Community Studies video

Community Studies provides students with insights into the ways in which communities are shaped and operate. It allows students to learn in a community context, both within and beyond the school environment. It can be undertaken at Stage 1 or Stage 2 as either 10-credit or 20-credit program.

Students set challenging and achievable goals for their community activity, and build on their existing knowledge and skills. They develop the capacity to work independently and apply their skills and knowledge in practical ways in their community.

At both Stage 1 and 2 the learning requirements direct students to plan and develop a community activity, to take practical action in their community, seek feedback from members of their community and reflect on their learning. The main difference between Stage 1 and Stage 2 is that at Stage 2 are required to complete a presentation to an audience about a community activity and their learning.

Community Studies, enables students to demonstrate their learning by pursuing an area of interest through a wide range of areas of study. Some examples of Community activities that students have undertaken in the past include making a video to teach new bike tricks, fundraising to upgrade a local swimming pool and creating memory tiles for a kindergarten.

Further examples are available in the subject outline and this resource which is on the Community Studies minisite. However students are not limited to these activities as they can generate their own focus and direction.

As mentioned earlier, Community Studies can be studied at Stage 1 or 2 as either a 10 or 20-credit program. However at Stage 2 it does not contribute to an ATAR for university admission or TAFE entry as it is not a Tertiary Admission Subject. Community Studies does contribute to students achieving their SACE at Stage 1 and Stage 2 and students can do more than one Community Studies subject. If students do more than one Stage 2, they must study in different subject areas.

The course outline explains the specific requirements of the respective Stage 1 and Stage 2 courses. The Assessment Overview — which is part of the Learning and Assessment Plan at Stage 1 — and the Assessment Group Planner at Stage 2 are important documents as they identify the assessment types, assessment names, learning requirements and the assessment design criteria. Students should be given the opportunity to address all the assessment design criteria; for Community Studies these are Planning and Organisation, Communication and Interaction, Fulfilment of Contract, and Reflection. It is critical teachers ensure students are able to provide evidence at the highest level in each of the performance standards.

As with all Stage 1 subjects, assessment is 100% school-based and at Stage 2 it is 70% school-assessed and the remaining 30 is externally-assessed.

So what makes a good community activity?

The community activity needs to be challenging but achievable and reflect the student’s own individual interests and goals. It needs to have value to the wider community and the student needs to have access to someone from the community to provide them with their expertise and continual feedback.

How do teachers support students to develop a good contract?

As with any subject, students benefit from clear and explicit instruction to guide and support them through the requirements of the subject.

Well-constructed task sheets are also critical to scaffold the skills and learning expected of students. Before beginning a contract, teachers often like to complete some preparatory activities. These activities could be undertaken collaboratively and include a think, pair and share activity to develop ideas for possible community activities or mind maps for brainstorming and further developing ideas. Refer to the *subject advice and strategies* section of the support materials on the Community Studies minisite for preparatory activities.

A good contract will identify challenging but achievable goals, identify existing knowledge and skills, including literacy and numeracy in detail, identify specific new knowledge and skills, identify a focus capability for development, provide a detailed list of steps and the time it will take to complete each step, identify the nominated community contact or contacts, identify strategies to reflect on the community activity.

So how can we as teachers support students to maintain a good record of evidence in their folio?

I like to show students examples of folios and point out to them the variety of evidence that can be documented. This may include: sketches, annotated photographs, graphed survey results, emails, interview notes, ongoing reflection on progress, feedback from the community expert identified in the contract, the list is endless.

You can support students by providing them with ideas like the ones on the screen so students are familiar with the range of evidence they can provide. A task sheet with clear and explicit instructions about developing and maintaining the folio is also available on the Community Studies minisite.

The folio will contain all feedback from the community as well as ongoing reflection from the student on the progress of their activity and their learning. This can be done through journals, blogs, emails, teacher discussions with the students as well as teacher prepared templates.

In summary, a good folio will have documentation of all actions and activities, all communication and interaction, ongoing reflection on progress and evidence of contract completion.

At Stage 2, students are required to conduct a presentation to an audience.

So what makes a good presentation?

I meet with the students to discuss their presentation planning and to provide explicit teaching of presentation skills. I negotiate with the student a rehearsal for the presentation and provide feedback on it. A task sheet is available on the minisite to assist students in the planning of their presentation.

Within the folio, students will provide evidence of the preparation and execution of the presentation as well as feedback obtained from the audience. Evidence can include palm notes, a copy of the PowerPoint, annotated images and completed feedback sheets.

In Stage 1 when students have completed their community activity and received feedback, they are required to reflect on what they have learnt, its value to themselves and to others. And guiding questions for this can be found in the subject outline.

At Stage 2 this reflection accounts for 30% of their overall grade and is externally assessed.

So how do teachers support students to develop a good reflection?

The task sheet available on the minisite provides clear and explicit support for students regarding assessment requirements as it identifies the area students need to address such as reflecting on their successes, challenges encountered, the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, the development of their chosen capability, the value of the community activity to themselves and others and an evaluation of the feedback they received. In addition, the Chief Assessor’s report provides teachers with ways to support students to be successful in each assessment type. Annotated examples from the website also show students how to demonstrate their evidence.

The reflection can be presented in written, oral or multimodal form within the word and time specifications of the subject outline. The students are required to complete a 200-word summary to describe their community outcome, the processes they used and an outline of their presentation. This is separate and in addition to the maximum of 500 words or 3 minutes oral for a 10-credit Community Studies subject or a maximum of 1000 words or 6 minutes oral for a 20-credit subject. To assist students, teachers can provide scaffolding to ensure evidence addresses the assessment criteria at the highest level.

Quality management systems in schools ensure that every year teachers monitor student progress to identify students at risk of not being successful in one of their subjects. After interviews and discussion with the student concerned, sometimes it is deemed necessary to withdraw the student from the subject. In these circumstances, it may be appropriate to enrol them in Community Studies. In this way, they will be able to use the learning from that subject as long as it is linked to the community activity. For example, as student may be withdrawn from Physical Education, enrolled in Community Studies and develop a community activity which involves learning new skills and knowledge about coaching and applying these skills to coaching a junior basketball team. Examples where materials from another subject are used to undertake a Community Studies subject are available on the minisite.

It is the school’s decision whether the student remains in their current class to study Community Studies or if they join an established Community Studies class or if they remain in their initial subject and then work with their Community Studies teacher in designated times and areas outside of lesson time. However, regardless of the timetabling, it is really important that students still receive the same ongoing support so that they can stay on track with their community activity.

There is a very good resource on the website to help teachers in advising students to develop a new Community Studies program. Please refer to this document: *advice for teachers and students using materials from another subject* on the community studies minisite or contact the curriculum officer at the SACE Board for further advice.

Stage 1 resulting occurs in June and December and is 100% school-assessed. Ensure you refer to the key documents for Stage 1 resulting which is shown on the screen. Teachers need to refer to community Studies subject operational information in order to know the schedule for when material is required for external assessment and moderation purposes.

At Stage 2 teachers will mark all student reflections and record results for the external component. It is important that teachers do not reveal these results to the student as they are then marked by SACE Board-appointed markers to ensure consistency of assessment across the state. Teachers then package materials using the stationery provided by the SACE Board.

A cover sheet as shown is to be used for each students’ reflection. Stage 2 moderation of the 70% school-assessed component occurs in November. And all work for each student for under each enrolment code is required for moderation.

A cover sheet for each student school-assessment materials is attached to the work to ensure the student has provided all information and this also enables efficient processing at moderation.

Many students enjoy the flexibility Community Studies provides and are able to demonstrate learning in an area of the community they are already involved in. Community Studies allows students to achieve their SACE in a self-directed and independent way. However, it is essential that teachers provide students with the support in order to develop their skills and knowledge to allow them to achieve highly in the subject.