HUMANITIES TEACHING IN VICTORIAN SECONDARY TECHNICAL

SCHOOLS: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

by

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ABSTRACT

Important policy decisions, it seems, are frequently taken without

prior and careful assessment of the likelihood of successful implementa-

tion.

The theoretical assumption implicit in this study is that both the

ease and fidelity with which policy gets formulated into practice is

dependent upon some carefully thought through assessment of basic

questions such as: how receptive will those who are to be responsible

for their implementation be? do such persons have the requisite skills?

attitudes? is the surrounding infrastructure adequate?

The study focused upon a number of overarching questions which fall

into two major categories. First, which are the most important influences

in curriculum decision areas? What individuals, groups of people or

circumstances are seen by Humanities teachers themselves to have the

greatest influence? Second, in the opinion of Humanities teachers what

are the major problems they perceive to exist in their teaching speciality?

Humanities teachers clearly saw their colleagues who teach at the

same form (or grade) levels as influencing them most. Teachers of other

form levels were seen as next most important curriculum influencers.

Other individuals within schools, such as educational technologists and

careers officers and some curriculum support personnel from outside

schools such as regional consultants and method lecturers, were not seen

as generally having much influence on curriculum decisions. Groups such

as subject associations and subject standing committees were seen by

teachers as having relatively little influence on their curriculum

decisions.

The two problems which were identified by the greatest number of teachers as being serious are concerned with the lack of time. One is insufficient time for curriculum development, the other, not enough time for lesson preparation. Two other problems perceived as serious by many teachers concern insufficiencies in teacher education – both initial and in-service. Of the problems stated the two viewed as being least serious were 'the number of staff members with very little teaching experience' and staff 'turnover' from one year to the next.

There is one overriding observation that comes through as one reflects upon this study. And, that concerns the viability of decentralized, school-based curriculum decision making in secondary technical schools of Victoria. School-based curriculum decision processes require collaborative approaches and attitudes on the part of those involved. However, many of the findings seem to support the view that Humanities teachers really prefer to work on their own, to operate as solo practitioners. Consequently, initial teacher training and in-service education programmes need to acknowledge and develop the skills and attitudes required for collegial curriculum development processes.

What teachers need most for curriculum development is time – time for collaborative curriculum development activities and for lesson preparation, and increased provisions for appropriate in-service activities.

The data of this study raise certain questions about how effective key personnel such as principals and heads of department are in providing leadership in the curriculum development field or in establishing the appropriate milieu for school-based curriculum decision-making.

A further question raised is what resources is the Education Department willing to make available to ensure successful school-based curriculum development?

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

All too often important policy decisions get taken without first

making a careful assessment of certain critical matters.

The theoretical assumption implicit in this present study is that

both the ease and fidelity with which policy gets translated into

practice is dependent upon some carefully thought through assessment of

just such basic questions as: how receptive will those who are to be

responsible for their implementation be? do such persons have the

requisite skills? attitudes? is the surrounding infrastructure adequate?

supportive? does the implementation time framework allow sufficient time

for inputs from key personnel? is the scheme flexible enough to allow

for meaningful change in response to those inputs?

Most observers in Victoria, Australia would agree with this writer's

view that the decision in 1968 to decentralize curriculum responsibility

to the individual secondary technical school was made without an adequate

assessment of many of the factors outlined above.

In that year all secondary schools were asked by the central adminis-

tration to

> (a) Accept the principles of education (see Appendix A)
>   arrived at through the work of the Curriculum
>   Advisory Board and the State-wide Curriculum Project.
>
> (b) Use them as a basis for working out their own
>   educational programmes during 1969 for implementation
>   by stages beginning in 1970.
>
> (Curriculum Advisory Board, 1975:6)

More recently, however, it has been alleged that many technical

school's Humanities departments lack comprehensive curriculum documents

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and some even lack statements of rationale, and statements of aims or basic course outlines. Further, there are indications that duplication of topics taught from one year to the next, total or partial omission of important knowledge and skill areas, and the use of limited and inappropriate resources have frequently resulted. If there actually are such shortcomings, then it is quite likely that these contribute substantially to the reduction of teacher effectiveness and the quality of student learning. It would not be unexpected that in this situation, teachers and students would tend to lose enthusiasm and experience a lowering of morale.

This present study, while unable to turn the clock back to the period prior to the 1968 decision, aims to gather data on the attitudes which Humanities teachers have today toward the various aspects of the decentralized approach which was set in motion when that decision became a matter of policy of the Victorian Education Department. The study also attempts to assess the adequacy of the infrastructure for supporting and sustaining such decentralization.

But, first, what sorts of evidence exist which suggest that the 1968 decision was not, in fact, a sound one and which has not been successfully implemented. Admittedly, the evidence is sketchy.

There is, however, one recent report, which states that some submissions to the recent Curriculum Services Enquiry '... revealed that many schools are experiencing difficulties in implementing as well as selecting or developing new programs.' (Victorian Education Department, 1977b:65)

Again, an impression of the state of Humanities teaching can be gained from some introductory remarks in a recent address titled 'Humanities and the Total School Curriculum.'

> At the coal-face in the real world of the school, how are
> the Humanities defined there? The honest answer to that is, it
> depends where you look! One glance at school time-tables reveals
> a bewildering array of subjects such as Social English, Social
> Studies, Social Science, Integrated Studies, English, Humanities,
> Topic Studies, etc. The Humanities appear to be suffering an
> identity crisis and this has made it difficult to say with any
> certainty just what the Humanities are. And so I believe the
> time has come for us all to think seriously about what our
> objectives are in the Humanities. In saying this I realise that
> "objectives" is almost a dirty word among Humanities teachers.
>
> (Smith, 1976:1)

Diploma of Education trainees, who teach Humanities two days each
week in technical schools and spend the other three at the State College
of Victoria at Hawthorn, report that they find it very difficult to
gain from their school any clear statement of their department's aims
or objectives and only rarely, they claim, do course outlines or other
curriculum documents appear to exist. (Victorian Education Department,
1977a:356). These teacher-students very frequently reiterate the
observations concerning the state of Humanities teaching adumbrated
above.

Additional evidence is the self-confessed lack of understanding by
trainees concerning the nature of Humanities teaching at the conclusion
of their first year of teaching. (Auer, 1976)

The executive of the Victorian Association of Social Studies Teachers
(VASST), an important curriculum support agency for Humanities teachers,
appears to be aware of some of these problems and is presently considering
a series of 'workshops' for curriculum developers. The objective would be
to produce a range of course outlines for a total school social studies
programme which would be made available to teachers throughout the state.
This is seen by that association as a strategy to improve curricula in
the short term.

On the basis also of personal, in-school observations, discussions
and interviews with many teachers, administrators and teacher-students
during recent years, there appear to be some fundamental problems
related to curricula facing Humanities' departments.

PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

Implied in the above discussion is the suggestion that the difficulties
which seem to exist with Humanities curricula in technical schools, can
be at least partially overcome. In order that partial solutions may be
found, this study focuses upon a number of overarching questions which
fall into two major categories. First, which are the most important
influences in curriculum decision areas? What individuals, groups of
people or circumstances are seen by Humanities teachers themselves to have
the greatest influence? Second, in the opinion of Humanities teachers
what are the major problems they perceive to exist in their teaching
speciality? How closely do their perceptions agree with those frequently
aired or cited by observers?

Some further elaboration of these two major questions follows.

I.   Influencers in curriculum decision-making. Specific questions
include:

(1) What are the relative differences in influence among principals/
vice-principals, department heads, teachers, and various outside personnel
such as regional consultants and special method lecturers with respect
to what is taught and what materials are used?

(2) What degree of influence do groups (such as subject associations,
subject standing committees and mini-school groups) have upon curriculum
decisions of teachers in the Humanities?

(3) How often do teachers make use of those materials produced
by various curriculum support agencies (such as the Secondary Social
Science Project and the Social Education Materials Project, etc.)?

(4) What other factors are seen to influence the curriculum
decisions of Humanities teachers?

II. Major problems which teachers perceive exist in the Humanities
teaching area.

(1) What are the more serious problems facing Humanities teachers?

(2) What problems are viewed as being not serious?

This study would be less than helpful if it failed to include a
section on implications for the improvement of Humanities teaching in
Victorian technical schools. The final section proposes a number of
suggestions for the consideration of such bodies as the Technical Schools
Division of the Education Department, the various curriculum support
agencies and the Technical School Principal's Association.

DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

Before proceeding with a discussion of the findings, a word about
the data gathering procedures which were used.

The principal vehicle for collecting data was a ten-page questionnaire.
(See Appendix B) This questionnaire was developed using information and
ideas gleaned from an initial survey of twenty-eight teachers. An open-
ended type instrument was used for that purpose. (See Appendix C)

In July, 1977 approximately 1,500 questionnaires were sent to the
108 secondary technical schools in Victoria which offered courses in the
Humanities. Appendix D amplifies further why the entire population rather
than a sample was used for this study. Teachers who were not required

to identify themselves, had the option of returning the questionnaire either in batch or individually. While 803 questionnaires were finally received, only 608 were received in time to be included in this present analysis. Considering the length and complexity of the questionnaire and the time of year it was received in the schools, a response rate of over 50 percent is well above average.

The responses were coded and punched on computer cards at Royal Melbourne Insitute of Technology (R.M.I.T.) and several S.P.S.S. programmes were applied to the data. (Nie, and others, 1975)

CHAPTER II

INFLUENCES IN CURRICULUM DECISION MAKING

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Teachers were asked to indicate the degree of influence that

individuals, groups of people or circumstances have on decisions

about what they teach and what materials they use in their teaching.

Respondents were required to indicate the degree of influence as

either 'none at all', 'very little', 'some', 'a fair bit', or 'a great

deal'. The first two sections of this chapter deal with the perceived

degrees of influence of individuals and of groups of people. A later

section discusses other factors (or circumstances) which were perceived

as influencing curriculum decisions.

What Influence do Different Individuals Have?

A number of items within sections D and F of the questionnaire are

concerned with the perceived degree of influence of certain individuals

upon Humanities teacher's curriculum decisions. In order to gain a clear

impression of the degree of influence of certain selected people, figures

cited (unless otherwide stated) indicate the percentage of respondents

who felt that the individuals influenced them in their curriculum

decisions either 'a fair bit' or 'a great deal'. (See Table 1)

Table I

Who Are The Influencers?*

	On what is taught	On what materials are used
	%	%
Principals and/or Vice-Principals	2.5	2.3
Department Heads	23.7	20.1
Teachers of Same Form Level	46.4	39.9
Teachers of Other Form Levels	17.6	17.2
Others (Regional Consultants, School Careers Officers, Audio-visual Officer, Method Lecturers, School Librarians,[1] Educational Technologist)[2]	15.9	31.9

n=608

*Data reported reflects the collapsing of two columns: 'a fair bit' and 'a great deal'. (See Appendices E and F for result details)

1 and 2 - included only in column 'On what materials are used'.

Only 2.5 percent of teachers surveyed reported that principals or vice-principals influenced them 'a fair bit' or 'a great deal' in decisions about what they taught. Even fewer teachers (2.3 percent) indicated that principals or vice-principals were influencers in terms of materials used. Department heads were thought to be influencers in relation to what is taught by 23.7 percent of respondents and in relation to what materials are used by 20.1 percent of respondents. Humanities teachers clearly saw their colleagues who teach at the same

form (or grade) level as influencing them most. More than 46 percent

of teachers claimed that such colleagues influenced them in what they

teach while about 40 percent claimed such colleagues influenced them

in their selection of teaching materials. Teachers of other form levels

were seen as curriculum influencers regarding what is taught and materials

used by approximately 27 percent of respondents.

Other individuals within schools, such as educational technologists

and careers officers and some curriculum support personnel from outside

schools, such as regional consultants and method lecturers, were not seen

as generally having much influence on curriculum decisions. All such

individuals taken together were seen as influencing what is taught by

less than 16 percent of respondents. On the other hand, the school

librarian was perceived to be of considerable influence in the selection

of materials. Only 19.2 percent of respondents reported her/him as

having no influence at all, while 47.6 percent reported her/him having

at least some influence in relation to material selection. This is not

a surprising result in view of the percent of teachers (74) who claimed

that 'available resources' had either 'a fair bit' or 'a great deal' of

influence on their decision as to the substance of their teaching.

What Influence do Groups Have?

Micro/Mimi School Groups, the Drama Resource Centre, Subject Standing

Committees and Subject Associations were seen by teachers as having

relatively little influence on their curriculum decisions. (See Table

II and Table III).

Table II

What Degree of Influence Do Groups Have

On What Is Taught?

	None	Very Little	A Fair Bit	A Great Deal
	%	%	%	%
Subject Associations (e.g., VASST)	37.7	20.6	5.9	1.8
Subject Standing Committees (e.g. History)	56.9	17.4	3.6	0.7
Drama Resource Centre	70.7	12.7	2.1	0.8
Micro/Mini School Groups	69.2	5.8	2.3	1.5

n=608

Subject associations, such as the Victorian Association of Social Studies Teachers (VASST) were seen as being of no influence on what is taught by 37.7 percent of teachers and of very little influence by a further 20.6 percent. In terms of materials used, subject associations were seen by 45.6 percent of teachers as being of no influence and by 23.5 percent of teachers as being only of very little influence. (See Table III)

TABLE III

What Degree of Influence Do Groups Have

On What Materials Are Used?

	None	Very Little	A Fair Bit	A Great Deal
	%	%	%	%
Subject Associations (e.g., VASST)	45.6	23.5	5.6	0.8
Subject Standing Committees (e.g., History)	65.0	14.6	2.3	0.5
Drama Resource Centre	73.7	9.7	1.2	0.7
Micro/Mini School Groups	73.5	4.6	2.3	0.7

n=608

Subject Standing Committees, such as the History Standing

Committee, were all seen as being a great deal of influence on what

is taught by less than one percent and as to what materials are used

by less than one half percent of respondents. Similarly, the Drama

Resource Centre was perceived as being a great deal of influence on

the selection of subject matter or the selection of materials by less

than one percent of Humanities teachers. Micro/Mini School Groups,

although increasing in number, are not prevalent in the majority of

schools and it is therefore not surprising that approximately 70 per-

cent of respondents saw these groups having no influence upon curriculum

decisions.

How Frequently Are Curriculum Agency and Self-Devised Materials Used?

It is noted in Table III that teachers used curriculum materials produced by subject associations and subject standing committees to a far lesser extent than units of work devised by themselves. Nearly 90 percent of teachers reported using self-prepared curriculum materials either 'a fair bit' or 'a great deal'. In contrast, the equivalent figure for using materials from Access Skills Project is 9.7 percent; for those of the Standing Committee on English in Technical Schools - 2.3 percent; Standing Committee on Technical Schools Social Studies - 5.0 percent; Social Education Materials Project - 3.8 percent; Secondary Social Science Project - 6.6 percent; Victorian Association of Social Studies Teachers - 7.9 percent; and, Victorian Association for the Teaching of English - 4.2 percent. For each of these curriculum support agencies at least 47 percent of teachers reported never using their materials. (See Table IV)

Table IV

How Often Do Teachers Use Curriculum

Agency and Self-Devised Materials?

Materials prepared by	Never	Very little & sometimes	A fair bit & a great deal
	%	%	%
ASPM	48.2	34.7	9.7
SCETS	63.0	29.6	2.3
SCOTSS	47.5	42.3	5.0
SEMP	55.1	35.2	3.8
SSSP	50.2	38.0	6.6
VASST	49.5	37.3	7.9
VATE	54.4	36.3	4.2
Teachers Themselves	0.3	8.8	87.8

n=608

KEY:
ASPM   -   Access Skills Project Materials
SCETS   -   Standing Committee on English in Technical Schools
SCOTSSS   -   Standing Committee on Technical Schools Social Studies
SEMP   -   Social Education Materials Project
SSSP   -   Secondary Social Science Project
VASST   -   Victorian Association of Social Studies Teachers
VATE   -   Victorian Association for the Teaching of English

What Other Factors Influence Curriculum Decision Making?

In addition to individuals or groups of people influencing curriculum decision making, other factors or circumstances are deemed important. As is indicated in Table V, each of the factors (available resources, personal academic background, personal interests/commitments, and student interests) was seen as influencing curriculum decisions by well over half the respondents to this survey.

Table V

What Other Factors Influence Curriculum

Decision Making?

	None or Very Little	Some	A fair bit or a great deal
	%	%	%
Available Resources	4.4	16.1	74.0
Personal Academic Background	18.5	23.4	53.4
Personal Interests/ Commitment	8.3	27.5	60.3
Student Interests	4.3	22.7	69.0

n=608

Nearly three quarters of Humanities teachers indicated that they are definitely influenced in their curriculum decisions by the resources available. Over 60 percent claimed that personal interests/commitments and student interests were also influential. Also, more than one half

of the respondents stated that personal academic background influences
curriculum decisions as well.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

What Influence Do Certain Individuals Have?

Responsibility for curriculum decisions in each technical school,
theoretically at least, resides with the principal. It will be
surprising to many to see how few teachers perceived principals and
vice-principals as having influence.

Likewise, department heads were not seen by teachers to be important
influencers. It is generally accepted that heads have responsibility
for the curriculum in their respective department. In theory at least,
this responsibility is delegated to them from the principal. Again,
many will be surprised to note how few teachers regarded the department
head as a key influence.

There are, of course, a number of factors which will help to explain
why colleagues, teaching at the same form level were perceived by the
greatest number to be influential. Colleagues generally share office
and staff room space. Teachers of classes at the same form level share
curriculum materials. Frequently, teachers offer courses similar to
those offered by their colleagues or even use the same syllabus or
curriculum guide. Teachers discuss problems peculiar to a form level.
For these reasons it is understandable that colleagues teaching at the
same form level should be seen as important curriculum influencers.

Not unexpectedly perhaps, the school librarian was seen by the
next largest number of teachers to be influential in curriculum matters.

All other individuals, who might have been considered as curriculum influencers were seen by teachers as actually having very little influence. The infrequency with which other individuals within schools, such as a careers officer, an audio-visual education officer or an educational technologist, were identified as influencers could very well be attributable to the fact that very few schools at present have such persons on their staffs.

Individuals located outside of the school, such as regional consultants and method lecturers, were seen by very few teachers as being of influence. For example, lecturers in Methods of Teaching at either university or teachers college were not considered influential. Is this because their responsibilities were seen to be primarily concerned with pre-service teacher-education? It may be surprising, especially to regional consultants themselves, how infrequently they were perceived by teachers as being influential. In addition, this statistic may be regarded with some disappointment by department officials, for example.

A recent department report made this statement:

> ... the consultancy (at the regional level) is a resource
> primarily given to schools to improve the professional competence
> of staff through the sharing of ideas.
> (Victorian Education Department, 1977b:86)

There appear to be few influencers, either inside or outside the school. Colleagues who teach at the same form level seem to be by far the most significant influencers as far as the teachers themselves are concerned.

What Influence Do Groups Have?

As has been documented in Tables II and III, support groups existing outside of schools were not seen by most teachers as being very influential.

The Drama Resource Centre has too specialised a function to attract the attention of many teachers. The division of schools into micro or mini school groups, while an increasing practice, is as yet uncommon.

There is already considerable evidence, for example, that teachers regard communication between themselves and various curriculum support groups as being inadequate. (Adams and Auer, 1976; Curriculum and Research Branch, 1976; and Victorian Education Department, 1977b) Isolation (as a result of distance) from the services, limited hours when support services are available, and lack of teacher influence over the nature of the services and the selection of support personnel, have been mentioned as factors that explain why such services are so infrequently used. (Victorian Education Department, 1977b:68-69) Moreover, the influence of both subject associations and subject standing committees considerably diminished once schools attained curriculum autonomy and external examinations were eliminated.

How Frequently are Curriculum Agency and Self-Devised Materials Used?

It will be surprising to many that there was so little use made of the many curriculum support materials available to teachers. These materials include philosophical and theoretical papers, available resources guides, topic outlines and single topic full curriculum packages with student exercises, audio-visual and other resource materials,

and evaluation exercises. Yet, despite such seemingly relevant
materials, they were not used very much by Humanities teachers.
Perhaps the explanations offered previously as to why various groups
exert so little influence are also applicable here.

What Other Factors Influence Curriculum Decision Making?

A large number of teachers indicated other circumstances, as their
'personal interests and/or commitments' and their 'personal academic
background', were very influential in their curriculum decisions.
(See Table V) In fact, the number is greater than for any single
individual or group. (See Appendix E for these comparative data)

In light of the fact that nearly half the Humanities teachers
felt that 'getting students interested in Humanities' constituted either
a considerable or a serious problem, it comes as no surprise that nearly
70 percent of teachers perceived 'student interests' as influencing
their curriculum decisions 'a fair bit' or 'a great deal'.

It is also not surprising that teacher's 'personal interests or
commitments frequently influence what is taught. It would appear that
teachers of the Humanities, since they are not very specifically directed
as to what they ought to teach, seem to be content to 'do their own
thing'. An additional explanation contributing to this situation may be
a perceived inadequacy of teacher training (Victorian Education Department,
1977b:66)· and of in-service education provisions (Ingvarson, 1975; and
Research Advisory Committee, S.C.V. at Hawthorn, 1975).

In the absence of appropriate initial teacher education and in-
service education, teachers in searching for curriculum ideas and materials
fall back on their personal interests and commitments as well as their
personal academic background.

CHAPTER III

PROBLEMS IN TEACHING THE HUMANITIES

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In order to generate items for that section of the questionnaire
dealing with problems facing Humanities teachers, twenty eight teachers
were asked to indicate the problems they personally were experiencing.
An analysis of their responses revealed sixteen distinctly different
problems. These became the items which the teachers in this study were
asked to examine. and to indicate whether they regarded each as 'not a
problem', 'a small problem', 'a considerable problem', or 'a serious
problem.

By combining categories 'a considerable problem' and 'a serious
problem' and combining the other two categories, the resultant percentage
figures yield rather clear indications as to which problems were regarded
as serious for the greatest number of teachers. The percentages range
from a high of 65.8 to a low of 15.3. The mean percent is 36.5. (See
Appendix G) Six items are above the mean, while ten are below.

What Are the More Serious Problems Facing Humanities Teachers?

The six problems which were regarded as serious by forty or more
percent of the respondents are as follows:

    1.   Insufficient time for curriculum development (65.8%)

    2.   Finding time to prepare lessons adequately (52.6%)

    3.   Getting students interested in Humanities (49.2%)

4. General lack of understanding by non-Humanities teachers
    of Humanities teaching (45.0%)

5. Insufficient in-service education help with curriculum
    (43.7%)

6. Insufficient teacher training in curriculum (40.0%)

The two problems which were identified by the greatest number of
teachers as being serious are concerned with the lack of time. One is
insufficient time for curriculum development, the other, not enough
time for lesson preparation.

Humanities teachers perceived the third most serious problem to be
getting students interested in their subject area.

The problem which was seen as next most serious is the poor under-
standing that non-Humanities teachers have of Humanities teaching.

The remaining problems which were thought to be serious by a high
proportion of teachers were concerned with inadequate training in
curriculum matters. This pertains to initial teacher training and to
in-service programmes.

Table VI

Problems Perceived To Be Serious

Extent of Problem

	Not a Problem or Small Problem	Considerable Problem or Serious Problem
	%	%
Insufficient time for curriculum development	28.6	65.8
Finding time to prepare lessons adequately	41.9	52.6
Getting students interested in Humanities	45.4	49.2
General lack of understanding by non-Humanities teachers of Humanities teaching	49.5	45.0
Insufficient in-service education help with curriculum	48.1	43.7
Insufficient teacher training in curriculum	52.0	40.0

n=608

Note: The percents in each column represent a collapsing of two categories. See Appendix G for the full table.

What Problems are Viewed as Being Less Serious?

The problems which most teachers regarded as less serious are as follows:

1. The number of staff members with very little teaching experience (78.8%)

2. Insufficient assistance from curriculum experts (69.1%)

3. Lack of an overall curriculum plan (65.3%)

4. Lack of variety of curriculum materials available (65.2%)

5. Inappropriateness of the curriculum assistance available (64.8%)

6. Lack of coordination within the Humanities department (62.9%)

7. Insufficient curriculum materials available (61.7%)

Clearly, inexperienced teachers was not perceived by the vast majority of Humanities teachers as a problem. It is interesting to note that only thirty-two of the 608 respondents regarded the presence of inexperienced teachers on a staff as a serious problem.

Two other 'non-problems' pertained to curriculum assistance. One was concerned with insufficient teacher help from curriculum experts (69.1 percent did not regard this as a problem) while the other focused upon the inappropriateness of that assistance (64.8 percent did not see this as a problem).

Table VII

Problems Perceived To Be Not Serious

Extent of Problem

	Not a Problem or Small Problem	Considerable Problem or Serious Problem
	%	%
The number of staff members with very little teaching experience	78.8	15.3
Insufficient assistance from curriculum experts	69.1	22.4
Lack of an overall curriculum plan	65.3	28.4
Lack of variety of curriculum materials available	65.2	28.7
Inappropriateness of the curriculum assistance available	64.8	25.3
Lack of coordination within the Humanities department	62.9	32.0
Insufficient curriculum materials available	61.7	31.4
Staff turnover from one year to the next	58.4	34.4
Developing teaching ideas and approaches	58.4	34.7
Insufficient money available for the purchase of materials	58.4	35.2

n=608

Note: The percents in each column represent a collapsing of two
       categories. See Appendix G for the full table.

Another two, not regarded as serious problems were concerned with curriculum planning. One was the lack of an overall plan, the other poor coordination in Humanities departments.

The remaining two concerned curriculum materials. One was the insufficiency of materials, the other, the lack of variety of materials.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

What are the More Serious Problems Facing Humanities Teachers?

The problem reported as serious by the greatest number of Humanities teachers is the lack of time for curriculum development. This would be seen by many to be not surprising. The Education Department, has for a very long time allowed each school two 'professional days' per year when student attendance is not required. These days were frequently used for correction of work and administrative purposes at the end of an academic term.

Since the granting of curriculum autonomy, these two days have most usually been taken for teacher meetings to discuss school aims and objectives, to develop courses of study or to evaluate existing programmes. Since such 'curriculum days' generally occurred months apart there were very few opportunities available for any meaningful curriculum construction, up-grading or evaluation. In past decades, with prescribed and detailed curricula requiring only implementation at the school level, two professional days may have been adequate. Now that the entire curriculum process - Research, Development, Diffusion and Adoption - is supposed to occur at the school level, very much more time is obviously needed for curriculum development activities. Aoki

(1977), a Canadian Curriculum Scholar, has discussed attempts at such holistic curriculum development and has indicated how time consuming such activity can be. The problem of lack of time for curriculum development has, of course, been the subject of much discussion in Victoria. (See, for example, Adams and Auer, 1976:9; Beeson and Gunstone, 1975:9; Carlin and others, 1976:10; Nicholas, 1973:98 and Victorian Education Department 1977b:65)

Not less serious a problem is that of finding time to prepare lessons adequately. In a curriculum area like the Humanities which embrace several disciplines dealing with contemporary phenomena, individual lesson preparation is of vital importance. This is particularly so for a subject which requires such tailoring according to student's interests. It may be recalled that a great number of Humanities teachers reported being strongly influenced in their curriculum decisions by the individual interests expressed by their students. (See Table V) As one might expect, this problem of insufficient time for lesson preparation is not unique to Humanities teachers. Beeson and Gunston (1975) for example, found that it was also regarded by science teachers to be a serious problem.

Insufficient time for curriculum construction and lesson preparation may well result in inferior Humanities teaching. There may very well be a link between the quality of teaching and the third most serious problem perceived by Humanities teachers - getting students interested in Humanities. The writer has frequently heard the view aired in technical school staffrooms that it is more difficult to interest technical school students in Humanities than in most other areas, especially practical studies. Students often question the relevance of Humanities to their future job aspirations, for example.

Two other problems perceived as serious by many teachers concern insufficiencies in teacher education.

It is likely that both initial teacher training and in-service education for teachers have not adjusted appropriately or quickly enough since the inception of curriculum autonomy. Pre-service courses contain only a small component dealing with curriculum development. Despite pleas for an increased curriculum development component in technical teacher training programmes (Research and Advisory Committee, S.C.V. at Hawthorn, 1975), the composition of such programmes has altered little. The situation is still such that the recent report of the Curriculum Services Enquiry stated that there is '... great concern ... expressed about the perceived inadequacies of teacher training and its effects upon the beginning teacher.' (Victorian Education Department, 1977b:68-69). Many submissions to that enquiry

> ... noted that beginning teachers in particular experience
> special difficulties in their curriculum implementation
> role, and even more so in performing a curriculum develop-
> ment function.
> (Victorian Education Department, 1977a:66)

This need for appropriate teacher education in curriculum extends into years far beyond those of initial training. There are indications that traditional in-service activities - university courses in curriculum theory and evaluation, and conferences during which 'experts' provide most of the input - are no longer serving the needs of teachers. The following citation from Ingvarson, suggests the nature of in-service activities in demand by teachers.

> ... teachers feel a strong need for in-service education, that in-
> service courses have caused them to make changes in their teaching
> and that teachers should play a greater part in choosing the areas
> to be covered and the running of in-service courses. However, when

asked to compare in-service education with other factors that had
influenced their professional development, greater importance was
given to meetings within the school to discuss educational topics,
to original teacher training and formal study, research and
professional reading. ... Not surprisingly, the most useful
courses dealt with practical problems and were directly relevant
to the teaching situation. Dissatisfaction was strong for
conventional conferences which had too many lectures which were
too theoretical and speakers who were incompetent, boring, dogmatic
and patronising. (1975:74)

The most useful in-service activities to foster teacher expertise

in curriculum matters seem to be those which maximise participation of

teachers in on-going activities. Matthews (1976) argues that the

principal, and possibly also the school council, need to facilitate

cooperative effort in curriculum development. The results of this

present study confirm the need for significant improvement at both the

initial training and in-service levels.

What Problems are Viewed as Being Less Serious?

A substantial number of teachers in this survey did not regard

the number of staff members with very little teaching experience as a

problem. This finding is rather interesting in view of the many

submissions to the Curriculum Services Enquiry (Victorian Education

Department, 1977b) which strongly argued the contrary.

One explanation of this apparent contradiction which teachers might

be inclined to offer is that most of the contributors to the Curriculum

Services Enquiry were not classroom teachers, but administrators, who

may have never taught in the Humanities area, or, if so, many years ago

when the expectations were quite different.

Another problem which is often regarded as serious by administrators

and curriculum commentators is that of staff 'turnover' from one year to

the next. The Curriculum Advisory Board, for example, claimed that '... with the development of unique curricula in schools, the tasks of incoming teachers and of existing staff are magnified.' (1975:8) Lack of stability of staff was also perceived to be a problem among science coordinators. (Beeson and Gunstone, 1975:9)

However, these present data indicate that most teachers themselves do not perceive staff 'turnover' as a problem. Rather, they tend to see themselves as working independently of their colleagues and thus see 'turnover' as having little effect upon their own teaching.

The lack of coordination within Humanities departments and the lack of overall curricula were also not perceived by most teachers as problems. Yet, more than half the respondents indicated that their school did not have a written Humanities curriculum. (See Appendix H) These statistics taken together, would seem to suggest that Humanities teachers do not see as particularly important the existence of one overall school Humanities curriculum to which individuals generally adhere.

Most teachers believe that the number and the variety of curriculum materials are adequate. Several individual teacher comments on the questionnaire, suggested however, that supply and variety may be more of a problem for teachers in rural areas distant from Melbourne. In recent years there has been an enormous growth in both Australian as well as overseas book and audio-visual resources. And, at the same time, an increasing number of curriculum support agencies have been created. Most recently, the Curriculum Development Centre in Canberra has developed a 'clearing house' function that should help teachers keep better informed as to available resources and teaching approaches.

(Curriculum Development Centre, 1975)

Inappropriateness of curriculum assistance and insufficient
assistance from curriculum experts were not regarded as serious by
most teachers. In view of the infrequent use made of curriculum
support agency materials, as indicated in Table III of Chapter II, it
would appear that the majority of Humanities teachers do not value
extensive assistance from outside of their school. Anstee's 1976 study
reports similar findings. The point made by Murray more than ten years
ago, appears to be still applicable today.

> We do not need academics to tell us what and how to teach –
> and examine. We are trained teachers and professionally capable
> of working out what our secondary pupils need.
>
> (Murray, 1966:20)

This view, however, appears in contradiction to that suggested by
Matthews (1976) that teachers lack the incentive to be involved in
participative decision making with respect to curriculum. Baron (1975)
lends support to this view by indicating reasons for such disinterest.
He claims that:

> Some teachers can't give the time to talk to others, e.g.
> those who travel long distances; some married women. Some
> don't want to give time to such consultation and only want to
> be left alone to do their job and be protected from colleagues
> by the principal. Among others, the school day is that time when
> teaching takes place.
>
> (Matthews, 1976:7)

Another interpretation though, is that most teachers prefer to
practice as individual professionals and take pride in their ability to
formulate aims and objectives, to develop or gather the appropriate
materials and to put into practice classroom management strategies and
teaching techniques. According to Massey and others (1977:6), ... 'This
individualized and isolated decision making allows individuals to develop
themselves and their own relevances.' To work in a collegial mode would

mean giving up their independence and, what for many would be, a source of considerable personal satisfaction.

These contentions throw some doubt on the viability of decentralizing the responsibility for curriculum development upon teachers.

Summary

To sum up, what has become very clear is that Humanities teachers prefer to work very much on their own. They are not generally influenced to any great extent by individuals or groups within or outside of their school. Principals, vice-principals and department heads apparently exert little influence on curriculum decisions of Humanities teachers. Similarly, outside personnel such as regional consultants and special method lecturers appear to have little influence. The only people who do seem to substantially influence Humanities teachers' curriculum decisions are colleagues who teach at the same form level.

Groups such as subject associations and subject standing committees also have little influence upon curriculum decisions of teachers in the Humanities. Teachers generally use materials produced by such groups only infrequently.

Factors which are important in Humanities teachers' curriculum decisions include 'the availability of resources' and 'student interests'.

The two problems which are considered by the greatest number of teachers as being serious are concerned with insufficient time: insufficient time for curriculum development and insufficient time for lesson preparation.

On the other hand, problems viewed as being less serious include the number of teachers with very little teaching experience, insufficient

assistance from curriculum experts, and lack of an overall curriculum

plan.

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

There is one overriding observation that comes through as one

reflects upon the findings from this study. And, that concerns the

viability of any scheme which seeks to decentralize curriculum decision

making. Connelly, a noted curriculum theorist in Canada speaks very

forcefully on the matter of decentralized curriculum development:

> Without an adequate understanding of how teachers make
> curriculum choices and without adequate mechanisms for
> educating teachers in their roles as choice-makers, it is
> irresponsible romanticism to delegate curriculum-development
> authority to teachers.
>
> (1972:170)

So many of the findings seem to support the view that Humanities

teachers, for example, really prefer to work on their own, to operate

as solo practitioners. For example, most teachers did not see super-

visory personnel as helpful; they did not use, to any great extent,

readily available units of work; they were not troubled by the fact

that there frequently was little or no coordination within their

departments; they were unconcerned about teacher 'turnover' and about

the relatively large number of inexperienced among them.

However, school-based curriculum construction, if it is to become

vital and creative, requires collaborative approaches and attitudes on

the part of those involved. It requires some sharing of knowledge and

teaching strategies; it requires systematic and continuous attention to

upgrading of one's knowledge and expertise through in-service education.

(It will be remembered that the original intention of curriculum autonomy

provisions from the late 1960's and onwards strongly implied a <u>school</u>
based approach, not an individual teacher approach.)

Quite apart from this tendency of individual Humanities teachers
toward a solo practice, there are several other critical findings that
undoubtedly have an effect upon the quality of the Humanities programme
and indirectly, surely, the amount of interest which it holds for
technical school students.

Firstly, it is difficult not to conclude from the data that the
curriculum materials now readily available in the Humanities field are
less than adequate. This assertion is based on the evidence outlined
in Chapter II which is that a great many teachers do not make much use
of such materials as produced by Subject Associations and Standing
Committees. It is entirely possible that these materials themselves
are of a very high quality. The fact, though, that they are systematically
ignored by so many, suggests some serious faults either in the way the
materials were produced (i.e. with little direct involvement of Humanities
teachers themselves) or in the way the materials have been introduced
and marketed.

Secondly, the supervisory personnel who would be expected to be
specialists in their field, namely, the heads of Humanities departments,
and curriculum consultants located in each of the regions, are not
generally perceived by the teachers themselves as being sources of help.
This was also the case with Subject Associations and Standing Committees
such as VASST and SCETS.

Why is this the case? This study does not explore the why. (That
might well be the focus for a following study, which uses a more in-
depth interview approach.) But, the fact remains that these resources

are <u>not</u> being used by most teachers. And, therefore, one potential

for making school based curriculum decision-making more effective is

being seriously under-utilized.

Thirdly, the evidence as found in the perceptions of Humanities

teachers, strongly question the adequacy of both initial training and

in-service education. The present school-based approach certainly

requires a much more sophisticated teacher than that of an earlier era.

Hence the <u>initial training</u> programme needs to be of a different sort —

one which acknowledges that there are unique skills and attitudes

required for a greater self sufficiency in curriculum development

processes and skills.

No less important is an adequate provision for <u>in-service</u>

education. Downey claims that ...

> ... the purposes of modern programs of in-service education for
> educators are: (1) to assist teachers to keep informed of and
> up-to-date on the latest developments in the fields of study
> which relate to the substance of their teaching; (2) to assist
> teachers to keep informed of research findings and developments
> in the techniques of teaching; and (3) to establish and maintain
> a professional forum for the communication, debate and analysis
> of ideas which are of concern to educators.
> <div align="right">(Ingram and Robinson, 1963:4)</div>

Adequate provision is most definitely lacking in Victoria if one is to

believe the data presented in this report.

Finally, the most serious impediment to a satisfactory realization

of the aims of a school-based approach is the shortage of time. Teachers

overwhelmingly identified as a most serious problem the inadequacy of

time for curriculum development and for lesson preparation.

SUGGESTIONS

The section which follows makes a number of suggestions which derive from the foregoing observations and raises several additional questions.

Time

What teachers need most if they are to have greater responsibility for curriculum development is time. (While this discussion is concerned with Humanities teachers, the points made are, undoubtedly, equally valid for teachers in other subject areas.) Essentially, periods of perhaps a week's duration are required for curriculum development within Humanities departments. The period just prior to the beginning of an academic year would likely be the most appropriate. During this time the staff would undertake up-dating activities such as revision of courses, selecting new materials and cooperatively developing schedules for various activities both within and outside the school. An important task for this period would surely be that of helping teachers who were new to the school become familiar with the programmes and procedures.

In addition, time must be provided for in-service or continuing education of Humanities teachers.

Among the several possible ways of achieving more time would be shortening the summer vacation for teachers from six weeks to five weeks and shortening by three days each of the other two holiday periods. It will be remembered that some years back the May vacation used to be only one week in duration. A second week was added for the expressed

purpose of providing time for in-service activities such as attending

seminars and curriculum workshops. Another alternative is to reduce

the length of the academic terms, but this is an unlikely one in view

of increasing public concern over returns on educational spending.

Whatever means are used to obtain additional time, it should be remembered

that blocks of time less than three consecutive days are less than useful

to the types of activities referred to earlier. The Curriculum Advisory

Board in 1975 implied in one of its reports that there was need for

such sustained periods of time.

> (are) ... the demands of day to day teaching too great to allow
> teachers to rise above their immediate short term needs to an
> overall long-term and total view of the curriculum?
>
> (1975:28)

Before leaving the very important matter of time, a word about

time for lesson preparation. At present, most Humanities teachers get,

on average, a one-hour period for preparation (and other tasks) each day.

This is clearly inadequate. It would seem sensible to increase this

amount of time to the equivalent of two hours per day. Again, it might

be more effectively used if it were in two blocks of time, each of one

half day.

To provide this increased time means employing more teachers or

increasing the size of classes, or some combination of both. In all

likelihood, it will cost more money. But, if the time problem is as

critical as it appears to be to improving Humanities teaching in

Victorian technical schools, then a larger investment of time is warranted.

It was McGaw who recently asserted:

> In ensuring that devolution works, the system should not only
> attempt to provide teachers with the necessary skills and resources,
> it should continually monitor the effectiveness of the process of
> identifying needs for support as they emerge.
>
> (1977:9)

Teacher Education

As has been pointed out earlier, the appropriateness of initial

training has been questioned. It is suggested that teacher training

institutions review the content of their programmes - in particular

those elements concerned with curriculum development processes and

skills. Since school-based curriculum decision-making calls for colla-

borative interaction, then it would seem desirable that such processes

be not only taught but also practiced during the initial training

period.

If these changes are already under way, then so much the better.

It will mean that the next generation of Humanities teachers will have

the basic preparation needed for a more succesful experience in curri-

culum development at the school level.

The appropriateness of continuing educational opportunities for

Humanities teachers needs very careful study. Ideally, both formal

(i.e., credit) and informal courses in curriculum development should be

available on an after hours basis as well as during vacation periods.

The informal or short courses could be developed by subject

associations in close collaboration with specialists at the college or

the university level, regional consultants and representative classroom

teachers.

It is true that some such courses already exist, usually in the

form of seminars. However, according to data presented in this study,

they are not attended by most teachers. This suggests that problems

exist in either their relevance or in the techniques of presentation as

was expressed earlier. They typically use the lecture mode, are too

theoretical, and frequently the speakers are '... incompetent, boring,

dogmatic and patronising." (Ingvarson, 1975:74)

Of course, teachers' centres should not only continue but also increase opportunities whereby teachers may share ideas and resources and cooperatively develop some.

In view that data from this study show that few teachers made use of consultation, there is need to examine why this is so. Is it that there are too few consultants? Are some of the consultants out of touch with the realities of the Humanities teacher's world and thereby regarded as irrelevant? Other reasons? Answers to such questions will require a research technique which uses a more in-depth approach such as interviews involving only a small sample or a study of a relatively small number of cases.

It goes without saying that there needs to be a continual examination of the adequacy of the kinds of materials available from such resource centres for teachers. There should be a wide range of materials very readily available. In addition to classroom materials, such centres should have on hand information about curricula in other schools, catalogues of available community resources and descriptions of recent curricula innovations.

One cannot leave the question of continuing education without wondering how adequate are in-service opportunities for such personnel as principals and heads of department. Again these data raise certain questions about how effective these key personnel are in providing leadership in the curriculum development field or in establishing an appropriate milieu for school-based curriculum decision-making.

In a very recent British Columbia Study, Storey (1978:211) found that public school principals were very interested in 'developing

curriculum at the school level' and 'stimulating teacher's interest in professional growth.' Such areas of concern seem to be important ones for principals' continuing education activities for example. It would seem that those who are designing continuing education activities for school leaders should keep this finding in mind.

It has been clearly alleged that,

> The growth of school-based curriculum development requires a radically altered concept of school administration. The development of a whole school approach to curriculum requires the involvement of the whole school: administration, teaching staff, students and parents.
> (Curriculum Advisory Board, 1976:5)

Questions Requiring Further Discussion

To conclude, here are some additional questions deserving of further thought and exploration.

Is it too much to expect from beginning teachers in particular, to be involved in the devising of curriculum packages? Ought inexperienced teachers to be encouraged to follow ready made programmes of high quality? Is initial teacher education the appropriate place for introducing Humanities teachers to curriculum building processes? If so, what should be omitted from present initial teacher preparation? Would it be more realistic to see continuing education as the mode for the development of curriculum construction skills and attitudes?

Finally, since few of the suggestions of the earlier section will be acted upon without support both financial and moral from the Education Department, what pirority does that Department give to the topic which this study has addressed, namely Humanities teaching in technical schools? What priority does the Department give to ensuring

that devolution of curriculum responsibilities upon the schools is

working satisfactorily? This writer agrees with Sullivan who stated

that

> Decentralization of curriculum development cannot be viewed
> as a means of producing curriculum for less expenditure of funds.
> When a school system approaches a problem which calls for
> customized curriculum development, it must be cognizant that the
> costs for such an approach will be greater.
>
> (1975:12)

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APPENDIX A

PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION

PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION

(a) The first four years of Secondary Education (possibly the first
     five) should be considered years of general non-specialist
     education, open to everyone without discrimination of sex,
     background, aptitude or means.

(b) Organization should try to ensure close teacher-student and
     student-student contact and be flexible enough to permit varied
     grouping and, if necessary, easy abandonment of traditional
     subject categories.

(c) The basic curriculum offered, though it may be open to wide
     choice within it, should embrace at least the Arts, Social
     Sciences, Mathematics and Physical Education. It is not supposed,
     however, that all or any of these need be offered as separate
     "disciplines", nor indeed that there must be any fixed patterns
     within or between schools. (The Arts are taken to cover liter-
     ature, the visual arts, music, film and drama.)

(d) There is no place for competitive assessment in Secondary School.
     Whatever assessment is done should be seen as a function of the
     essential communication between school and child and between
     school and parents.

(e) Methods of teaching should encourage intellectual independence
     in students. Learning should be thought of as a cooperative,
     not an authoritarian, situation.

                                          (Curriculum Advisory Board)

APPENDIX B

HUMANITIES CURRICULUM QUESTIONNAIRE

Peter R. Auer,

4 August 1977

Dear Colleague,

The enclosed questionnaire is an attempt to gather information related to Curriculum in the Humanities in Victorian Secondary Technical Schools. It seeks to help answer three fundamental questions:

(i) What are the trends in Humanities teaching in Victorian Secondary Technical Schools at present?

(ii) What are the reasons for the present trends and general situation?

(iii) What are the major problems and how might these be overcome?

I am aware that completing questionnaires is often tedious and time consuming, and frequently the results of a study are never published. I wish to stress that results from this study will be published and that recommendations for improving the Curriculum in Humanities in Victorian Secondary Technical Schools will be made available to teachers.

I wish to stress that your reply will be anonymous, that you as an individual could not be identified. Should you have any queries, you could direct them to me at the College.

Yours sincerely,

Peter R. Auer

Enclosure

HUMANITIES CURRICULUM QUESTIONNAIRE

(A) SOME DETAILS ABOUT YOURSELF

Place a tick (√) in the appropriate box where applicable.

1. Sex

Male [1] 10

Female [2]

2. Age (years)

21 - 25 [1] 11

26 - 30 [2]

31 - 35 [3]

36 - 40 [4]

Over 40 [5]

3. Years of Teaching Experience

Less than 1 [1] 12

1 - 3 [2]

3 - 8 [3]

8 - 15 [4]

More than 15 [5]

4. Are you employed

Full-time [1] 13

Part-time [2]

5. Where did you do your initial teacher training?

La Trobe University [1] 14

Melbourne University [2]

Monash University | 3

S.C.V. at Hawthorn | 4

S.C.V. at Melbourne | 5

S.C.V. at Rusden | 6

Other _____ | 7
(Please specify)

6. What major studies did you take in your first degree or diploma?

_____

office use only | 15-16

7. What were your "method studies" during teacher training?

_____

_____

office use only | 17-18

8. Do you have any further qualifications in Education?

B.Ed.

M.Ed. | 19

Ph.D. | 20

| 21

Other _____ | 22
(please specify)

9. How many hours per week do you presently teach at each form level?

Form I	23 – 24	33 – 34	43 – 44	53 – 54	23-66
Form II	25 – 26	35 – 36	45 – 46	55 – 56	
Form III	27 – 28	37 – 38	47 – 48	57 – 58	
Form IV	29 – 30	39 – 40	49 – 50	59 – 60	
Form V	31 – 32	41 – 42	51 – 52	61 – 62	
If other, specify name of subject	63	64	65	66	

NOTE: PLEASE DISREGARD COMPUTER REFERENCE NUMBERS IN BOXES

10. Are you a student teacher?

Yes [1] 67

No [2]

11. How many In-service education functions have you attended during the last 12 months?

[ ] 68-69

Please specify: _____

_____

_____

(B) MAJOR AIMS/OBJECTIVES

2/1-6 Dup
7 [B]

Frequently mentioned aims/objectives of Humanities teaching are listed below. Please rank these in order of importance by placing 1 beside the item you think is most important, 2 beside the item you think next in importance and so on.

1. To develop student's basic communication skills [ ] 2/10

2. To develop in students a sense of responsibility to themselves, their family and the community. [ ] 2/11

3. To develop basic research skills and those associated with the Social Sciences [ ] 2/12

4. To allow students to clarify and develop attitudes and values. [ ] 2/13

5. To increase the student's understanding of him/herself. [ ] 2/14

6. To teach formal English skills like grammar and spelling

7. To increase the student's understanding of him/herself.

8. To enable students to creatively express themselves.

Others: _____

_____

_____

2/15

2/16

2/17

Further comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

(C) LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Below is a list of learning activities used by Humanities teachers.
Rank these according to the amount of time <u>you</u> spend on them at
each form level you teach. Use 1 for the activity taking most
Humanities time, 2 for the next most time-consuming activity and
so on.

FORMS

	I	II	III	IV	V
1. drawing and inter- preting graphs & maps	10	24	38	52	66
2. student initiated research assignment	11	25	39	53	67
3. guest speaker	12	26	40	54	68
4. reading	13	27	41	55	69
5. formal English exercises (e.g. spelling & grammar)	14	28	42	56	70
6. working from a basic textbook	15	29	43	57	71
7. using audio tapes, films and video	16	30	44	58	72
8. excursions and/or outside room activity	17	31	45	59	73
9. teacher initiated class lesson	18	32	46	60	74
10. creative writing exercises	19	33	47	61	75
11. teacher initiated research assignment	20	34	48	62	76
12. classroom discussion	21	35	49	63	77
13. simulation games and role playing	22	36	50	64	78
Other:	23	37	51	65	79

Further comments:

_____

_____

(D) INDICATE THE DEGREE OF INFLUENCE WHICH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE,
     GROUPS OF PEOPLE OR CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE ON YOUR DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT
     YOU TEACH.

Write one of these numbers in each box to indicate the degree of influence you attribute to each.	NONE AT ALL	– WRITE	1
	VERY LITTLE	– WRITE	2
	SOME	– WRITE	3
	A FAIR BIT	– WRITE	4
	A GREAT DEAL	– WRITE	5

1. Teachers of the same form level at your school   10

2. Teachers of other form levels at your school   11

3. Head of department   12

4. Micro school/mini school group   13

5. Principal and/or Vice-Principal   14

6. Teacher training students   15

7. Method lecturer from a teacher-training institution   16

8. Subject Association/s   17

9. Regional consultant   18

10. Subject Standing Committee   19

11. Audio Visual Education Officer   20

12. Drama Resource Centre   21

13. Teachers from other schools   22

14. School careers officer   23

15. Your academic background   24

16. Your personal interests and/or commitments   25

17. Student interests   26

18. Available resources   28

    Other: Please Specify

Any other comments:

_____

_____

(E) HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS IN YOUR TEACHING
THIS YEAR?

Write one of these numbers
in each box to indicate the
frequency with which you
use these materials.

NEVER	– WRITE	1
VERY LITTLE	– WRITE	2
SOMETIMES	– WRITE	3
A FAIR BIT	– WRITE	4
A GREAT DEAL	– WRITE	5

1. Curriculum/course <u>outline</u> (own Department)   10

2. Units of work from SCOTSSS[1]   11

3. Units of work from SSSP[2]   12

4. Materials from SCETS[6]   13

5. Materials from SEMP[3]   14

6. Materials from VASST[4]   15

7. Materials from VATE[5]   16

8. School library references   17

9. Access Skills Project Materials   18

10. Class sets (books)   19

11. Units of work devised by yourself   20

12. Units of work devised by other people   21

13. Films, Slides, Video Tapes, Audio Tapes   22

14. <u>Detailed</u> Syllabus from own Department   23

   <u>Other:</u> (please specify)

[6]SCETS   = Standing Committee English in Technical Schools
[1]SCOTSSS   = Standing Committee on Technical Schools Social Studies
[2]SSSP   = Secondary Social Science Project
[3]SEMP   = Social Education Materials Project
[4]VASST   = Victorian Association of Social Studies Teachers
[5]VATE   = Victorian Association for the Teaching of English

   <u>Any other comments:</u>

   _____

   _____

(F) INDICATE THE DEGREE OF INFLUENCE WHICH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE, GROUPS OF PEOPLE OR CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE ON YOUR DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT MATERIALS YOU USE IN YOUR TEACHING.

Write one of these numbers in each box to indicate the degree of influence you attribute to each.

NOTE AT ALL – WRITE	1
VERY LITTLE – WRITE	2
SOME – WRITE	3
A FAIR BIT – WRITE	4
A GREAT DEAL – WRITE	5

1.	Teachers of the same form level	10
2.	Teachers at other form levels at your school	11
3.	Head of Department	12
4.	Micro school/mini school group	13
5.	Principal and/or Vice-Principal	14
6.	Publishers or Book Shops' representatives	15
7.	School librarian	16
8.	Regional Consultant	17
9.	Subject associations	18
10.	Teacher training students	19
11.	Special Method Lecturer from a teacher training instituion	20
12.	Subject Standing Committee	21
13.	Audio Visual Education Officer	22
14.	Drama Resource Centre	23
15.	Teachers from other schools	24
16.	School Careers Officer	25
17.	Parents	26
18.	Educational Technologist	27
19.	Student interests	28

Other: (please specify)

Any other comments:

_____

_____

(G) WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS MOST CLOSELY DESCRIBES THE
     PRESENT SITUATION IN HUMANITIES AT YOUR SCHOOL (INDICATE WITH
     A TICK)

1. Teachers follow an overall Humanities curriculum
    outline but not very much consultation takes place.   ☐ 10

2. There is an overall curriculum outline but it is
    mostly ignored by teachers.   ☐ 11

3. There is no course outline that I know of and
    teachers do their own thing with their classes.   ☐ 12

4. There is no total school Humanities curriculum
    outline at the moment but some discussion has
    begun with a view to doing something about it   ☐ 13

5. There is a total course outline and teachers
    adhere pretty well to the suggested sequence
    of topics   ☐ 14

6. There is no written Humanities curriculum outline,
    but teachers consult with each other frequently
    to plan new units and to avoid repetition for
    students.   ☐ 15

7. There is a total curriculum outline and teachers
    consult frequently about its ongoing application.   ☐ 16

Any other comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

(H) BELOW ARE SEVERAL ISSUES FOUND BY SOME TEACHERS TO BE SOURCES OF
DIFFICULTY IN HUMANITIES TEACHING. INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH
YOU REGARD EACH OF THESE AS BEING A PROBLEM IN HUMANITIES TEACHING
AT THE PRESENT TIME.

Write one of these numbers in each box to indicate the extent to which you regard each issue as a problem.

NOT A PROBLEM – WRITE	1
A SMALL PROBLEM – WRITE	2
A CONSIDERABLE PROBLEM – WRITE	3
A SERIOUS PROBLEM– WRITE	4

(a) Insufficient assistance from curriculum experts (at C & R or in regions) ☐ 10

(b) Lack of variety of curriculum materials available ☐ 11

(c) Finding time to prepare lessons adequately ☐ 12

(d) Insufficient time for curriculum development ☐ 13

(e) Lack of coordination within the Humanities Department ☐ 14

(f) Staff turnover from one year to the next ☐ 15

(g) The number of staff members with very little teaching experience ☐ 16

(h) General lack of understanding by non-Humanities teachers of Humanities teaching ☐ 17

(i) Developing teaching ideas and approaches ☐ 18

(j) Getting students interested in Humanities ☐ 19

(k) Lack of an overall curriculum plan ☐ 20

(l) Insufficient money available for the purchase of materials ☐ 21

(m) Insufficient curriculum materials available ☐ 22

(n) Inappropriateness of the curriculum assistance available ☐ 23

(o) Insufficient teacher training in curriculum ☐ 24

(p) Insufficient in-service education help with curriculum ☐ 25

Any other comments: (Include suggestions as to how problems might be overcome)

(J) (i) HOW WOULD <u>YOU</u> RATE THE <u>PERFORMANCE</u> OF THE HUMANITIES
         DEPARTMENT IN RELATION TO THAT OF OTHER TEACHING AREAS
         AT YOUR SCHOOL?

low ← → high	10

1	2	3	4	5

(ii) HOW DO YOU BELIEVE <u>STUDENTS</u> RATE THE <u>STATUS</u> OF HUMANITIES
     COMPARED WITH OTHER SUBJECTS IN YOUR SCHOOL?

low ← → high	11

1	2	3	4	5

(iii) HOW DO YOU BELIEVE THE <u>SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION</u> RATE THE <u>STATUS</u>
      OF HUMANITIES COMPARED WITH OTHER SUBJECTS IN YOUR SCHOOL?

low ← → high	12

1	2	3	4	5

<u>Any other comments:</u>

_____

_____

_____

_____

Your early return of this form would be very much appreciated.

Thank you.

APPENDIX C

PRELIMINARY, OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME (optional) _____

For each item below place a tick (/) in the appropriate box.

(A)   Some details about yourself

Sex

                male ☐ female ☐

Age   21-25 ☐

                              26-30 ☐

                              31-35 ☐

                              36-40 ☐

                         over 40 ☐

Years of Teaching Experience   less than 1 ☐

                                 1-5 ☐

                              6-10 ☐

                           11-15 ☐

                     more than 15 ☐

Do you present teach?   full time ☐

                        part time ☐

Where did you do your <u>initial teacher training?</u>

                La Trobe University ☐

             Melbourne University ☐

              Monash University ☐

              S.C.V. at Hawthorn ☐

             S.C.V. at Melbourne ☐

                S.C.V. Rusden ☐

Other   _____ ☐

        (please specify)

Do you have any further qualifications in Education?

B.Ed.	
M.Ed.	
Ph.D.	
Other _____	
(please specify)	

How many hours per week do you teach at each form level?

Form I	
Form II	
Form III	
Form IV	
Form V	

Are you a student teacher?

Yes	
No	

(B) **What are your major aims/objectives in Humanities teaching?**
(Specify up to 5)

Other comments:

(C) (a) List the activities (not teaching methods) that you presently
          use in your teaching (e.g. mapping exercise)

     (b) Indicate the number of hours you would typically spend in
          each activity at each form level if you were limited to 100
          hours of humanities teaching with each form you take (ensure
          that the sum of hours allocated to each form is exactly 100).

Activities	Forms				
	I	II	III	IV	V

Comments:

(D) In your present teaching situation which of the following people or groups of people actively influence your decisions about what you teach? Indicate the degree of influence you attribute to each.

	Very little	←	→	Very great		Any Other Comments:
(a) Teachers of the same form level						
(b) Head of Department						
(c) Micro school/mini school group						
(d) Principal and/or Vice-Principal						
(e) Outside school person (please specify)						
(f) Other (please specify)						

(E) How often do you use the following materials in your teaching this year?

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Any Other Comments:
(a) Curriculum/course outline (own Dept.)					
(b) Units of work from SCOTSSS[1]					
(c) Units of work from SSSP[2]					
(d) Materials from SEMP[3]					
(e) School library references					
(f) Class sets (books)					
(g) Units of work devised by yourself					
(h) Units of work devised with other people					
(i) Films, Slides, Video Tapes, Audio Tapes					
(j) Detailed Syllabus from own dept.					
Other: please specify					

[1] SCOTSSS – Standing Committee on Technical Schools   Social Studies

[2] SSSP – Secondary Social Science Project

[3] SEMP – Social Education Materials Project

(F) In your present teaching situation which of the following people
     or groups of people actively influence your decisions about <u>what
     materials you use</u> in your teaching. Indicate the <u>degree of
     influence</u> you attribute to each.

Any Other Comments:

	Very little	←————————→		Very great
(a) Teachers of the same form level				
(b) Head of Deparment				
(c) Micro school/ mini school group				
(d) Principal and/or Vice-Principal				
(e) Publishers or Book Shop's representative				
(f) Other: (Please Specify)				

(G) Below are several issues found by some teachers to be <u>sources of difficulty</u> in <u>humanities teaching</u>. Indicate the <u>extent</u> to which you regard each of these as being a <u>problem</u> in humanities teaching at the present time.

	Not a problem	←		→	Serious problem
a) Insufficient assistance from curriculum experts (at C & R or in regions)					
b) Lack of variety of curriculum materials available for forms I - IV					
c) Finding time to prepare lessons adequately					
d) Insufficient time for curriculum development					
e) Lack of coordination within the humanities department					
f) Staff turnover from one year to the next					
g) The number of staff members with very little teaching experience					

(G) Continued

	Not a problem			Serious problem
h) General lack of understanding by non-humanities teachers of humanities teaching				
i) Developing teaching ideas and approaches				
j) Getting students interested in Humanities				
k) Lack of an overall curriculum plan				
l) Insufficient money available for the purchase of materials				
Other: (please specify)				

Any Other Comments:

APPENDIX D

SAMPLING RATIONALE

SAMPLING RATIONALE

When this study was first being contemplated, a random sample was considered as being appropriate. As it became evident that the population for this study consisted of various strata, it was felt that a proportionate stratified sample in which various strata were correctly represented would be even better. It became apparent very quickly, however, that there were quite a number of such strata to be taken into account: school regions; large schools, small schools; boys' schools, girls' schools; co-educational schools; recently established schools; teachers from different teacher-training institutions; experienced teachers, inexperienced teachers; to name some important ones.

Moser and Kalton suggest:

> The main justification for a complete coverage ... is the need for adequate numbers for analysis in the individual regions, conurbations, towns and rural districts for which results are required. (1971:60)

But to have adequate numbers in each stratum would require almost as many respondents as there were in the whole population. Thus, while there are advantages of sampling, as against complete coverage (savings in cost, labour and time) it was decided to send the questionnaire to the total population of the study.

Of course, a secondary purpose of this study was an educative one, namely to involve Humanities teachers in such a way as to increase their awareness of the various problem areas. Also, because of their involvement they may be more receptive to and interested in the findings of this study.

APPENDIX E

INFLUENCE WHICH INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS

OF PEOPLE OR CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE ON

DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT IS TAUGHT

INFLUENCE WHICH INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS OF PEOPLE OR
CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE ON DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT IS TAUGHT

	Degree of Influence					
	No Response	None At All	Very Little	Some	A Fair Bit	A Great Deal
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1. Teachers of the same form level at your school	4.1	3.9	10.7	34.9	29.8	16.6
2. Teachers of other form levels at your school	4.3	12.8	25.5	39.8	14.5	3.1
3. Head of Department	4.7	18.9	20.2	29.3	14.8	8.9
4. Micro school/mini school group	16.4	69.2	5.8	4.6	2.3	1.5
5. Principal and/or Vice-Principal	4.9	68.6	19.1	4.9	2.0	0.5
6. Teacher training students	7.1	55.6	18.4	14.0	3.3	1.6
7. Method lecturer from a teacher-training institution	7.6	68.9	8.6	8.1	4.9	1.8
8. Subject Association/s	5.8	37.7	20.6	28.3	5.9	1.8
9. Regional consultants	6.1	63.0	17.4	10.9	2.3	0.3
10. Subject Standing Committee	6.4	56.9	17.4	15.0	3.6	0.7
11. Audio Visual Education Officer	6.6	61.0	18.8	10.4	2.3	1.0
12. Drama Resource Centre	7.2	70.7	12.7	6.4	2.1	0.8
13. Teachers from other schools	4.9	34.4	28.0	25.7	5.4	1.5
14. School careers officers	5.9	59.5	18.4	12.8	2.8	0.5
15. Your academic background	4.4	5.8	12.7	23.4	34.5	18.9
16. Your personal interests and/or commitments	3.9	2.0	6.3	27.5	38.8	21.5
17. Student interests	3.9	0.7	3.6	22.7	38.2	30.8
18. Available resources	5.3	1.6	2.8	16.1	34.0	40.0

n = 608

APPENDIX F

INFLUENCE WHICH INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS

OF PEOPLE OR CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE ON

DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT MATERIALS ARE USED

INFLUENCE WHICH INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS OF PEOPLE OR CIRCUMSTANCES
HAVE ON DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT MATERIALS ARE USED

		Degree of Influence					
		No Response	None At All	Very Little	Some	A Fair Bit	A Great Deal
		%	%	%	%	%	%
1.	Teachers of the same form level	5.6	6.6	12.1	36.6	26.2	13.7
2.	Teachers at other form levels at your school	6.1	14.8	30.6	31.3	14.1	3.1
3.	Head of Department	8.9	20.2	21.5	29.3	13.0	7.1
4.	Micro school/mini school group	15.3	73.5	4.6	3.6	2.3	0.7
5.	Principal and/or Vice-Principal	6.6	74.0	13.5	3.6	1.6	0.7
6.	Publishers or Book Shops' representatives	6.4	46.9	28.6	15.0	2.8	0.3
7.	School librarian	5.9	19.2	27.3	30.8	13.5	3.3
8.	Regional Consultant	7.4	67.3	15.0	9.0	1.3	0
9.	Subject Associations	7.4	45.6	23.5	17.1	5.6	0.8
10.	Teacher training students	7.7	60.2	17.1	11.5	2.6	0.8
11.	Special Method Lecturer from a teacher training institution	8.2	71.4	8.4	7.2	3.6	1.2
12.	Subject Standing Committee	7.6	65.0	14.6	10.0	2.3	0.5
13.	Audio Visual Education Officer	7.6	58.9	18.1	11.2	3.5	0.8
14.	Drama Resource Centre	8.4	73.7	9.7	6.4	1.2	0.7
15.	Teachers from other schools	6.4	39.3	26.8	22.0	4.6	0.8
16.	School Careers Officer	7.2	65.3	15.1	9.7	2.5	0.2
17.	Parents	6.9	52.8	23.5	13.7	2.0	1.2
18.	Educational Technologist	10.2	76.6	8.1	3.1	1.2	0.8
19.	Student interests	8.4	3.5	6.4	25.7	35.4	20.7

n=608

APPENDIX G

THE EXTENT TO WHICH SOURCES OF DIFFICULTY

ARE PERCEIVED AS PROBLEMS IN HUMANITIES TEACHING

THE EXTENT TO WHICH SOURCES OF DIFFICULTY ARE
PERCEIVED AS PROBLEMS IN HUMANITIES TEACHING

	Extent of Problem				
	No Response	Not A Problem	A Small Problem	A Consider- able Problem	A Serious Problem
	%	%	%	%	%
(a) Insufficient assistance from curriculum experts (at C & R or in regions)	8.2	36.2	32.9	16.0	6.4
(b) Lack of variety of curriculum materials available	6.3	33.9	31.3	20.1	8.6
(c) Finding time to prepare lesson adequately	5.4	14.1	27.8	27.6	25.0
(d) Insufficient time for curriculum development	5.6	8.4	20.2	34.9	30.9
(e) Lack of coordination within the Humanities department	5.1	28.0	34.9	20.7	11.3
(f) Staff turnover from one year to the next	6.9	23.5	34.9	20.1	14.3
(g) The number of staff members with very little teaching experience	5.9	43.1	35.7	10.1	5.3
(h) General lack of understanding by non-Humanities teachers of Humanities teaching	5.4	17.8	31.7	27.1	17.9
(i) Developing teaching ideas and approaches	6.7	20.1	38.3	25.2	9.5
(j) Getting students interested in Humanities	5.4	12.5	32.9	34.2	15.0
(k) Lack of an overall curriculum plan	6.1	35.4	29.9	15.6	12.8
(l) Insufficient money available for the purchase of materials	6.3	28.6	29.8	18.6	16.6
(m) Insufficient curriculum materials available	6.6	28.8	32.9	20.7	10.7
(n) Inappropriateness of the curriculum assistance available	9.9	33.7	31.1	17.4	7.9
(o) Insufficient teacher training in curriculum	8.1	25.5	26.5	23.4	16.6
(p) Insufficient in-service education help with curriculum	8.2	21.9	26.2	28.6	15.1

n=608

APPENDIX H

ALTERNATIVE DESCRIPTIONS

OF HUMANITIES CURRICULA

IN TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

ALTERNATIVE DESCRIPTIONS OF HUMANITIES
CURRICULA IN TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

(G) WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS MOST CLOSELY DESCRIBES THE
PRESENT SITUATION IN HUMANITIES AT YOUR SCHOOL (Indicate with
a tick)

1. Teachers follow an overall Humanities curriculum
   outline but not very much consultation takes place. | 127 |

2. There is an overall curriculum outline but it is
   mostly ignored by teachers. | 38 |

3. There is no course outline that I know of and
   teachers do their own thing with their classes. | 59 |

4. There is no total school Humanities curriculum
   outline at the moment but some discussion has
   begun with a view to doing something about it. | 112 |

5. There is a total course outline and teachers
   adhere pretty well to the suggested sequence
   of topics. | 101 |

6. There is no written Humanities curriculum outline
   but teachers consult with each other frequently
   to plan new units and to avoid repetition for
   students. | 156 |

7. There is a total curriculum outline and teachers
   consult frequently about its on-going
   application. | 66 |

mean: 94.1