

**Social Studies Reorganization****Feedback and other general comments**(last updated: 5<sup>th</sup> March

2015)

	(JB) I really like the idea that in Year 3 we are given the freedom to choose which topics to teach to the pupils from the elective topics. It is more beneficial to the students when the teacher gets to choose the topics she finds most interesting from the three sections: G,C,S	<i>curricular devolution</i>
	<p>(MD) Year 6 – Dwar il-fieldwork tal-belt Valletta, kien fieldwork interessanti però nixtieq ngħaddi dawn il-kummenti:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Għal dan il-fieldwork, it-tfal kellhom prattikament ikunu jafu kollox bl-amment. Kien hemm hafna mistoqsijiet li ma setgħux jiġu mwiegħba fuq il-post. Għaldaqstant dan serva l-iżjed biex jaraw il-postijiet ta' nteress li jinsabu fil-belt Valletta aktar milli biex iwiegħbu l-mistoqsijiet fuq il-post. Ikun ferm aħjar kieku l-mistoqsijiet jistgħu jiġu mwiegħba jekk jaraw xi informazzjoni/sinjali li jkun hemm ma' kull post storiku.</li> <li>• Dawk it-tfal li jkunu 'absent' għall-fieldwork x'jiġri? Kif se jagħmlu l-fieldwork u x'marki jingħataw?</li> </ul> <p>(AV) In the case of students who were absent during the fieldwork and had to carry it out with their parents, it's somewhat hard to evaluate pupil's performance.</p> <p>(AV) From a teacher's perspective, the Year 6 fieldwork was very well planned and supported by the worksheets and video clips.</p> <p>(AV) From a parent's perspective, the Year 4 fieldwork around town entailed extra lessons by the class teacher to discuss the topic since the Year 4 syllabus does not deal with this topic at all.</p> <p>(JS) As regards the fieldwork it was very interesting and fun as well as educational to the pupils. As regards the second fieldwork there could be more options as to where this could be carried out.</p> <p>(JM) Compared to the Mdina fieldwork, this year I found the Marsaxlokk fieldwork quite loaded with questions and with some of them proved difficult to answer especially since this year I have the lower band. In fact I'm thinking about trying the project apart from the fieldwork for the second semester. In the Marsaxlokk fieldwork there were certain questions which my pupils found it hard to answer as they did not have any background about the history of Malta such as:</p>	<i>fieldwork</i>

<p>1) Torri Vendome: X'taħseb li kien l-iskop ta' dawn l-ixquq?</p> <p>2) pillbox: X'taħseb li kien l-iskop li għalih inbniet?</p> <p>I think year 5 pupils should have at least some general knowledge about the knights of Malta to be able to think why for example the Fort San Lucjan was used.</p> <p>(SF) (All my outings are meant for the students to gain knowledge and social studies was always my main subject in mind when scouting sites and outing possibilities. (They instill the love in exploring and having fun in finding out more about their predecessors while being in full control of the process)</p> <p>(AS) I found the fieldwork very interesting, it helped a lot the students to look for things, notice things and search for information and prepare themselves well. In my opinion it was important that the guidelines of how to handle and not handle the fieldwork had to come earlier, since a lot of the fieldworks were already done, and handled in the wrong way by some year 6 teachers, since it was the first time for them.</p> <p>(CM) I would like to note that the Year 3 fieldwork booklet for the first semester was not targeted for the students of our school, because it had questions like: what signs are there around your school or shops or zebra crossings, when there aren't any. Or else what do you find in front of your school, none of the multiply choices couldn't fit in with our area, because there is only a house with a very particular character of family living in it. Even regarding the public garden, the only one that is in Senglea is about an hour's walk from the school. Also the students found it too long 12 pages to do.</p> <p>(OB) The fieldwork's content is fully loaded. For students with lower ability, it was a bit to of a hassle to complete all the fieldwork. (referring to the one about Marsaxlokk).</p> <p>(SA) The children really enjoyed the fieldwork trip. This hands on experience involved them more to comprehend what they learnt in class and put it into practice. They were enthusiastic to fill in the fieldwork notes and fully participated.</p> <p>(GG) I prefer if the fieldwork workbook is not put online as parents can work it out with their children.</p> <p>(KA) I was very positive about the SS changes, for example, I really liked the fieldwork. The students learned a lot from it and participated a lot. The fieldwork was a learning experience and not just an exam. However I have just corrected the written papers and quite a big number of marks went down. That worried me a bit.</p>	
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	<p>(IF) The Valletta fieldwork took longer to be completed. By the end of the fieldwork, many students were tired and restless. On the other hand, all students benefitted a lot from the fieldwork.</p> <p>(DA) Fieldwork, as part of the social studies syllabus is interesting and made teachers and students alike aware of the fact of the importance of first hand experiences.</p> <p>(Z) The fieldwork shouldn't be online since most parents worked it out beforehand. – (by three teachers)</p>	
	<p>The first Field work (Il-Belt Valletta) was very interesting but it took us much more than 90minutes (from 9:20 till 1pm with only a 20min break). Year 6 Children got tired of walking and by the end of the fieldwork, they started to lack motivation due to being tired.</p> <p>I wish that next year it will be reduced without too much repetition. (Ex: There were a lot of questions which their answer was Glormu Cassar, over and over again).</p> <p>(LH) – year 3 teacher – I feel that 90 minutes are not enough for the second fieldwork. Unfortunately, we had to rush to at least cover half of the booklet provided. The children were very enthusiastic and they observed and asked a lot of questions when they were onsite. I had a lot of positive feedback from my kids. What I suggest is that we will be given the opportunity to have the fieldwork exercise somewhere in the South like Xrobb l-Ghagin.</p> <p>(MS) Nixtieq nikkummenta dwar il-‘Fieldwork’ intitolat Dawra fil-Belt /Raħal fejn Noqghod.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nemmen li l-‘fieldwork’ bħal dan kien ilu jinħass il-bżonn tiegħu sabiex l-istudenti tagħna jitgħallmu japprezzaw aħjar il-lokalità tagħhom. Il-‘fieldwork’ li ġie ppreżentat lill-istudenti tagħna kien ta’ livell li għen biex it-tfal jagħmlu użu tajjeb mis-sensi tagħhom tul il-ħarġa edukattiva u jsiru jafu aħjar raħal twelidhom.</li> <li>• Biss hassejt li l-‘fieldwork’ kien xi ffit twil iżżejjed u li xi domandi kienu ripetittivi: qed nirreferi għal meta l-istudenti kellhom jgħoddu n-numru ta’ vetturi li jgħaddu minn quddiem l-iskola, fi triq traffikuża / parti kwieta tal-lokalità. Hekk li wħud mit-tfal tilfu l-interess f’dan l-eżerċizzju.</li> <li>• Kien ikun aktar għaqli li kieku minflok dawn id-domandi msemmiya hawn fuq l-istudenti jittieħdu l-Kunsill Lokali tal-lokal u jiltaqgħu mas-Sindku fejn dan min-naħa tiegħu jispjega fid-dettall is-servizzi li joffri u l-istudenti jkollhom il-ħin isaqsu numru ta’ mistoqsijiet ippreparati lill-istess Sindku.</li> </ul>	<p><b>fieldwork duration</b></p>

	<p>(CKS) I teach a lower band class. Since many of my students have limited access to internet and other educational resources at home, fieldwork is the best option.</p> <p>(DC) Regarding the SS Project I agree that it carries immense educational benefits for the students, however from what I have experienced last year, most of the projects handed in were more of an adult’s work rather than a 10-year-old’s in their majority. I also feel that since most of the research will be done at home, it will discriminate pupils who have no help at home whatsoever.</p> <p>This year, having the benefit of a choice, I have opted for a second Fieldwork for the Annual Exam as, in my opinion, every pupil will have the opportunity to participate fully and solely under continuous monitoring by the teacher him/herself.</p> <p>(MVM) The reason why I opted for a fieldwork is first and foremost because the children are having a first hand and hands-on experience.</p> <p>(AS) In my opinion it is important for having a choice of a project and fieldwork in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, since in my case I am training the students in learning how to do a powerpoint project and they are really enjoying it. The fieldwork will still be done as an outing.</p> <p>(OB) As regards the project, those children who don’t receive help from home, find it very difficult to make a suitable project. So, this year, as I’m teaching band 2, I preferred another fieldwork instead.</p> <p>(JS) I am definitely in favour of fieldworks as students have hands on experience on what they have learned in class. On the other hand, I am against projects at primary level as they are mainly done by parents/carers of students.</p> <p>(GEM) I would definitely prefer to opt for fieldwork in second term. I am currently teaching band 2 kids and together we really managed to do well in fieldwork. Project at home would be very very difficult for them.</p> <p>(DA) The project is important as well, however not everyone can contribute to it properly as some don’t care less and others care so much as to have it done, or most of it, by carers.</p> <p>(K) Children learn more through seeing and experimenting . I think children in Year 3 are still not well prepared for doing such projects and certain things which are in the fieldwork booklet would have been better done during the 2<sup>nd</sup> term since</p>	<p><i>fieldwork or project?</i></p>

	<p>certain topics will be much better covered such as cm, metres, adjectives etc... P.S. Not all questions were applicable to the location the fieldwork takes place. E.g. No. 10, <i>Għid kif trid tagħmel biex mill-kuritur <u>tinżel</u> fil-bitha</i>. Il-kelma ‘tinżel’ l-aħjar tinbidel u ssir ‘tmur’ għax mhux kulhadd irid jinżel biex imur fil-bitha!</p>	
	<p>(SID) I did not print all the worksheets in one booklet for the students to keep them interested and motivated for the new lessons still to be delivered.</p> <p>(KS) I appreciate the effort that has been made to improve the Social Studies syllabus, be it in the revised syllabus, available worksheets and lesson plans, introduction of fieldwork and projects and I would like to thank all of those involved. Yet I must admit that several topics are simply beyond the age of my students (year 3). I try to follow the lesson notes available, yet I feel that the students aren't enjoying the lesson as much as I want them to. I have printed all the worksheets available for the topics we had chosen and made a booklet. I now regret this as there is too much work and we are finding some difficulties to manage all of them – I will definitely remove some of the worksheets for next year's booklet.</p> <p>(AMA) I truly benefit from the worksheets and next year I will be doing a booklet since this year not all worksheets were out on time.</p> <p>(MVM) The booklets and the notes give teachers the same direction and path to take. Thus the children are given the same opportunity to discover topics unknown to them. Furthermore, this enhances collegiality among teachers. Keep up the good work and thanks for always taking in consideration our comments.</p> <p>(AS) Thanks for all the handouts and help related to syllabus. My confusion was only about the topic <i>Ġeografija mill-Aħbarijiet</i>, since I was scared I would leave something out since it could be very vast, and since we had that topic in our college, we had 4 topics for half yearly exams, since we had to cover also the topic, <i>Fejn ninsabu</i>, and it was too much to handle for the half yearly exams.</p> <p>(MV) Well done for the worksheets! However they would be better as a word document, so that one can modify any spelling mistakes or typing errors.</p> <p>(MD) The worksheets are very helpful, however pupils who have a low academic ability find it hard to work out most the exercises in worksheets, even though they have understood the topic being researched.</p> <p>(BB) Worksheets were a great help but there were too many of them.</p> <p>(BB) There are too many worksheets to be downloaded and printed. Some of the exercises are not so clear. Too much about the same topic!</p>	<p><b>worksheets</b></p>

	<p>(BB) The worksheets are not helpful to students in the lowest bands. These children have serious reading difficulties. It would be of great help if there were alternative worksheets for these students.</p> <p>(Z) There were too many worksheets and some information was above the students' level. I think that the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea could be introduced again.</p> <p>(Gh) I did not print the worksheets because some of them were read in class.</p>	
	<p>(SID)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very well planned syllabus which motivates the students to learn, think, research and observe more.</li> <li>• The fact that it was all planned and uploaded on 'ilearn' before the beginning of this scholastic year helped me as a teacher to plan better.</li> <li>• Well done!</li> </ul> <p>(SMS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the way the objectives for each lesson are listed helps me to understand more of what the children are to know by the end of the lesson.</li> <li>• The worksheets are of great help when planning as for me there is one thing less to prepare and I can thus prepare more activities for the lesson. However adaptations were needed for some worksheets e.g. year 2 S2.1.1 were children's matching can be so messy that I would not be able to recognise their answers. Additionally the questions at the end encouraged the children to think. However no space to note down their answer is provided which confused some children.</li> <li>• The children enjoyed the songs chosen and they also helped them remember things better from the lesson.</li> <li>• On the whole I liked the approach for the year 2 syllabus as the children are enjoying it</li> </ul> <p>(SF) It wasn't loaded and it isn't loaded now either. It's balanced and detailed in the right way</p> <p>(RM) Students are enjoying and are understanding more the subject. I believe that what they are learning will be of great importance for all their lives.</p> <p>(SB) Regarding Year 3: Parts of the first topic about Our school was too difficult for 6 year olds. Some concepts are still abstract for a young child. Besides it is too detailed and too long. At the end the children got bored hearing about the school.</p>	<p><i>the syllabus</i></p>

<p>Since now the other topics seem to be fine. Thanks.</p> <p>(CA) Some parents commented that some topics were too difficult for 8 year old children, like extreme weather and its effects. They also commented that they had difficulties to help their children study for the exam. It would be a good idea to have a sample exam paper.</p> <p>(LB) I appreciate all your efforts in facilitating our task as educators and all the material we can find on the website is so helpful. My students visit the website too and share what they learnt in class and I think this is true learning where the students are autonomous and not just passive receivers. I also like the fact that students will not be assessed again on the same themes in their annual exam. This reduces tension and makes the subject more child-friendly. We enjoyed the fieldwork so much (Ir-Rahal taghna) and a photo of us during the fieldwork even ended up in the Sunday Times !</p> <p>(CG) Vera prosi tal-websajt li tiġi aġġornata regolarment. Vera nsibha utli fit-tagħlim tas-sugġett tal-Istudji Soċjali. Grazzi ukoll tad-diversi riżorsi li nsibu fiha. Hadt gost ukoll bil-fatt li għall-eżami tal-aħhar ma jridux jistudjaw kollox imma t-topiks nqasmu – biċċa għall-eżami ta' nofs is-sena u l-bqija għall-eżami tal-aħhar.</p> <p>(TA) In my opinion, our pupils encountered difficulties when studying World War 2 and The Great Siege for their half yearly exams. These two topics shouldn't be chosen to be studied during the same period.</p> <p>(LM) Well Done for reorganising the SS syllabus, in general it's positive, but there are some points that would like to add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It's a good idea to have 3 core topics for the first semester and another 3 for the second.</li><li>• Fieldwork is interesting for both teacher and students but certain questions can be avoided for year 4 students (too much detail requested and too long, therefore children can show less interest).</li><li>• Worksheets are very helpful to consolidate topics but some of them can be avoided ... some exercises about the topic 'weather' are repetitive, for an 8-year old pupil it's more effective to learn about the rights and duties of children than as workers (maybe in year 5 or year 6 would be much better), to start from the first week of school doing research about two different towns is a bit difficult and not that much effective, certain exercises like advert can be quite challenging for the majority of the students in a year 4 class.</li></ul>	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notes are necessary for young students in year 4 especially when they are learning new topics and this was not available. They still need some basic notes to revise.</li> <li>• Certain project titles are very challenging and difficult for year 4 children.</li> </ul> <p>(N) Good idea to have separated HY content from annual exam content.</p> <p>(N) Naqbel hafna li s-sillabu hu maqsum fuq żewġ partijiet, hekk l-istudenti ma jitgħabbewx b'hafna noti għall-istudju għall-eżami annwali. Tajjeb ukoll li l-fieldwork hu marbut mat-temi tas-sillabu. Nahseb li t-tfal jitgħallmu aktar mill-fieldwork għax tkun esperjenza għalihom (N.B. Hafna drabi l-proġett jispiċċa jsir minn dawk li jieħdu hsiebhom).</p> <p>(MT) I appreciate that we are being guided, followed and helped to make sure that children take the best out of these fieldworks.</p> <p>(RZ) As now the SS syllabus isn't very loaded, we have more time for research and discussion with students.</p> <p>(K) The fact that children will now have less to study for the annual exam is a very positive thing (i.e. they only have to revise the topics during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester).</p> <p>(JJ) The new Syllabus is not only great but it's fun for the children especially the young ones. The Topics chosen for this new syllabus are of a great help even in their every day life! The booklet and the video were of extreme help. Thanks</p>	
<p>(AA) The fact that the half yearly exam is going to focus on certain topics while the annual exam will focus on 3 other different topics has helped the pupils to concentrate more and deepen their knowledge on certain subjects.</p> <p>(MM) TEACHERS SHOULD BE VERY CAREFUL WHEN PREPARING TESTS AND EXAM PAPERS. DURING THE HALF-YEARLY EXAMS PUPILS WERE ASKED A LOT OF DETAILS FROM THE 'EXTRA' NOTES PROVIDED ON THE WEBSITE. SS SHOULD BE FUN AND NEVER STRESSFUL.. PAPER SETTERS SHOULD HAVE LIMITED THEMSELVES TO ASKING QUESTIONS FROM THE WORKSHEETS' CONTENT AND SHOULD HAVE AVOIDED THE DETAILS FOUND IN THE NOTES. AFTER ALL THIS 'DIRECTION' IS CLEARLY STATED ON THE SOCIAL STUDIES WEBSITE!</p>	<b>assessment</b>

	<p>(BB) If exams at the end of the year can be worked out in English, how can notes are not in English too!</p> <p>(DA) When preparing the exam papers, there is less content to assess and this may make it difficult as regards written exercises.</p> <p>(Z) Ħafna informazzjoni ripetuta dwar is-sajd.</p>	
	<p>Although there has been improvement in the load in general, with students being ‘banded’ it is still too much for the lower bands. It is not only an issue with Social Studies, but with the syllabus in general. It ought to be graded also to meet the abilities of the students. The fieldwork trip to Marsaxlokk was in the great part of great interest, but we had to go so fast that there wasn’t enough time for the students to really enjoy it and ask questions themselves.</p>	<b><i>banding</i></b>
	<p>(N) The RLOs are an added bonus. (Although they were late in being introduced – with regards to topics for Half Yearly) All the videos are of great help.</p> <p>(KS) Again, I would like to make it clear, that I extremely appreciate the effort and all the resources we found available to aid us in teaching Social Studies, yet I feel that certain worksheets and you-tube videos aren’t age-appropriate and students are not as interested as I would like them to be. Thank you for allowing us to give our feedback – much appreciated!</p> <p>(AMA) Keep doing the video clips since they are of great help and we don’t find a lot of videos in Maltese on YouTube. Thanks.</p> <p>(LH) I am a year 3 teacher. The handouts provided are useful and they help me in the consolidation of lessons. Well done to all the persons involved!!</p> <p>(CA) In the syllabus, some interactive games related to the topic were mentioned. Will they be available online?</p> <p>(TS) I would like to suggest that more notes are made available online as most of the material found on the Social Studies website is worksheets. It would be of great help for both teachers and students.</p> <p>(MV) The fieldwork booklet shouldn’t be published online as some of the students work it out beforehand.</p>	<b><i>resources</i></b>

	<p>(MD) The videos available on YouTube are really helpful and the pupils in my class not only learn from them but they also enjoy them.</p> <p>(MM) THE FIELDWORK WAS EXTREMELY INTERESTING NOT ONLY FOR THE STUDENTS BUT ALSO FOR US TEACHERS. THE VIDEOS HELPED A LOT BECAUSE STUDENTS SAW IN REALITY WHAT THEY SAW IN THE VIDEOS.</p> <p>(SC) The online resources including the PowerPoints, videos, worksheets and notes are a great help to teachers as they reduce our workload. Furthermore, thanks to these resources, the content is standardised throughout the schools, eliminating the possibility of leaving something out or elaborating too much. Your help is very much appreciated. Thanks.</p> <p>(K) I suggest more notes about topics are given to teachers.</p> <p>(K) The children loved the video clips and showed great interest but when it came to the fieldwork they did not refer to any of the videos.</p> <p>(K) Could not find online games on website.</p> <p>(K) Proper workbooks with notes and exercises are needed so that the students can take better care of the material. Loose PDFs might get lost unfortunately.</p>	
	<p>(AV) Having separate modules for Half Yearly Exams and Annual Exams thankfully shifts the emphasis from an enormous rote learning of content to a more exploring learning process.</p> <p>(CA) The new syllabus and the project encourage the research approach. Some children who are helped at home are at an advantage than those children who are not helped or do not have a computer at home.</p>	<p><i>the research / exploration method</i></p>
	<p>(AV) Due to the presence of foreign students in our classes, could an English version of the notes and fieldwork sheets be available?</p> <p>(KS) I am also finding great difficulties in delivering the lessons in Maltese due to the increasing number of foreigners in our school (a problem which we also encounter in other subjects).</p>	<p><i>the language barrier/s</i></p>

	<p>(MD) Another problem I encounter is that despite the fact that the Department provides an English exam for Annual examinations, there are no English notes available, so it is hard for such students. Thank you for all the help provided.</p>	
	<p>(JC) Keep up the good work!</p> <p>(JS) Keep up the good work. I understood better what was expected out of me to deliver to my students thanks to the notes, videos and worksheets provided. Thanks once again and well done.</p> <p>(AA) I would also like to thank you for making it much easier for us to teach social studies. We are given the notes and worksheets to give to our students which is surely a first as we always had to prepare all the material ourself - so thank you for all this.</p> <p>(AA) Dear Sir,I would like to thank you for the useful notes and all the activities that you send us online, which are very useful. We should be grateful.</p> <p>Thank you for asking for feedback. I appreciate the great effort made in the improvement of this subject.</p> <p>(SF) Dear Mr Pace, I would like to thank you for all the hard work and passion you have in what you do. Thanks for giving us the tools to help us guide the students and instill in them the love for our country and history and geography in general.</p> <p>(MP) Keep up the good job! I appreciate all effort that's being poured in the effective learning of Social Studies..</p> <p>(JS) Well done. Keep up the good work!</p> <p>(CA) My pupils are looking forward to Social Studies, much more than ever before. As a teacher, I feel very well guided.</p> <p>(Z) well done for the way Social Studies has been reorganised.</p> <p>(Z) I don't know whether my students are enjoying the 'research' method. At times the syllabus is a bit repetitive. We always too our students for fieldwork. The project entails a lot of extra work by the teacher. SS is an interesting subject where students learn a lot of general knowledge. Unfortunately because of the exam they tend to learn the topic for exam purpose and forget about real life (they do not</p>	<p><i>miscellaneous</i></p>

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	<p>connect it to real life situations). However having divided the syllabus in two was a great idea as now for the annual exam they'll have less to study and hopefully enjoy SS more.</p> <p>(K) It would be great if we were given more practical strategies on how to teach some of the SS topics available online.</p> <p>(MT) Well done to those who have contributed in the syllabus and worksheets. I found them very useful.</p>	