
Assessment 1 - Planning and Justification Portfolio

Lesson 1 Justification Report – Quality Teaching Model (QTM)

Unit: *The Great War: Australia's Experience*

Lesson Focus: *Causes of WWI and Reasons for Enlistment*

Length: 45 minutes

Year Level: 9 (Middle Years)

Dimension 1: Intellectual Quality

QTM Elements: Deep Understanding & Higher-Order Thinking

Strategy 1 – Developing Deep Understanding through Concept Mapping and Explicit Teaching

Lesson section: *Introduction and Development.*

In this lesson, I deliberately focus on 'Deep Understanding' by guiding students to recognise how the four MAIN causes of World War I - Militarism, Alliances, Imperialism, and Nationalism - were interconnected rather than isolated events. The lesson begins with explicit teaching supported by visuals and concept mapping, encouraging students to explore the complex relationships between political, social, and economic factors that contributed to the outbreak of war.

This aligns with Gore and Ladwig's (2003) definition of Deep Understanding, which requires students to "integrate knowledge into coherent structures rather than memorise disconnected facts." By using a visual concept map and explicit teacher modelling, students can see how each cause influenced the others, helping them to form a holistic and relational understanding.

This strategy also aligns with Middle Years pedagogy, where adolescents benefit from structured frameworks that make abstract historical concepts more tangible (Duchesne et al, 2023). Providing a clear scaffold allows students to build cognitive connections between ideas while still maintaining active engagement.

Why I chose this element:

History content in Year 9 requires students to move beyond recall to explanation and interpretation. Teaching the MAIN causes conceptually ensures they develop analytical thinking and relational understanding—both crucial to historical reasoning.

How it supports implementation:

The concept mapping activity allows students to actively process cause-and-effect

relationships while the teacher's explicit modelling ensures conceptual clarity. This dual structure ensures differentiation for mixed-ability learners and maintains intellectual challenge.

Link to Middle Years practice:

According to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2017), effective Middle Years teachers design learning that builds on prior knowledge and fosters abstract reasoning. Explicit teaching followed by guided inquiry caters to early adolescents' developmental need for clarity, structure, and relevance.

Strategy 2 – Encouraging Higher-Order Thinking through Source Analysis and Inquiry Questioning**Lesson section:** *Development.*

The lesson integrates a short source analysis activity using a WWI recruitment poster and a soldier's diary excerpt. Students respond to the inquiry question:

"What messages and values are being communicated, and why might Australians have chosen to enlist?"

This activity encourages students to analyse, interpret, and evaluate key indicators of Higher-Order Thinking. Instead of passively receiving information, students apply historical reasoning skills by inferring meaning, questioning bias, and connecting ideas to broader social values.

Gore and Ladwig (2003) argue that Higher-Order Thinking "requires students to manipulate information and ideas to transform their meaning," which this task achieves through interpretation and evidence-based reasoning.

Why I chose this element:

The skill of analysing sources is central to historical inquiry and explicitly stated in the Year 9 Australian Curriculum (AC9HH9S02). By embedding source work early in the unit, students build analytical habits and develop disciplinary thinking.

How it supports implementation:

The "See, Think, Wonder" thinking routine guides students through observation, interpretation, and reflection stages, providing structure while promoting open-ended reasoning. This approach also differentiates by allowing all students to engage meaningfully, regardless of literacy level.

Link to Middle Years practice:

Middle Years learners are developing abstract thinking and are naturally curious about real-world issues (Vygotsky, 1978). Source analysis encourages exploration and inquiry, satisfying their need for cognitive challenge while validating their developing ability to reason critically.

References for Slides (Dimension 1):

- Gore, J., & Ladwig, J. (2003). *Quality Teaching Model*. NSW Department of Education.
- Duchesne, S., McMaugh, A., Bochner, S., & Krause, K. (2023). *Educational Psychology for Learning and Teaching* (7th ed.). Cengage.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Harvard University Press.
- AITSL. (2017). *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*.

Dimension 2: Quality Learning Environment

QTM Elements: Engagement & Social Support

Strategy 1 – Promoting Engagement through Visual Hook and Guided Discussion

Lesson Section: *Transition and Introduction.*

At the start of the lesson, students examined a World War I recruitment poster as a visual hook. The image served as an immediate entry point into the historical context, sparking curiosity about why Australians enlisted. Using the *See, Think, Wonder* thinking routine, I guided students to make observations, interpret meaning, and pose their own questions.

This opening task encouraged Engagement, as defined by the Quality Teaching Model — “sustained interest and active participation in learning tasks” (NSW DET, 2006). The poster provided emotional and cognitive immediacy, helping students to connect personally with the time period before moving into more abstract learning (the MAIN causes lecture).

Why I chose this element:

Visual prompts are powerful tools for capturing adolescent learners’ attention. Middle Years students often respond best to stimulus-based learning that is concrete and emotionally resonant (Duchesne et al., 2023). Starting with a striking poster drew students into the lesson through curiosity and relevance.

How it supports implementation:

The *See, Think, Wonder* routine scaffolds observation and inference, ensuring every student has an accessible entry point regardless of prior knowledge. This creates an inclusive and engaging classroom atmosphere from the outset.

Connection to Middle Years practice:

Engagement in adolescence depends on relevance and emotional connection. The visual hook satisfies the developmental need for immediacy and meaning, while the open questioning supports autonomy and student voice — both key aspects of Middle Years pedagogy (Beane, 1993).

Strategy 2 – Building Social Support through Reflective Writing and Feedback

Lesson Section: *Consolidation.*

The final activity asked students to write a short diary entry from the perspective of a young Australian deciding whether to enlist in 1914. This task encouraged empathy, creativity, and reflection — and relied on a supportive classroom climate that values effort and voice.

I provided verbal encouragement throughout (“Great connection there,” “I like how you linked nationalism to pride”), affirming students’ ideas as they developed their writing. This approach directly supports the QTM element of Social Support, where “students experience positive relationships that encourage participation and persistence” (NSW DET, 2006).

Why I chose this element:

Empathetic tasks like diary writing require students to take intellectual and emotional risks. Establishing safety and affirmation allows them to explore ideas openly without fear of error.

How it supports implementation:

Teacher feedback was framed using a model that targets affirming students’ strengths before suggesting an improvement. This simple yet consistent approach encourages effort and reinforces a growth mindset.

Connection to Middle Years practice:

Middle Years research highlights that positive teacher–student relationships are essential for learning engagement and wellbeing (Brown & Larson, 2009). Adolescents are more likely to persevere in reflective, creative tasks when they feel their ideas are respected and supported.

References for Slides (Dimension 2):

- Gore, J., & Ladwig, J. (2003). *Quality Teaching Model*.
- NSW Department of Education and Training. (2006). *Quality Teaching in NSW Public Schools*.
- Brown, B. B., & Larson, J. (2009). *Peer Relationships in Adolescence*. In *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*.
- Beane, J. (1993). *A Middle School Curriculum: From Rhetoric to Reality*.

Dimension 3: Significance

QTM Elements: Connectedness & Inclusivity

Strategy 1 – Building Connectedness through Empathetic Writing

Lesson section: *Consolidation*.

The diary-entry task at the end of Lesson 1 allows students to adopt the perspective of a young Australian in 1914, deciding whether to enlist. This task develops ‘Connectedness’ by encouraging students to link historical knowledge with personal emotion and moral reasoning. According to the QTM, Connectedness occurs when “learning has meaning

beyond the classroom” (NSW DET, 2006). Through writing, students draw on the factual knowledge from the earlier lecture and source analysis but apply it creatively to express feelings of duty, pride and uncertainty, universal emotions that still resonate today.

This strategy ensures that historical learning becomes personal rather than distant. Middle Years learners are developing identity and empathy; therefore, tasks that ask them to “step into history” satisfy their social-emotional need for relevance and self-expression. It also supports civic learning: by reflecting on why people enlisted, students begin to consider contemporary values such as service, loyalty, and national identity. This balance of fact and empathy deepens conceptual understanding while strengthening emotional engagement.

Why I chose this element:

For adolescents, emotional connection is critical to long-term memory and meaning-making. Allowing them to write as historical characters transforms abstract information into lived experience.

How the strategy supports implementation:

The teacher models historical empathy first, discussing how feelings and motivations differ across contexts, then scaffolds the diary task with guiding questions (e.g., *What would you fear? What would you hope for?*). Students receive formative, supportive feedback as they write, ensuring safety while encouraging depth.

Middle Years link:

Bishop and Curtis (2001) emphasise that adolescent engagement increases when learning connects to human stories and identity formation. Empathetic writing provides precisely that bridge.

Strategy 2 – Extending Relevance through Modern Reflection**Lesson section:** *Conclusion.*

To conclude the lesson, students participated in a short reflection asking, “*What can we learn from WWI today?*” This simple but powerful prompt transforms understanding into personal relevance, fulfilling the QTM’s focus on *Significance* as “*learning that has value and meaning beyond the immediate task*” (NSW DET, 2006).

By linking historical events to modern citizenship and shared values, students recognise that history shapes how societies define courage, sacrifice and identity. This reflective step reinforces that studying WWI is not about memorising battles but understanding enduring lessons about humanity and community.

Why I chose this element:

Adolescents are forming worldviews and ethical awareness; connecting historical insight to contemporary issues supports this development.

How the strategy supports implementation:

Using a simple exit poll or chat reflection allows every student to articulate a takeaway,

ensuring all voices are heard. This reflective closure also serves as formative assessment — revealing what ideas resonated most strongly.

Middle Years link:

According to the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2022), History teaching should cultivate active, informed citizens. By inviting students to relate WWI experiences to present-day contexts, the lesson aligns with that goal and supports ongoing critical thinking about identity and community.

References:

- NSW Department of Education and Training. (2006). *Quality Teaching in NSW Public Schools*.
- Bishop, P., & Curtis, D. (2001). *The Power of Adolescence*.
- ACARA. (2022). *Australian Curriculum v9 – History*.

Conclusion:

This lesson integrates elements from each QTM dimension to create a balanced, engaging, and intellectually rigorous learning experience. The combination of explicit instruction, collaborative inquiry, and empathic writing supports both cognitive and emotional development.

Through this planning, students are not only learning about the causes and experiences of World War I but also developing the analytical, reflective, and interpersonal skills central to success in the Middle Years. The QTM provides a cohesive structure ensuring that high-quality pedagogy, deep learning, and adolescent engagement are embedded at every stage of the lesson.

Complete Reference list:

- ACARA. (2022). *Australian Curriculum v9*. <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>
- Beane, J. (1993). *A Middle School Curriculum: From Rhetoric to Reality*. <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/cirs/3134/>
- Bishop, P., & Curtis, D. (2001). *Service Learning in the Middle Grades: Learning by Doing and Caring*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19404476.2017.1415600>
- Brown, B. B., & Larson, J. (2009). *Peer Relationships in Adolescence*. <https://prsq.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1209/2019/09/Brown-Larson-09-Peer-relas-in-adol-Hndbk-Adol-Psych-3rd-ed.pdf>
- Duchesne, S., McMaugh, A., Bochner, S., & Krause, K. (2023). *Educational Psychology for Learning and Teaching* (7th ed.). Cengage. [https://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=RQ9xDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=Duchesne,+S.,+McMaugh,+A.,+Bochner,+S.,+%26+Krause,+K.,+\(2023\).%C2%A0Educational+Psychology+for+Learning+and+Teaching+\(7th+ed.\).+Cengage.&ots=r11L76sjF&sig=85yUBWfvxvsovHIF5PB1b0NQ_2l&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=RQ9xDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=Duchesne,+S.,+McMaugh,+A.,+Bochner,+S.,+%26+Krause,+K.,+(2023).%C2%A0Educational+Psychology+for+Learning+and+Teaching+(7th+ed.).+Cengage.&ots=r11L76sjF&sig=85yUBWfvxvsovHIF5PB1b0NQ_2l&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false)

- Gore, J., & Ladwig, J. (2003). *Quality Teaching Model*. NSW Department of Education. https://openresearch.newcastle.edu.au/articles/conference_contribution/Equity_effects_of_Quality_Teaching_closing_the_gap/28984454
- NSW Department of Education and Training. (2006). *Quality Teaching in NSW Public Schools*. https://www.darcymoore.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/qt_EPSColor.pdf
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Harvard University Press. [https://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=RxjjUefze_oC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Vygotsky,+L.+\(1978\).%C2%A0Mind+in+Society.%C2%A0Harvard+University+Press.&ots=okBVSyq_fo&sig=uKA-LSDdOkhpVSwd5M5DXo_c25Y&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Vygotsky%2C%20L.%20\(1978\).%C2%A0Mind%20in%20Society.%C2%A0Harvard%20University%20Press.&f=false](https://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=RxjjUefze_oC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Vygotsky,+L.+(1978).%C2%A0Mind+in+Society.%C2%A0Harvard+University+Press.&ots=okBVSyq_fo&sig=uKA-LSDdOkhpVSwd5M5DXo_c25Y&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Vygotsky%2C%20L.%20(1978).%C2%A0Mind%20in%20Society.%C2%A0Harvard%20University%20Press.&f=false)