http://www.padlet.com)

A virtual wall, Padlet allows students to express their thoughts on issues being discussed or debated in class. There are a myriad of uses for this online tool in the Social Sciences, some of which can be found [here](#)