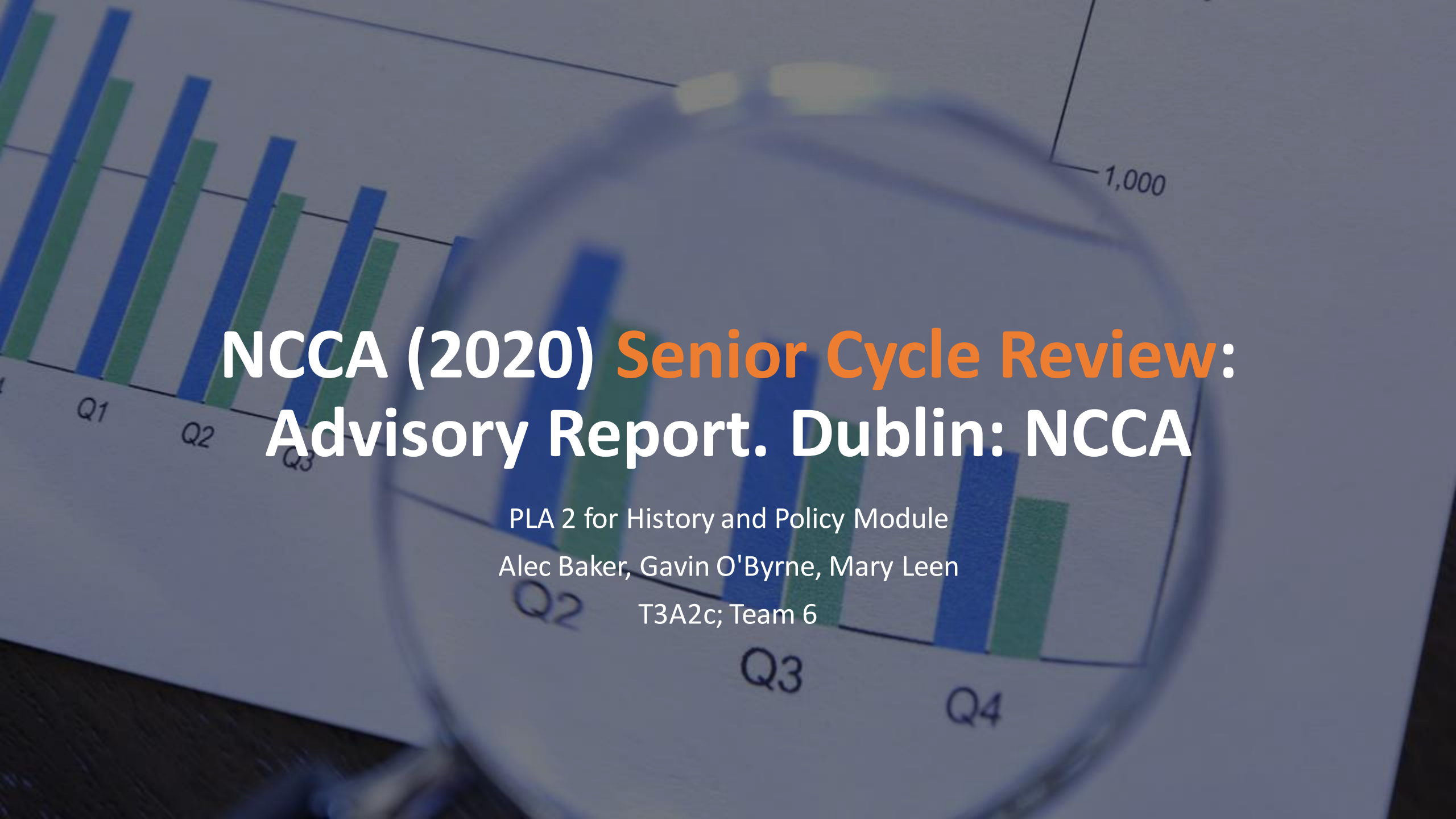


NCCA (2020) Senior Cycle Review: Advisory Report. Dublin: NCCA

PLA 2 for History and Policy Module

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Rationale

- As our paper is around the Senior Cycle Review, we are focusing on a key element of the review process which is mentioned repeatedly throughout the Advisory Report, stakeholder input and the impact this may or may not have on the outcome of this review.

Insight 1 - Alec; pgs. 5-30

- **Observation:**

This senior cycle review allegedly takes into account insights from a wide array of educational stakeholders.

There is little apparent evidence of input from disabled or SEN individuals and a noticeable absence of a diverse range of opinions from people from other cultures, particularly those coming to Ireland as refugees or asylum seekers. - Though there is some evidence of participation from one or two organisations working on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities for example, there is an absence of observations from the people themselves. Only 2 out of 41 schools surveyed were special schools.

I also did not see any suggestions submitted by the 'Movement of Asylum Seekers Ireland', 'Belong To', or the 'Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre' for example.

There was however some input from at least two political parties.

- **Personal Reflection/Relation to experience:**

From the information provided I feel some concern that there is some gaps in the NCCA's aim to include a diverse range of opinions.

Most noticeably I think there was not enough emphasis on gaining insights from individuals from marginalised communities, which I find concerning, particularly as the advisory report stresses that the revisions made supposably strive for equity, diversity, and inclusion.

While these are noble goals, the lack of a wider range of relevant voices may render these aims as somewhat insincere propositions.

I am also wary of the extent to which the voices of political parties were taken into account, as there is no guarantee that these do not contain biased and self-serving views.

Insight 2
Review Findings RE: 'Pathways & Flexibility' and 'Curriculum Components' - Gavin; pgs. 32-45

PATHWAYS & FLEXIBILITY	FINDINGS	AREAS FOR ACTION BY NCCA
Learning progression for students following L1 or L2 JC learning programmes	• Students following on from L1/L2 LPs don't have access to appropriate learning at senior cycle that's age & peer appropriate	• Develop a series of modules for students that are age and peer appropriate
A redeveloped senior cycle: Transition Year	• Concern around the equity of student access to the programme.	• Conduct an audit of TY prog to see what's working & see how these could be incorporated into pathways of a redeveloped senior cycle.
An integrated senior cycle	• Lack of progression options for students taking LCA programme	• Conduct an audit of LCVP & LCA programmes to identify most effective existing programmes
Flexible Pathways	• Should have options to combine different types of learning inc. vocational, technical, professional & creative learning	• Explore potential of online learning environments to enhance flexibility.
CURRICULUM COMPONENTS	**FINDINGS**	**AREAS FOR ACTION BY THE NCCA**
Review & development of curriculum components	• More flexible learning pathways	• Outline the range & form of appropriate materials that can be utilized e.g. teacher guidelines/sample materials
Learning for life	• Every student in senior cycle needs appropriate RSE which includes topics relevant to students age & stage learning	• Develop interim guidance for teaching of senior cycle SPHE/RSE & a revised curriculum for them

Reflection/Relation to experience:

- According to BMJ 'What is best practice in sex & relationships education?' - The RSE curriculum model is found to be gendered & sexist with an ignorance toward LGBTQ+

In 'Report on review of RSE on primary & post primary schools' - key findings from pupils included that it is...

- Too biological & not emotive
- Teacher's perspectives = not comfortable and lack of knowledge

Insight 3 - Mary; pgs. 46-66

- **Observation:**

There seems to be a recognition that more diverse methods of assessing and teaching are needed for all students to achieve their potential to become lifelong learners.

A carefully crafted holistic approach has been taken to all aspects of development of senior cycle reform. Strong emphasis is placed on a collaborative process involving stakeholders, teachers, students and parent and community bodies. With the ultimate aim of designing an effective future proof, fit for purpose senior cycle.

- **Personal Reflection/Relation to experience:**

I think it is great that they are placing importance on hearing all the voices involved, I just hope they listen and act on the feedback.

I found that the current system seems to override what teachers and students want.

I also think much more discussion is needed with teachers in the schools to see how they would improve senior cycle and assessments in the real world, and also what they are willing to do as teachers. I believe they will not cooperate fully with any changes if there is too much added to their workload. There must be negotiation around what is added and removed from teachers workload as they are already overworked burnt out and stressed.



Conclusion

Summary of main points

1. There are some significant limitations to the insights accounted for.

2. Issues concerning the subject of Relationships and Sex Education.

3. There is a relevant concern regarding the absence of sufficient supports for teachers to have the time and ability implement any changes made.

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