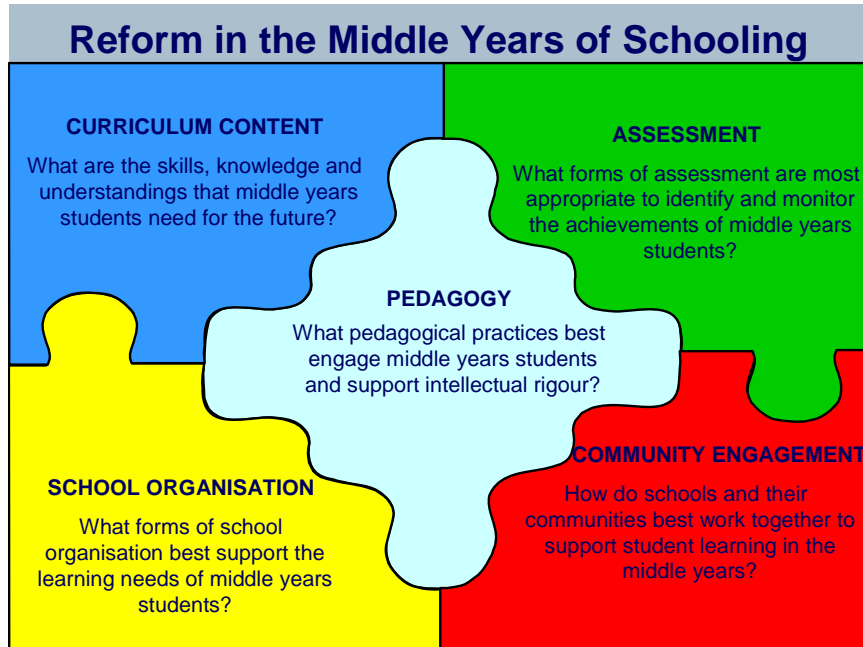


1. The Program Context

Over the past ten years schools around Victoria have been developing their Middle Years programs around the findings from the massive research base that now exists on student in the middle years .The development has centred around the key areas illustrated in the diagram below



<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/mys/supportmaterials/>

The essence of the research is that teacher/student relationships should be more personalised, that pedagogy and assessment should be more student centred, curriculum more engaging and relevant to better prepare them for life in the global knowledge society and that school organisation should be realigned to put the student in the centre.

Our knowledge of middle year's students indicates that teaching and learning should be as personalised and flexible as possible. By redressing the institutionalised nature of schooling, minimising the number of teachers with whom students regularly interact, timetabling sustained learning time and having small teams of teachers working with consistent groups of students, higher levels of rapport, trust and learning can be achieved.

In 2006 UHS was successful in gaining time for a Teacher Professional Leave Team to explore the possibilities of a special Year 9 program that would build on these emerging trends whilst maintaining the essence of the University High culture.

Over the past twelve months the team has reflected on the nature of students at University High and listened to teachers and students. As well, the team has visited schools already adopting successful programs, read widely on best practice learning and analysed the research. The team's deliberations have now been synthesised into a draft Year 9 program. This program will sit alongside the recently restructured Year 10 program giving students in the pathway years greater choice and flexibility .

Our proposal presents an exciting opportunity to develop an innovative inquiry program that will build on the best UHS traditions of rigour and excellence and integrate a variety of different learning experiences all focussed on the wellbeing and intellectual, social and personal development of the individual student.

2. Educational Framework

Vision –UHS Year 9 Program 2010

University High Year 9 students are engaged and motivated by a challenging and stimulating program that integrates lifelong skills within a rich community based curriculum .Student are given opportunities to personally and socially develop and are known and encouraged by a team of teachers who provide personalised feedback and support . The expectations within the program are high and students are encouraged to extend themselves as thinkers becoming lifelong learners who are confident and responsible global citizens, capable of facing the future with resilience and confidence .

The Program is staffed by a team of creative teacher facilitators who work as a dynamic team generating a program that brings energy to the school community, and which integrates best practice learning and realises the potential of its students

Principles on which the program has been designed

Rationale drawing on Victorian Essential Learning's and the Middle Years Research and Development

A commitment to developing

- Independent responsible learners with high expectations
- Ethical, caring global citizens
- Learning through authentic tasks that require complex thought, creativity and allow time for exploration
- a constructivist method of learning Involving students in decision-making about content, process and assessment;
- Team processes involving co-operation, communication, negotiation and social competencies
- Recognising and meeting individual differences in interest, achievement and learning styles.
- Time-tabling for sustained thinking and learning;
- Teacher-student-class arrangements for strengthened teacher-student knowledge and relationships
- Team-teaching and ongoing professional learning for staff ;
- Integration of technologies and rich resources
- Strong Community partnerships and engagement in real life issues

3. Curriculum Overview

The ten weeks will consist of the following elements

- Skills Based Workshops/Guest Presenters
- A Residential Team Experience
- A Community Team Project
- An Individual Rich Task
- The Melbourne Roam-inquiry based learning exploring the layers of city life
- Student/Team Presentation/Celebration

Description of each element

Skills Based Workshops/Guest Presenters –explicit teaching and learning around key personal, social, interdisciplinary skills –thinking, research, organisational, communication, team building, reflective practice ,Socratic questioning, resilience, leadership ,community awareness, global issues

A Residential Team Experience –students will have an opportunity to integrate personal and social learning through a participation in a student led camp

Community Team Project –Self Directed Team Task linking students with their Communities with the aim of making a contribution to social and community well being

Rich Task –Individual exploration of a big idea or question connected to the world beyond the Classroom incorporating thinking, problem solving research, presentation skills .
Research question –Inquiry-Presentation

The Melbourne Roam – The jigsaw of contemporary city life

What makes for a liveable city? Does Melbourne deserve to be considered as one of the worlds most liveable cities? What issues do modern cities have to address to ensure their sustainability /

Using Melbourne and its infrastructure as an example of a contemporary city students will explore the layers that make up

- a culturally rich and liveable community
- an inclusive, yet diverse multi cultural society-
- a sustainable, progressive, international city
- a thriving centre of commerce ,business and industry
- a well educated, law abiding democracy

The roams will be organised on a half day basis and revolve around the city services, landmarks and centres of activity. Students will be encouraged to bring back their impressions and questions and each Year 9 cohort will contribute their perspective on their community.

Student/Team Presentation –students feed back their work, contributions and learning's through formalised reflection, self evaluation and presentation

4. Program Structure and Organisation

A number of models were discussed with staff

Model 1 which featured the following elements was preferred by staff

Key Features of the Proposed Model

- Block of time –one term for all students, allows immersion
- Equal loss of time to all KLA's
- Facilitated ease of relationship building
- Flexibility to organise excursions, camps
- Practical for staffing
- Encourages teacher teams
- Minimises disruption to the school program

Weekly structure

- A weekly outline of the program is outlined in the Appendix –*Appendix 2*

Physical resources

- An open space that will accommodate 50students and allow formal and informal teaching and learning arrangements .Ownership of space .Separate learning contexts
- Break out areas for small group work
- Ready access to ICT
- Furniture that readily adapts to the context
- Library Annexe

Staffing

- To ensure the program is embedded in the school and amongst teachers there is a need for a team approach
- Two full time teachers with time allowances of four sessions for coordinating and planning
- A team of teachers with a partial allotment in the program. At no time should there be fewer than three teachers with the student cohort and the optimum at times of four
- From research of other programs and feedback if the desired aims of personalised learning are to be met the staffing needs to be above norm

5. Assessment

Principles for assessment

- Commitment to engaging students in reflection on their learning
- Developing different modes of assessment reflecting the variety and interdisciplinary nature of learning
- Integrating student portfolios as a means of self reflection, goal setting and record of learning
- Integrating key VELS domains/dimensions as a core framework for part of the assessment

Assessment Matrix

- See Appendix

Relevant VELS Domains and Dimensions

- See Appendix