

# 1. Study of Religion(s) goes AWOL

- Recent debate about academic disciplines underpinning RE
- Wanda Alberts, Tim Jensen (and me?) – SR, obviously
- ‘No university subject equivalent to RE’ unlike History, Maths
- CoRE 2018 *National Entitlement* 9. ‘through a wide range of academic disciplines and through direct encounter’
- Gillian Georgiou, Kathryn Wright et al ‘Three-legged Stool’  
*Theology, Human/Social Sciences, Philosophy*
- R. Kueh: *Hum/Soc Sciences, Philosophy, Theology, History*
- ***Where’s Study of Religion(s)?***

## 2. Is SR a discipline?

- ‘crazy academic patchwork quilt’ (Sharp – rejects this)
- Just ‘a themed study’ via other disciplines (Felderhof)
- ‘distinctive recognizable brand’ (Steve Sutcliffe)
- Has: founders, associations, conferences, journals, norms and values, a **community** of scholars, a **state of mind**, requires qualification, expertise, hard work and commitment, *methodology*. Not many Departments.
- Draws on methods from many other disciplines, including literary criticism, archaeology, creative arts, **media studies**, natural sciences, **psychology**.
- Includes study of non-religion (S of Religion & Worldviews?)
- Has damaged RE (Philip Barnes)

### 3. Is RE (Religion and Worldviews) a discipline?

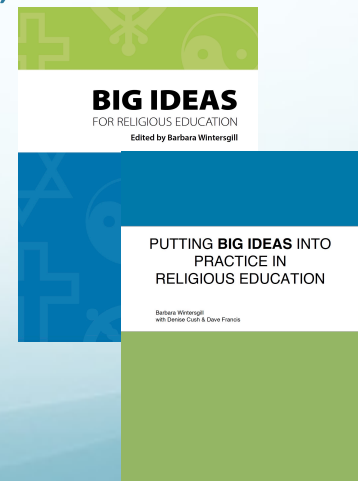
- ‘Multidisciplinary’ but at base SR and Education Studies (also ‘multidisciplinary’/ ‘polymethodic’ – so is Theology)
- Wider **educational** aims than SR: reflection on and development of personal/community worldviews
- Has founders, associations, journals, conferences, norms and values, a **community of scholars and practitioners**, professors (1980, 2003), **state(s) of mind**, qualification, commitment, **pedagogies**.

Cush, D. (2021) ‘One discipline many methods?’ *REToday/Professional REflection* 38: 3&4 (in 2 parts)

# 4. Big Ideas as ‘Disciplinary Knowledge’

Disciplinary knowledge organises and selects substantive knowledge - clear link to disciplines – helps select from substantive knowledge to gain holistic picture of how R/WVs work and the study of R/WVs works

1. Continuity, Change, Diversity SR, Theol, Hist, Geog, Sociol/Anthropology
  2. Words and Beyond SR, Theology, Lit/Lang, Creative Arts, Media
  3. A Good Life SR, Theol, Ethics, Philosophy
  4. Making Sense of Life’s Experiences SR, Theol, Psych, Phil, Sciences
  5. Influence and Power SR, Theol, Hist, Sociol, Politics
  6. The Big Picture SR, Theol, Lit, Philosophy, Sciences
- [tinyurl.com/bigideasforre](http://tinyurl.com/bigideasforre) [tinyurl.com/bipractice](http://tinyurl.com/bipractice)
  - Current Project – units for 4-18



# 5. So What? Does it matter?

- Separate subject under threat at all levels. Would any thing be lost if religions/worldviews were studied through history, sociology etc at university and school level?
- **Holistic** picture from many perspectives/methods: both text and context, ideas and people, philosophies and lived reality, past and present (methodology rather than distinct method).
- SR and R&WV (RE) have a distinctive approach to the subject matter: methodological agnosticism (neither reductive nor promoting), epistemological humility, respecting adherents and allowing their perspectives to challenge one's own while still critical (discipline as state of mind).
- Specialists whose central concern is R/W 'RE enthusiasts' – requested and deserved by students from primary to postgrad (discipline as commitment and hard work).

## 6. An SR/ED-based Worldview(s) Approach

- For all pupils, not just the 'religious' or keen on studying 'religions'
- Draws upon a wide range of traditions including smaller, newer, nonreligion
- Stresses diversity and interactions between and within traditions, lived reality
- Focus on how religions/worldviews work and how the study of religions/worldviews works, problematises concepts: 'religion', 'secular', 'spiritual', 'worldview' etc
- Queries a sharp divide between 'religious' and 'non-religious' – non-binary
- Challenges generalisations, accounts in social/other media, fixed boxes that divide us, dominant constructions, colonial impositions...avoids WRP, GWP, isms
- Asks questions about sources of authority and whose experience counts (gender, sexuality, 'race', disability, issues of equality and human flourishing)
- Enables pupils to interrogate the sources of their own developing worldviews and to benefit from exploring the rich heritage of humanity in order to best cope with its/their future.