



Research Matters!

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Research (n) act of searching closely from French
recerche (1530s)

Research (v) to seek out, search from French
recercher (1590s)

- How did you decide what to wear if you went outside for a walk/run today?
- How did you decide which mobile phone to buy?
- How did you decide which hotel/apartment/campsite to stay at for your last holiday?

What do we mean by research?

- A study which seeks to make known something about a field of practice or activity which is currently unknown to the researcher.
- Research therefore aims to increase knowledge and/or reach (new) understanding
- Research is usually driven by a **question** e.g. a problem, concern or issue. This question then usually leads to a literature review followed by the defining of the research **approach, design, strategy** and **methods, collection of data, analysis of data** and finally writing a **report**. However, this is not usually a linear process!



Why does research matter?

Use post it notes to jot down ideas

Why does research matter?

- Provides reliable sources of new knowledge and understanding
- Develops and trials best practice/pedagogies
- Empowers teachers to improve methods/strategies thus becoming more effective
- Monitors trends in attitudes and attainment
- Leads to policy changes/making of policy e.g. identifying inequalities in provision
- It nourishes (and exercises!) our minds!

Why engage **with** research

- Ofsted Research Review (2021) and the importance of scholarship
- Making more robust and intentional connections with the disciplinary foundations of our subject
- Increasing the professionalisation of the teacher of RE/R&W
- Ensures we are up to date with the latest thinking

Some ways to engage with research...

Library of over 100 research reports

Case Studies

Research Opportunities

Research of the Month

Engaging in and with research

Research Bulletin

Research Posters


Resources from conferences

Search our free research library

BEING AN RE TEACHER Relevance ▾	NATURE OF RE Relevance ▾	SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE Relevance ▾	TEACHING AND LEARNING Relevance ▾	<input type="submit" value="Submit"/>
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Resources

Resources from REXChange and partner conferences.



[Read more >](#)

In Conversation

Recordings of the events. A researcher gives a very brief summary of a key piece of research and the host invites questions, feedback and comment.

[Read more >](#)

Case Studies

Learn about research journeys people have taken and find out about what people are currently researching.

[Read more >](#)

Opportunities

Opportunities to participate in Religion and Worldviews research projects.

[Read more >](#)

Research of the Month

Features a different piece of research each month with extra resources to support

Engaging in and with research

Links and resources to use when exploring research

Research Bulletin

Culham St Gabriel's Masters and PHD students alongside other funded projects share

Research Posters

Summaries of research in an easily accessible format.

Research of the Month

RESEARCH // RESEARCH OF THE MONTH

An Approach to Decolonising Religious Education

November / December 2021 research of the month features Krystian McInnis



Each month:

A short vlog or film from a researcher

A summary of their research and links to journal papers or articles

A series of discussion questions to use with local groups, a department or other group of teachers

Discussion Questions

- Are there, could there be, or should there be links between the worldview agenda and curriculum decolonisation in RE?
- What would decolonising the RE curriculum actually mean in practice, not just rhetorically?
- Discuss and identify some ways in which your own RE curriculum could be decolonised: come up with two or three specific examples of changes that could be made. Think about content, but also approach.

ISLAM AS A WORLDVIEW



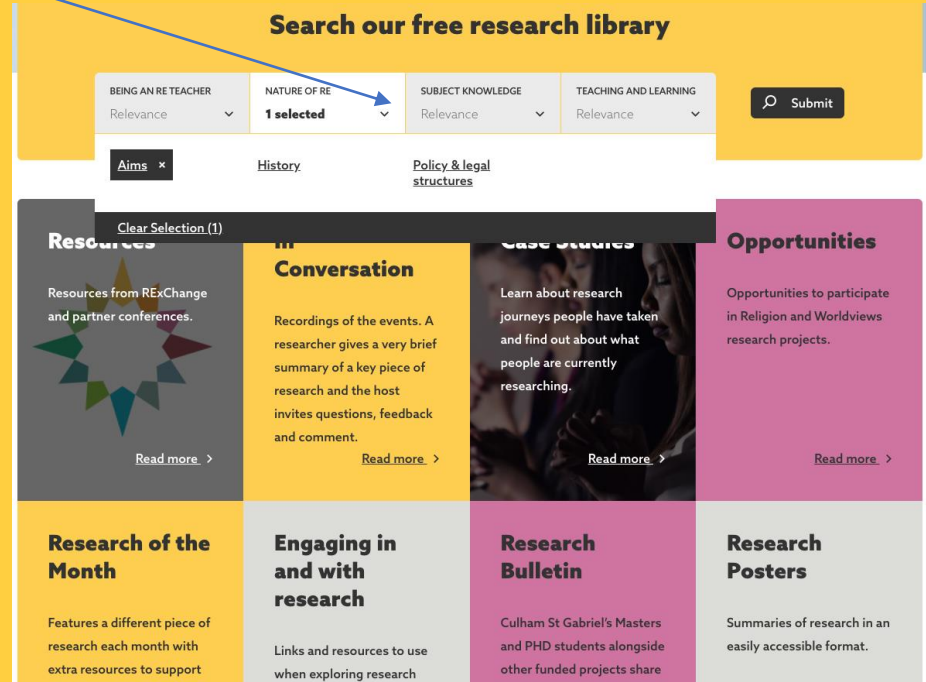
Dr Kate Christopher and Dr Lynn Revell- Islam as a worldview

Watch the video at <https://vimeo.com/569745056>

The research library

- Click on any of the drop downs to refine your search using set categories
- I've selected nature of RE, and then aims.
- Click the 'submit' button

Why not ask a local group member to choose a piece of research to summarise to your next meeting?

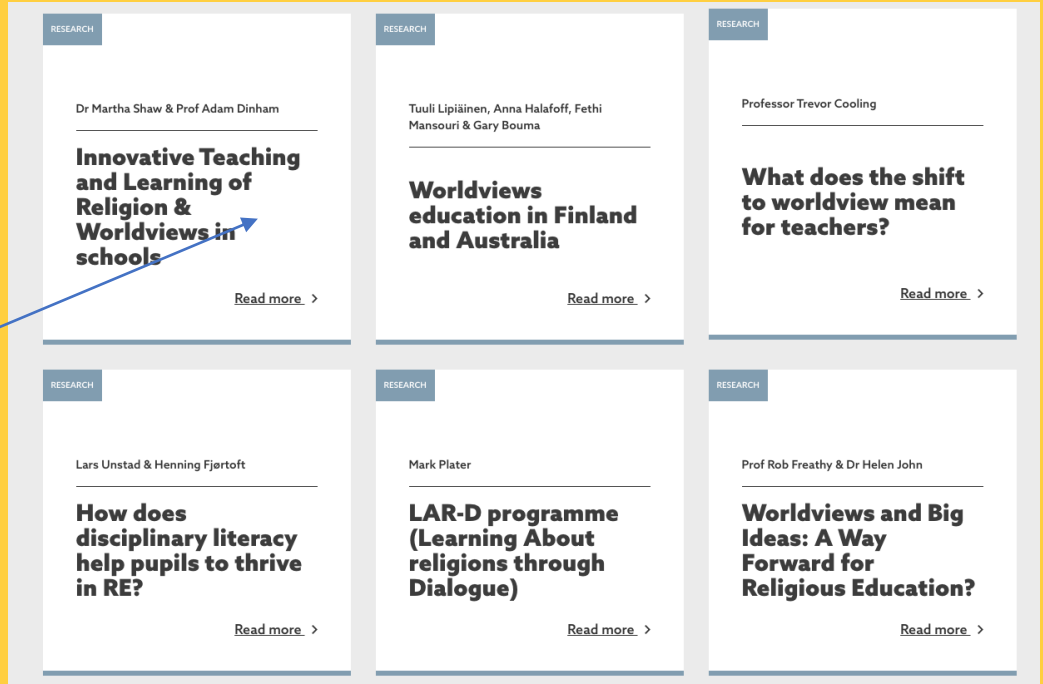


The screenshot shows a search interface for a research library. At the top, it says "Search our free research library". Below this are four filter categories: "BEING AN RE TEACHER" (with a dropdown menu showing "Relevance"), "NATURE OF RE" (with a dropdown menu showing "1 selected"), "SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE" (with a dropdown menu showing "Relevance"), and "TEACHING AND LEARNING" (with a dropdown menu showing "Relevance"). A "Submit" button is located to the right of these filters. Below the filters, there are three tabs: "Aims" (selected), "History", and "Policy & legal structures". The main content area is divided into four columns: "Resources from REXchange and partner conferences" (with a starburst icon and a "Read more" link), "Conversation" (with a recording icon and a "Read more" link), "Case studies" (with a photo of people and a "Read more" link), and "Opportunities" (with a text description and a "Read more" link). At the bottom, there are four more sections: "Research of the Month" (with a description), "Engaging in and with research" (with a description), "Research Bulletin" (with a description), and "Research Posters" (with a description).

The research library

- Summaries of research reports and papers will now appear. Click on 'read more'
- I've clicked on the paper by Martha Shaw and Adam Dinham

Why not ask a local group member to create some questions about one of the pieces of research for you to chat about together?



The screenshot displays a grid of six research summaries, each with a 'RESEARCH' tag in the top left corner. The first summary, 'Innovative Teaching and Learning of Religion & Worldviews in schools' by Dr Martha Shaw & Prof Adam Dinham, is highlighted with a blue arrow pointing to its 'Read more >' link. The other summaries include 'Worldviews education in Finland and Australia' by Tuuli Lipiäinen, Anna Halafoff, Fethi Mansouri & Gary Bouma; 'What does the shift to worldview mean for teachers?' by Professor Trevor Cooling; 'How does disciplinary literacy help pupils to thrive in RE?' by Lars Unstad & Henning Fjertoft; 'LAR-D programme (Learning About religions through Dialogue)' by Mark Plater; and 'Worldviews and Big Ideas: A Way Forward for Religious Education?' by Prof Rob Freathy & Dr Helen John.

Author(s)	Research Title	Read more >
Dr Martha Shaw & Prof Adam Dinham	Innovative Teaching and Learning of Religion & Worldviews in schools	Read more >
Tuuli Lipiäinen, Anna Halafoff, Fethi Mansouri & Gary Bouma	Worldviews education in Finland and Australia	Read more >
Professor Trevor Cooling	What does the shift to worldview mean for teachers?	Read more >
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Prof Rob Freathy & Dr Helen John	Worldviews and Big Ideas: A Way Forward for Religious Education?	Read more >

The research library

- You can now read a summary of their research and if you scroll down you can find a link to the in-depth report or paper or article at the bottom of the page under 'find out more'.

Why not choose one piece of research and consider what difference it might make to your practice in the classroom? Could you try something out and feedback to your local group?

Innovative Teaching and Learning of Religion & Worldviews in Schools

Dr Martha Shaw & Prof Adam Dinham

Research Summary

This project presents 5 case studies exploring how RE is being re-imagined in schools. It is a showcase of classroom practice which goes some way towards meeting the learning proposed in the new National Entitlement for Religion & Worldviews. The project builds on the recommendations of the Faiths Unit's 2015 report RE for Real - The Future of Teaching and Learning about Religion & Belief by providing examples of an emerging shift in RE towards understanding religion and worldviews as dynamic, lived, and interpretable phenomena and concepts.

Researchers

Dr Martha Shaw & Prof Adam Dinham

Research Institution

London South Bank University & Goldsmiths, University of London

What is this about?

This project is based on the premise that there is much brilliant, innovative RE going on all around the country but that it is patchy and could be extended. This project highlights some key examples of innovative practice, which speaks to the new direction proposed for Religion & Worldviews. It is intended to complement debates about change in policy and practice, with evidence of existing new practices from which others can learn.

What was done?

The project has worked with 5 schools to explore examples in practice of aspects of the new National Entitlement. We invited submissions of interest to participate then undertook a series of visits to the schools, in close collaboration with teachers:

Visit 1: Summer Term 2019 (May-June), to discuss the national plan and how the school is already or might respond to it. We worked together during and following this visit to consolidate the potential connections to at least one element of the national entitlement,

In conversation

- Join in live, or watch/listen to recorded events
- Ana talks about mapping the sacred in your local area. She even shares some resources you can download to help.
- Other curriculum related conversations include: Denise Cush, Stephen Pett, Martha Shaw, Jo Pearce and Alexis Stones, Tamanda Walker, ...



Exploring sacred spaces through the lens of its users in Nottingham. This is a method which could be used in the classroom to understand how students recognise and experience sacredness in their neighbourhood/context. <https://mappingnottinghamidentity.uk/mapping-sacred-spaces/> Recorded on 9th February 2022.

New series will begin in October 2022

E learning platform

**Free
online
Religion &
Worldviews
self-study
courses**



Why not try one of our new online self-study courses?
These are interactive and designed for teachers to introduce
you to current thinking in our field.

Introduction to Religion and Worldviews

What is the Religion and
Worldviews approach?
This course is for anyone
interested in the subject;
teachers, SACRE
members, advisers,
all welcome.

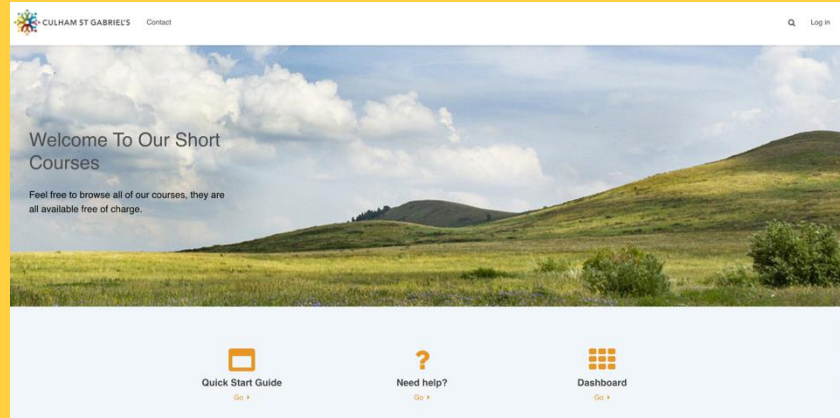
Introduction to Curriculum

What is a curriculum?
What is its purpose?
Take our clear and basic
introductory course to
start your systematic
thinking about curriculum.

Introduction to Research

What is classroom-based
research and how can it
enhance your practice?
Explore these case
studies and examples.

More courses will be added over the summer, do check back!
<https://courses.cstg.org.uk>



- FREE Online Courses
- Introduction to religion and worldviews
- Introduction to curriculum
- Introduction to research
- All designed to last approx 90 mins
- Further courses planned from September
- courses.cstg.org.uk

New curriculum related research in the pipeline funded by CSTG

- University of Strathclyde – Reimagining an R&W education, includes curricula materials
- University of Birmingham- Environmental ethics, climate and nature in R&W education
- Ormiston Academy Trust – curriculum and progression
- EYFS Group– R&W model digital curriculum
- David Ross Education Trust- disciplinary language in the classroom

<https://www.cstg.org.uk/grants/projects/grants-awarded/>

Why engage **in** research

- Relates research to your own context - 'Real World' research
- Makes research meaningful to you, and in particular to pupil outcomes
- Builds confidence and promotes reflexivity
- Places the teacher as researcher, rather than 'consumer' (Teacher agency)
- Learning which is 'spaced out' is known to be more effective, so doing research is a highly effective form of CPD
- Focus on something you are passionate about!

An example: Research Bulletin

- Undertaking a Masters or doctoral studies
- Collaborative writing brings together examples from different schools

<https://www.reonline.org.uk/research/research-bulletin/>

RESEARCH // RESEARCH BULLETIN

How does decolonisation within schools' impact on the teaching of RE?

Simon Cardy with Sian Brockway and Almaz Messenger

Decolonisation, we felt, offers multiple contexts and a variety of perspectives that not only provide a mandate for further inclusion of alternative narratives but also legitimise one's own experience as a contribution to learning within RE. For us, decolonisation is the process of identifying colonial influences that have become accepted orthodoxy. We don't aim here to articulate detailed concepts or suggest definitive ways forward. Rather, we aim to suggest possible ways for further dialogue and research into decolonisation within both wider school contexts and more the more explicit context of RE.

As a group we are presenting deliberately from three, well established emphases used within RE teaching; hermeneutics, sense of self/identity and visual arts and representation. Collectively, we work within numerous contexts including primary and secondary sectors, inner city, suburban, and different areas of England. It is hoped that this offers a nuanced range of reflections, based on a variety of epistemic sources that will enable further exploration by the reader.

Hermeneutic Reflection

Colonialism impacted the way Christianity developed throughout history globally. Given the restrictions of this paper, we have restricted consideration to a few scholarly perspectives. Christian missionaries would travel across the world, converting communities to Christianity. At times, indigenous traditions were assimilated, and generalisations are difficult; yet a Western, androcentric understanding still prevails, even where it is not fit for purpose. For example, the image of God as a powerful male is un-relatable for Latin American poor (see Gerbara, 1999; Guadiola-Saenz, 2002).

An example: Research of the Month (Hunting)

- A small group of teachers
- CSTG funded small scale grant
- Well focused around GCSE argumentation
- Support from a university lecturer
- Resources developed to support all teachers of KS3/4

September 2021: RS Argument at GCSE research project



Research of the month
Tim Hunting
RS Argument at GCSE research project

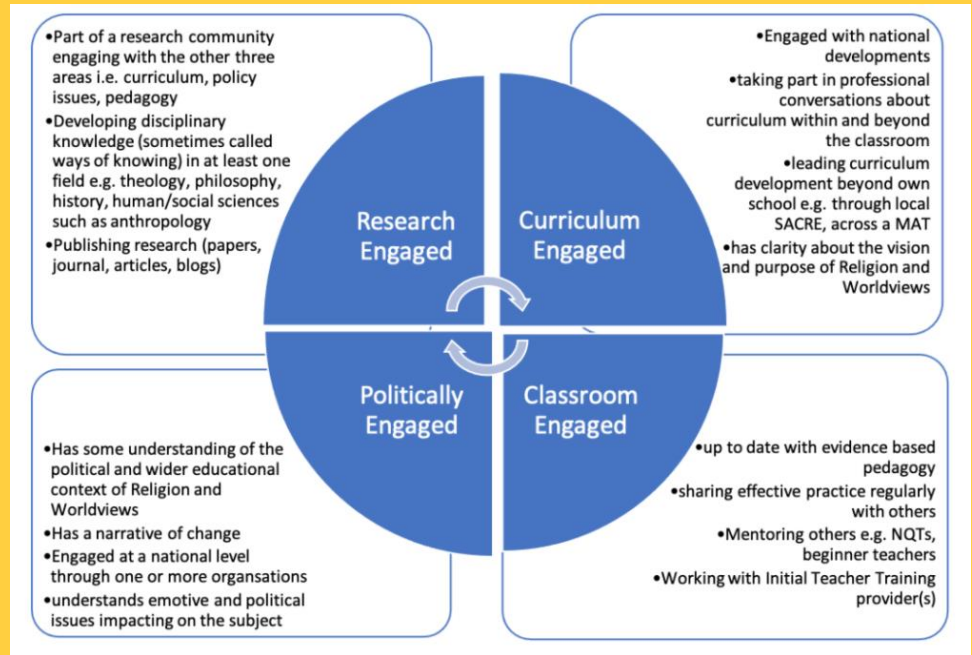
Introduction to the RS Argument at GCSE research project, Tim Hunting

Why? Background:

The research project started from the desire amongst colleagues to work together improve teaching of students the skills needed to reach the highest level in RS GCSE essays, which require 'logical chains of reasoning leading to judgement(s)'. The essays are supposed to be short -guidelines suggest 250 words- and the time frame is around 15 minutes maximum for planning and writing time, so there is a lot of pressure on students to analyse the claim in the title and construct a quality answer very quickly. The idea was to think more deeply about what we mean by argument and concentrate minds on how to teach these skills through

An Example: Leadership Programme

- Work with a mentor to develop a research interest
- Areas explored last year included: Etymology, curriculum design, multi-disciplinary approaches, decolonising the curriculum, hermeneutics, pedagogy.
- <https://www.reonline.org.uk/leadership/leadership-programme/>



Your chance to make a difference!

- Celebratory 10th anniversary awards! 10 awards, £1000 each.
- Small innovative projects or initiatives
- Get a small group of teachers together or work within your own school
- Applications close 22nd Sept
- Chat to us!!
- <https://www.cstg.org.uk/grants/celebrating-10-years/>



Questions



And finally....

- Two pieces of recent research you really need to read if you haven't already!!
- Worldview: A. multidisciplinary report
- <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/20-19438-REC-Worldview-Report-A4-v2.pdf>
- Worldviews in Religious Education
<https://www.theothinktank.co.uk/research/2020/10/21/worldviews-in-religious-education>