

RE MATTERS FOR EVERY CHILD

Support materials for Key Stage 3

**PLANNING THE LEARNING
PROCESS:
AN ENQUIRY-BASED
APPROACH TO R.E.**

Step 1: Creating an RE curriculum overview for Key Stage 3

In the support materials for RE at Key Stage 3, you will find exemplar curriculum overviews showing five different models. See [R.E. Overviews for Key Stage 3](#).

These five models make reference to various learning enquiries. Those underlined have been written up in detail.

These are of course purely suggestions. It is up to each school as to how it constructs its RE curriculum for Key Stage 3. However, in developing a curriculum overview, the most important principles are:

- continuity between learning enquiries (units of work);
- progression through the key stage;
- achieving a balance of religions, and including secular world views;
- achieving a balance between ‘learning about religion’ and ‘learning from religion’ (AT1 and AT2).

Step 2: Choosing the conceptual areas, religions and learning enquiry title

There are six Conceptual Areas in the Agreed Syllabus. These are:

1. Beliefs, teachings and sources
2. Practices and ways of life
3. Expressing meaning
4. Identity, diversity and belonging
5. Questions of meaning, purpose and truth
6. Values and commitments

By combining two Conceptual Areas, it is possible to create a high quality learning enquiry where the focus is on concepts and key questions. By doing this a balance between both attainment targets is also maintained.

Elsewhere in the support materials for RE at Key Stage 3, you will find suggested learning enquiries in relation to the six major world religions and Humanism for the following nine combinations of Conceptual Areas:

- Conceptual Areas 1. and 4.
- Conceptual Areas 1. and 5.
- Conceptual Areas 1. and 6.
- Conceptual Areas 2. and 4.
- Conceptual Areas 2. and 5.
- Conceptual Areas 2. and 6.
- Conceptual Areas 3. and 4.
- Conceptual Areas 3. and 5.
- Conceptual Areas 3. and 6.

You may of course use your own combination of conceptual areas, questions and learning enquiries. This guidance aims to give you suggestions that you may use if you wish.

Step 3: Creating a pedagogical framework for the learning enquiry

Background

There are many different approaches that may be used to ensure that the teaching and learning in RE has challenge and rigour at Key Stage 3. Many approaches are based on philosophies and pedagogies specific to RE, as well as more generic approaches. For a good summary of those relating specifically to RE you might refer to *Pedagogies of Religious Education: case studies in the research and development of good pedagogic practice in RE*, edited by Michael Grimmitt (McCrimmons 2000). There is also a chapter on effective teaching and learning, based on different pedagogies in *Teaching Religious Education* by Julian Stern (Continuum 2006).

To provide a broad and balanced curriculum in RE, it is suggested that a range of approaches is used, and that opportunities to be creative in the light of new secondary curriculum are embraced.

Whichever approaches are taken, it is essential that a balance is maintained between 'learning about religion' (AT1) and 'learning from religion' (AT2). The two must be clearly interwoven, with clear learning objectives and outcomes for both. You should also provide elements of the 'Experiences and Opportunities' outlined in the syllabus.

This guidance material gives a number of exemplars using different pedagogies to help you expand your repertoire.

Creating a pedagogical framework

Choosing the most effective pedagogy is crucial for effective RE. You will need to decide on the approach to learning/pedagogy that would best suit the particular learning enquiry. There is a list of different pedagogies and approaches to learning listed below, providing a variety of styles and strategies for the learners.

If the enquiry involves key questions and discussion, a 'philosophy for children' approach might be most appropriate.

If your focus is on expressing meaning through religion, you might use the experiential or human development approach.

If the enquiry focuses on a problem solving activity, then dilemma based learning may be the most effective approach.

You may of course have your own preferred pedagogical model that you would wish to use as an alternative to those listed below. With the implementation of the new agreed syllabus, you might like to take the opportunity to reflect on your own practice and consider which pedagogies you currently use and whether you might broaden your repertoire further to provide a greater variety of learning experiences for your students.

Some specific RE pedagogies

Phenomenological approach

As exemplified by Ninian Smart (*The Religious Experience of Mankind*, Collins 1969) and his dimensions of religion. This is based on a study of phenomena associated with different world religions.

RE as human development

As exemplified by Michael Grimmitt (*Religious Education and Human Development*, McCrimmon 1987). The focus is on 'making meaning' through RE. This is at the heart of 'learning from' religion (AT2).

Experiential approach

As exemplified by David Hay and John Hammond (*New Methods in RE Teaching: an Experiential Approach*, Oliver & Boyd/Longman 1990). The emphasis is on spiritual development through RE.

Religious literacy

As exemplified by Trevor Cooling (*A Christian Vision for State Education: Reflections on the Theology of Education*, SPCK 1994) and Andrew Wright (*Religious Education in the Secondary School: Prospects for Religious Literacy*, David Fulton 1993). The focus is on understanding the central concepts and truth-claims of different religions.

Interpretative approach

As exemplified by Robert Jackson (*Religious Education: an Interpretative Approach*, Hodder 1997). The focus is on the skill of interpretation, and the importance of internal religious diversity as well as religious plurality.

De-constructivist approach

As exemplified by Clive Erricker (*Reconstructing Religious, Spiritual and Moral Education* Routledge Farmer 2000). See also the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus (2003). This approach is based on constructivist theories of education, the task of education being to construct the 'self'. In terms of RE, this is to do with the philosophical or spiritual self. World views as well as religions become increasingly important in this approach.

Some generic pedagogies

Dilemma-based learning

Developed by Phil Wood, Barry Hymer and Deb Michel. The approach involves reflection and action in equal measure. It does this by allowing the teacher to expose their students to enquiries into a number of difficult choices based upon real life. The dilemma-based learning approach helps students to improve their group skills, as enquiries are based upon a joint quest, in the belief that several thinkers working together are more effective than just one. For more information see *Dilemma-Based Learning in the Humanities*, B Hymer, P Wood and D Michel, published by Chris Kington, London 2007.

Mantle of the expert

This is an inquiry based approach to teaching and learning involving role play (donning the mantle of the expert). It was invented and developed by Professor Dorothy Heathcote at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in the 1980s. The big idea is that the class do all their curriculum work as if they are an imagined group of experts. For more information see www.mantleoftheexpert.com.

Thinking actively in a social context (TASC)

This is an approach developed by Belle Wallace (past president of NACE). The TASC approach encourages personalised learning and a sense of ownership. Students use the TASC problem solving wheel to guide their thinking. The approach encourages creativity and flexibility, within the framework of the Agreed Syllabus. For more information see www.nace.co.uk/tasc and www.tascwheel.com.

Concepts and processes: the ethos of Curriculum 2008

The focus is on exploring and understanding concepts, rather than a content led curriculum. The emphasis on personal, learning and thinking skills exemplifies this, and the opportunities to work with a range of different curriculum areas is presented through the cross curricular dimensions. See <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/>.

Philosophy for children (P4C) and community of enquiry

This approach was developed by Professor Matthew Lipman and his associates at the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children at Montclair State College, New Jersey. Lipman emphasised the importance of questioning or enquiry in the development of reasoning. In this he was influenced by Vygotsky, the Russian psychologist. Lipman developed a new model of learning, the 'community of enquiry', in which teacher and pupils collaborate with each other to grow in understanding, not only of the material world, but also of the personal and ethical world around them. For more information see <http://sapere.org.uk>

Step 3: Links to cross curricular dimensions

There are six cross curricular dimensions in the new secondary curriculum. See <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/cross-curriculum-dimensions/index.aspx> You will need to decide if you want this to be a focus for the learning enquiry, and if so which aspect. You might decide that a particular unit could be taught across two other subjects as well as RE. For example 'Why is there suffering?' could be approached through RE, art and English.

You may decide that it is not appropriate to link to these dimensions for a particular learning enquiry.

Step 4: Examples of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

These are an essential part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. You may decide that you want a learning enquiry to specifically develop one of these PLTS, or you may highlight different aspects of a number of PLTS in one unit. See <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/skills/plts/index.aspx?return=/key-stages-3-and-4/skills/index.aspx>

You could also develop a scheme where one of the PLTS e.g. Team Workers, is the key focus of the unit rather than the concept or content.

Whichever approach you make, reference to these should be included in the enquiry.

Step 5: Creating learning objectives

These should be based on the skills, knowledge and understanding as outlined in the Agreed Syllabus.

Step 6: Creating learning outcomes

These should be based on the level descriptors found in the Agreed Syllabus and the 'I can' statements found in the support materials. They should explain clearly what the students will be able to do by the end of the unit. This is for teachers. You will also need to create student friendly objectives and outcomes for individual lessons. Alternatively you might adapt the exemplar shown here to include these in Step 9.

Step 7: Key questions

You can either create your own or use those in the support materials. See links under step one.

Step 8: Key concepts

You can use the Agreed Syllabus itself or the support materials for AT1 to help with this.

Step 9: Suggested teaching and learning activities

How you set this part out will depend on your department and curriculum. You may wish to set this section out with individual lessons each with suggested objectives, activities, outcomes, differentiation and so on.

The exemplars in the guidance material provide **general** suggestions so that they can be used in a variety of ways and different contexts. You may use this framework if you wish, or develop your own.