

# Online Assignment Submission

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# What is *Religious* about Religious Education?

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## **Introduction**

In the context of other disciplines, it would be relatively straightforward to identify the distinct form of understanding that each subject encompasses. After all, it would seem odd to ask ‘what is *mathematical* about maths’ as the purpose of maths is mathematical understanding. The answer to our question is less intuitive. Is RE’s purpose religious understanding, or is RE only *religious* in as far as its content?

The essence of our enquiry is an investigation into the “uncertainty [surrounding]... the rationale for, and the aims and purposes of, RE” (Ofsted, 2013, p.14), as this has inevitably lead to RE’s “permanent crisis of identity” (Day, 1985, p.62). If we are to say what makes RE religious, then it is necessary to shed some light on why the subject has for so long struggled to discover its identity (Teece, 2011, p.169). I argue that RE’s mainstream pedagogical foundations are largely at fault; they are untenable and impede us from answering the question directly. Instead, we must shift into a postmodernist understanding of RE and on this proviso; we can answer our question.

## **Part I**

### **Learning *About* and *From* Religion**

Grimmitt’s work has had a phenomenal impact on RE, particularly his distinction between learning *about* and learning *from* religion (Grimmitt, 1987). It has become “standard practice in RE to distinguish between *learning from* and *learning about* religion” (A. Wright and E. Wright, 2003, p.232). Since the scientific revolution of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the quantitative, qualitative divide has had a substantial influence on modern thought. T. S. Eliot described this mode of thought as the “dissociation of sensibility” (1921, quoted in Waugh, 2011, p.383) and Wright, “the fact/value divide” (Wright, 2003, p.283). This distinction is warranted in the right context, however there is a modernist disposition to impose this divide without good reason and I am strongly inclined to believe that Grimmitt is guilty of this.

Wright (2003) argues that learning in RE is simultaneously academic and personal; ‘learning religion’ is not as atomic as Grimmitt infers. To learn *about* religion is not only to cultivate knowledge and regurgitate information, but also to engage “... critically with... existential

demands and truth claims” (Wright, 2003, p.285). By the same token, learning *from* religion is not exclusively the expression of ones feelings and opinions, but subjecting them to rigorous academic scrutiny. By assuming a basic dualism between the ‘learner-learning-from’ and the ‘object-learnt-about’, it invites the problem that a student must develop skills in isolation to overcome the gap. Alternatively, “if we indwell the world and thereby already participate in a range of different knowledge-relationships, then the task is not to find a set of skills” to bridge a gap, but to deepen and enhance our pre-existing knowledge-relationships (A. Wright and E. Wright, 2012, p.232). For this to hold, the “objectivity of knowledge... [must] take precedence over the subjectivity of the learner” (A. Wright and E. Wright, 2012, p.232).

In practice, I do not think that it is possible to separate ‘the self’ from the study of religion as rigorously as Grimmitt theorises and "unless a distinction can be made rigorous and precise it isn't really a distinction” (Derrida, 1991, p.115). Furthermore, if the objectivity of knowledge takes priority, then Wright’s notion of knowledge-relationships is more appropriate. An RE that depends on such a controversial distinction inevitably contributes to RE’s identity crisis, and disrupts our enquiry into RE’s religiousness.

### **Radical-Constructivism**

Erikson (2001) and Mathews (1994) argue that constructivism has become a meaningless ideology merely used to “distinguish the good guys (constructivists) from the bad guys (traditionalists)” (in Sjøberg, 2010, p.485) and one can sympathize with their frustrations. Surely the aims of RE cannot be fulfilled without a pedagogy underpinned by Piagetian-constructivism, but many theorists (e.g. Holt, 2015) seem content to appeal to a vague cross-definitional constructivism when such a rich diversity of interpretations exist. Most mainstream pedagogies will advocate a form of Grimmitt’s radical-constructivism: the subjective construction of the world itself (Sjoberg, 2010, p.485).

Grimmitt favours “von Glaserfeld’s radical constructivism over others” and entirely rejects the notion that knowledge is a “reflection of an objective ontological reality” (Erricker, 2010, p.64). “Instead of claiming that knowledge is capable of representing a world outside of our experience... knowledge is [exclusively] a tool within the realm of experience” (Glaserfeld, 1998, p.24). Most radical-constructivists will argue this, claiming that there is insufficient

evidence to support an alternative; “there no longer is a “contrary” to place in opposition to relativism” (Smith, 1998: p.25 quoted in Erricker, 2010, p.64).

The basis of radical-constructivism i.e. extreme-relativism, is a widely contested worldview. In a recent survey 81.6% of PhD-level philosophers favoured realism and a form of anti-radical-constructivism (Bourget and Chalmers, 2014, p.498). Basing RE on such a controversial worldview is dangerous. Glaserfeld argues that all academic subjects should adopt radical-constructivism fundamentally (2010) - but would it not be contradictory to teach ‘the sciences’ subjectively? In science, the objectivity of knowledge must necessarily take precedence over the learner’s subjectivity – science has to exclude subjectivity to function (Galileo, 1957, p.237-8). If radical-constructivism were exclusively incorporated as a fundamental in any subjects’ methodology, then we would be failing “to do justice to the objectivity of the external world” (A. Wright and E. Wright, 2012, p.228). On the basis of parsimony and rationality RE needs to follow its fellow school-subjects by working on the proviso of realism. Franck (2014) would oppose me here, arguing that if we accept realism, then RE will itself lead to realist-confessionalism. However, realist-RE recognises that “no education can avoid being ideological” and only adopts realism because we must initially accept the “...most appropriate ideological framework” (Wright, 2000, 186).

We have compelling reason here to endorse the claim that objective knowledge should take precedence over subjectivity at a fundamental level. If this holds, we must not only reject radical-constructivism but also the ‘learning about, from’ distinction too. I believe that Grimmitt’s modernist, unconventionally radical principles are untenable, and have inevitably contributed towards RE’s struggle for identify. On Grimmitt’s foundations, RE entails a form confessional-religiousness that rejects the notion of ‘objective truths’ entirely. This is fundamentally the religiousness of Grimmitt’s model, and it is not one that I care to endorse.

## **Part II**

### **Postmodern RE: 4-principles**

In an attempt to identify a more intelligible foundation for RE, I will postulate ‘4-principles’ that seek a non-radical, non-confessional RE built on sound, logical reasoning. Part I provides the justification for our first principle.

1. RE's methodology must assume only the most parsimonious worldviews as its starting point.

Additionally, RE should also embody the following pedagogical principles.

2. (2.1) RE should treat all statements truth-functionally and endorse an *open* understanding of truth.

(2.1) Radford (2012) claims religious statements are different 'types' of statements to those that are empirically verifiable, and therefore they should not be treated truth-functionally. I do not think that this argument holds much weight for two reasons. Firstly, as a point of clarification, the truth-value of all statements does not need to be determined empirically. After all we have truth-functional statements like '2+2=4', which are true *a priori*. Secondly, if we are seeking to avoid prejudice we cannot make special provisions for a particular worldview. As Leiter (2013) maintains; "If fundamentalist religious or non-religious conceptions are exempted from critical analysis, this is associated with certain risks with regard to democracy, dialogue and mutual respect" (quoted in Franck, 2015, p.228). RE will inevitably advocate an ideology at some level and it is essential that we avoid this as much as possible. Ultimately, it would be "... unreasonable and unfair to make room for this kind of exemptions... given that non-religious people are not qualifying for similar approaches: why should their conscience count as less relevant" (Franck, 2014, p.230)? If we exempt particular statements from truth-functionality and instead treat truth subjectively, we are left with a very closed-horizon understanding of truth. An RE that functions on closed-horizons will inevitably advocate confessionalism and in order to avoid confessionalism, we must allow an 'open-horizon' understanding of truth to take centre-stage.

3. (3.1) RE should focus on a students' own pursuit of truth. In doing so, (3.2) it should seek to avoid confessionalism, (3.3) challenge and deepen students' understanding of their own truth-values, and broaden students' horizons by introducing a diverse range of worldviews.

(3.1) As truth takes centre-stage a student will necessarily pursue truth for him or herself. This can be seen as a restoration of the ideas advocated by the 1977 Schools Council; specifically, one cannot separate 'the self' from the study of religion. RE is largely responsible for a students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and should be challenging pupils with questions of ultimate concern; we need to shift away from a pupil-centred RE to a

content-centred RE. Questions such as “what lies beyond death?” are the deep questions RE should be concerned with, where a question like ‘why do Muslims go to pilgrimage?’ although important, does not capture RE’s distinctiveness in being a deeply profound and personal enquiry (Smart, 1975, p.17). At present there is too much focus on a pupil’s basic subject knowledge, “rather than deepening their understanding through [student-centred] investigation” (Ofsted, 2007, p.10). I completely reject the claim that RE cannot be experientially immersive because pupils cannot ‘get into the skin’ of a believer. There is nothing more immersive than the pursuit of truth. RE needs to evolve into the subject it *ought* to be – a deeply personal exploration of ultimate truths.

(3.2) RE has shifted from being confessionally-Christian to a subject that seeks to eradicate confessionality entirely. In practice, there are far too many variables that lead an RE class to be indoctrinating and unfortunately our enquiry has not the luxury of exploring them. On a theoretical level, a model of RE must do what it can to avoid indoctrination. Cooling (1994) motions that RE has only shifted from Christian-confessionality to liberal-confessionality, and earlier we observed Franck’s critique of Wright, arguing that realism as a basis for RE would lead to realist-confessionality. Wright is not ignorant of this as he recognises that all RE-models will inevitably, and often inadvertently, push some kind of ideology. However, as argued in Part I, I believe that RE should adopt a foundation that is in line with its fellow curriculum subjects. RE should initially function on the assumption that the most parsimonious theories are true, as it would be dangerous to start from any radical standpoint. It is important to note that these assumed worldviews should not be free from scrutiny themselves. To avoid confessionality we must not give any worldview special status. Instead, RE should function with open-horizons; embodying varied and conflicting worldviews rather than a limited number of mutually agreeable truth-beliefs.

(3.3) It is important when teaching worldviews that they are made explicit as it “helps pupils to identify where they themselves stand” (Hookway, 2002, 104). I do not think that it is possible for anyone to identify with Rudge’s ‘I am nothing’ (1998); after all, to be ‘nothing’ is for itself to be ‘something’. Every student can identify with some worldview. Embodying a rich variety of worldviews in RE will deepen pre-existing knowledge-relationships, as a student must ‘dig deep’ to defend their own truth-values. Moreover, a deeper understanding of alternative truth-claims will develop when conflicting worldviews are articulated. An RE that aims to facilitate a critical debate is one that will inevitably lead to religious literacy.

4. Principles 1-3 are to be treated as *fundamentals* and must influence any principles that precede them.

The last twenty-eight years has seen the development of several effective pedagogical models in RE. Holt argues in favour of a kaleidoscopic approach, a model that employs a particular combination of these pedagogies when the context calls (2015, p.34). “All of them ‘can be brilliant, and... can be teamed up in various different eclectic combinations by any teacher’” (Blaylock, 2004, p.3 quoted in Holt, 2015, p.34). It is imperative that we have a unified RE that seeks to include rather than exclude the virtues of the major pedagogies. However, these pedagogies and also Holts’ kaleidoscopic RE depend on the untenable foundations that I rejected in Part I. In contrast to Holt and Wright, I argue that RE can involve any combination of pedagogical teaching techniques on the provision that they are built on principles 1-3.

### **Philosophical Nature**

In the light of this, I do not think that a conventional model of RE involves the development of ‘religious understanding’. Following the 4-principles, religious understanding is contingent; the content may be religious, but the understanding will only be religious if the students are themselves religious. The development of a philosophical understanding however, is *necessary*, as all students, religious or non-religious, will engage and understand a worldview in this way.

## **Part III**

### **Principles in Practice**

I anticipate the criticism that I have abstracted too far from the classroom. However, a criticism of this nature fails to acknowledge “the pedagogy of learning has logical priority over the pedagogy of teaching” (Wright, 2007, p.260). There is no reason why theory cannot be put into practice, “any divorce or split... is between practice and poor theory, rather than practice and theory” (Barrow, 2006, p.47). I believe that the 4-principles can be consistently translated into practise.

## **Research Methods**

In order to assess the application of the 4-principles my 3 colleagues and I carried out a small-scale research project. The research involved an experimental lesson, written feedback from the class and teacher, and a questionnaire given to 2 RE teachers.

Our research was carried out in an academy secondary school that follows the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (BCC, 2007). We taught a 1-hour revision lesson on Crime and Punishment (see Appendix A). 16 mixed-gender students made up the year 11 class; 11 pupil premium students, 4 SEND students - mean predicted grade: B (See Appendix B). The learning objective was to develop a deeper understanding of their own opinions and the opinions of others towards key points in the topic (see Appendix A). The pupils were divided into mixed-ability groups (see Appendix C) and the classroom was arranged into 4 workstations (see Appendix D). Each group rotated between the workshops completing different tasks in their revision booklets (see Appendix E). Our research was restricted by time as we had a large amount of content to cover in just 1-hour. This meant we did not have the luxury of testing a kaleidoscopic 4-principle approach. Instead, it was agreed we focused solely on the 4-principles.

Our findings largely rely on individual observations. For this reason, I shall focus exclusively on the task that I developed and taught, ‘workshop 2’ (see ‘workshop 2’ Appendix E and Appendix F).

## **Findings**

I was asked to help students revise ‘causes’ and ‘types’ of crime. Their previous lessons had significantly lacked religious content (see Appendix G). The success of the lesson perhaps supports my claim that RE should continue to shift away from being ‘religious-content-centred’ to being more ‘student-development-centred’. During the workshop religious beliefs came solely from the students - this was the most religious aspect of the workshop. We treated all worldviews as truth-claims as to allow students to engage with them critically. This meant students had to explain and justify their views in detail, and contrasting truth-claims were asserted in a respectful manner. The focus was on the students’ own pursuit of truth and this created an engaging environment. The workshop was perhaps more philosophical than it

was religious. The class teacher noted, “the discussion was very philosophical and struggled to fulfil the aim of teaching religion” (see Appendix H and Appendix I – ‘question 3’). This element of feedback is crucial. In theory, it was difficult to foresee the exact form the 4-principles would take in practice. The workshop successfully developed religious literacy through the 4 principles, but the nature of the lesson was not deeply religious – only aspects of its content were religious. The lesson seemed to be closer to a Sophology lesson - the study of wisdom. This supports my argument that when we comply with the need to replace REs foundations; we have a student-centred RE that encourages a deeper study of wise thought, which does not necessarily entail religious understanding (3.1).

Following Barrow (2006), the success of translating a theory into practice indicates that the theory is not poorly devised. The 4-principles, when implemented carefully can create a lesson that innately avoids the problems outlined in part I, and develops a deep understanding of truth-claims. Reflective student feedback gave a good indication of this; a pupil said the lesson, “helped me understand the key words and imprinted them into my brain” (see Appendix J.3). I believe this was successful due to the critical methodology behind the lesson. The class teacher wrote, “you are pushing the pupils through questioning and this is brilliant... they want to do their work for you... all [the] students are engaged” (see Appendix K). This clearly indicates an instance where the 4-principles were effective which again supports the soundness of the 4-principles.

We conducted an interview with 2 class teachers after the lesson (see Appendix H, Appendix I and Appendix L). Teacher A said; “An effective RE lesson is when students are respectful to all points of view even if they disagree... when students are reflectively thinking about their own opinions... [and] successful when all students make progress” (see Appendix I - ‘question 3’). Through my own observation and the teacher’s feedback, it is fair to say the lesson was effective and successful on the basis of this criterion, as in the lesson feedback the teacher praised; “you all question the pupils; stretching their knowledge further – this is really good as you have the ability to... move them forward” (see Appendix M). This quote directly supports the successful implementation of the 4-principles. Some would argue that this came at a price – the price of marginalising religious-content in the curriculum even further. Teacher A did not share this concern, “RE is less religious in the manner of learning facts... [and] more religious as we are focusing on our own engagement with a religion” (see Appendix I – ‘question 5’). As I have argued, this ‘engagement’ is perhaps better defined as

being more philosophical than it is religious but the key point here is that she believed this was RE's purpose. We have come some way in identifying RE, but by postulating that this 'religious understanding' is better conceptualised as 'philosophical understanding'; as "the meaning of a word is its use in language" (Wittgenstein, 1958, p.20e) the name 'RE' makes "little logical sense" (Moran, 1989, p.99).

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, the purpose of a more conventional, post-modernistic RE is the development of a philosophical understanding as opposed to a religious understanding. I have argued that we must refine RE's fundamentals (Part I) and on the basis of a more coherent formulation (post-modernistic RE – Part II), the most *religious* aspect of RE is its content. I believe that we are shifting away from a subject-centred RE towards a student-development-centred RE, and the 4-principles advocated attempt to pioneer this necessary evolution. The problems in Part I serve to highlight the flaws in RE's contemporary methodology and how this impedes us from answering the question directly. I have argued that by rethinking RE's fundamentals, we can begin to understand RE and its religiousness, but there is certainly much more to be said on the matter that goes beyond the scope of this enquiry.

As teachers, we must reflect on the principles that guide our work in the classroom. If we strip RE down to its fundamentals we see that the principles which guide the subject are too radical. By reconceptualising the principles into what they ought to be, RE looks more like Sophology; its primary purpose being the development of a philosophical understanding rather than a religious one.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A – Lesson Plan

## Lesson Plan: Team Teach

<b>Specific Target/Focus for the week/Class:</b> Students should be clear on what they must revise for Crime and Punishment module of GCSE Examination. The revision workshops should highlight gaps in their knowledge so that they know the key elements of the topics they need to focus on.	<b>Specific RE target for week/class:</b> Students must engage with revision materials to ensure their knowledge meets the standards of their target grades.
<b>Date:</b> 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2015	<b>Key Stage:</b> Four (GCSE)
<b>Class:</b> 11b/RE2	<b>Ability Range:</b> Mixed ability, B1 – D2
<b>SEND/More Able:</b> 4 students with SEN	<b>Pupil Premium/SAF/Intervention:</b> 11 students with PP/Unknown/Unknown
<b>SOW Focus/Enquiry Question:</b> How can I revise Crime and Punishment effectively?	<b>Lesson Focus:</b> Recapping and reiterating what students have covered in previous lessons. Facilitating discussions. Higher Order / Critical Thinking (achieved by dialogue)
<b>Lesson Objective (following school policy format):</b>  <b>Students must:</b> Identify key points from the crime and punishment topic <b>Students should:</b> Explain key points from the crime and punishment topic <b>Students could:</b> Consider my own opinion and the opinion of others towards key points in the crime and punishment topic	
<b>Main aims of the lesson (link to concepts, skills, topic, areas):</b> Revising prior knowledge of the topic. Creating materials they can use for further revision. Facilitating group discussions and group work surrounding Crime and Punishment.	
<b>Assessment:</b> Verbal assessment of discussions/ dialogue, written assessment of work completed in activity workbooks	<b>Resources:</b> Activity Workbook, Pens, Pencils

	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>CONSISTS OF:</b>	<b>TIMINGS</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>
MS A – workshop 1	Effects of crime/Aims of punishment	Discussion activity Match words to their meaning Design a poem	(5 mins) (2 mins) (3 mins)	Activity Workbook
MR Z – workshop 2	Types and causes of crime	Discussion, Debate, Critical thinking	(5 mins) (5 mins)	Activity Workbook
MRS B – workshop 3	What do Muslims believe about Crime and Punishment?	Back to Back Discussion Activity	(3 mins) (7 mins)	Activity Workbook
MR Y – workshop 4	Christian Law, Order and Forgiveness	Fill in the Gaps Connect dialogue shapes	(3 mins) (7 mins)	Activity Workbook

After the starter, students shall be put into groups of four. Each group shall then rotate around the activity stations (carousel) in order to complete their workbook. The starter shall consist for three crime scenarios being put forward, which the students will be asked to act as the jury and will have to decide which is the most immoral/least immoral. For the plenary, the same scenarios will be put forward but the students will be asked what Christians/Muslims would think about each scenario.

#### **TIMINGS**

2 mins – Register, 5 mins – Starter, 3 mins – get them into groups

8 mins – each task, 2 mins- rotation, 10 mins – homework, plenary, pack away

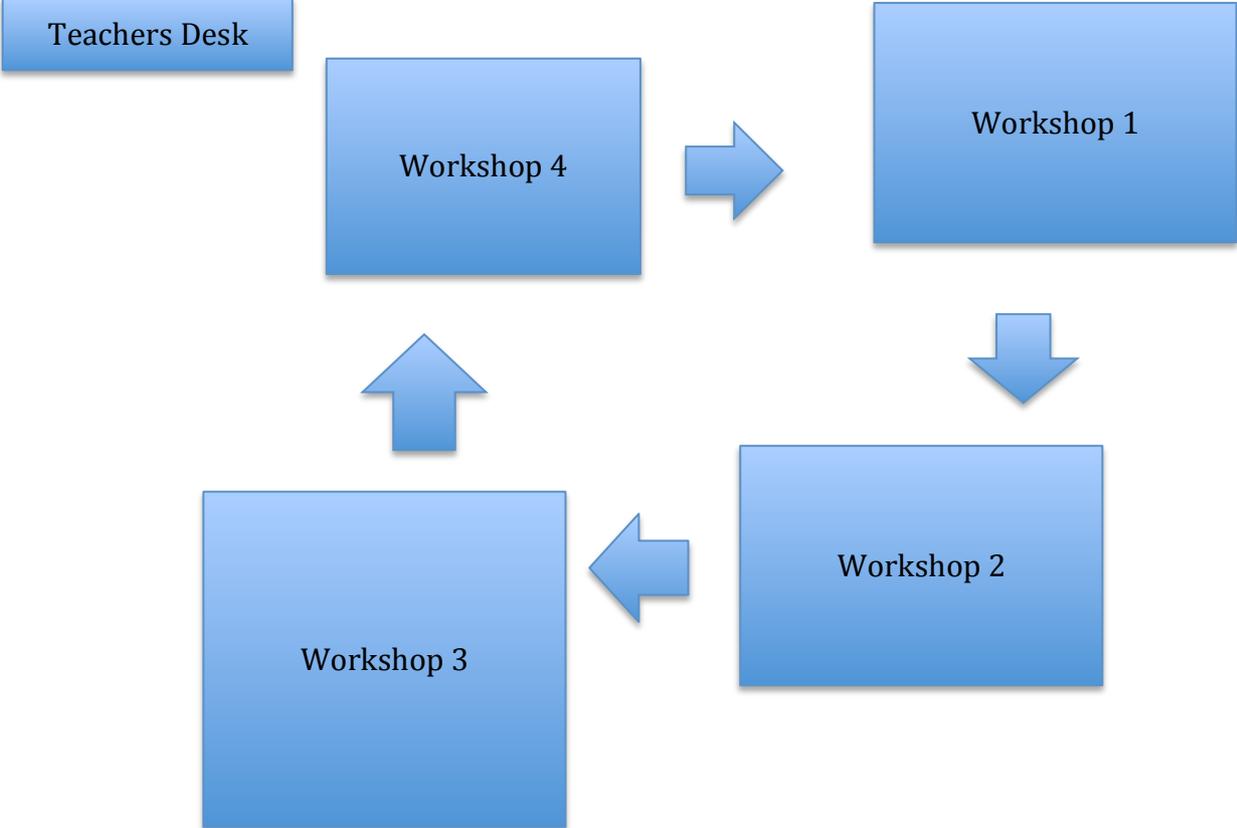
**Appendix B – Class Information**

Surname Forename	Gender	Reg Group	FSM	Ethnicity	% Attendance	Pupil Premium Indicator	SEN Status	Reading Test Age	KS2_Band	KS2_Mean_Sub_Lvl	Min Grade Needed 3	Levels Progress	RS 4 Levels Progress	Progress8_Target	RS GCSE Last Run	End_of_Year_2015	RS GCSE Full Gd	Predicted Grade	Working at Now	Yr11_Grade_Run1	Learning_Profile	Yr11_Grade_Run1	Comment	Yr10_Early_Life_Mid	Yr10_EL/PE_Real_Picture	Yr10_Unit2_Mock_Exam	Yr10_Existence_of_God_Mid	Yr10_Rich_and_Poor_Mid	Yr10_Existence_of_God_End	Yr10_Rich_and_Poor_End	Yr10_E&S_Mid	Yr10_Drugs_Mid	Yr10_Exam	
	M	JSE	N	White - British	100		N	153 M	4A	C	C	B	C+	C2	C									A3	C1	C1	A3	A1	A2	A2	A1			
	M	EWE	N	White - British	93.9		N	153 M	4B	C	B	C-	B1	B											A3	A1	A1	A2	A2	A2				
	F	RFH	Y	White - British	100	Y	K	153 M	4B	C	B	C-	C2	C											C1	C1	C1	A2	A2	A2	B1	B1		
	F	EWE	N	White - British	97		N	153 H	5C	B	A	B-	B1	B											A1	B2	B2	A2	A2	A2	B1	B1		
	F	EWE	N	White - British	100	Y	N	153 M	4B	C	B	C-	B1	B											B1	A1	A1	A2	A2	A2	A*1	A*1		
	M	PRS	Y	White - British	93.9	Y	N	153 M	4C	C	B	D-	C1	C											B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	A*2	A*2		
	F	EWE	Y	Indian	100	Y	N	133 M	4C	C	B	D	C1	C											C2	B2	B2	F2	B2	B2	C3	C3		
	F	EWE	N	White and Black Caribbean	93.9	Y	N	153 M	4A	C	B	C	C1	C											B2	B1	B1	A2	A2	A2	A2	A1		
	M	EWE	N	Pakistani	97		N	153 M	4B	C	B	C-	B1	B												B1	B1	A2	A2	A2	A1	A1		
	M	EWE	N	White - British	87.9	Y	K	153 M	4A	C	B	C-	B1	B												A2	C1	C1	C1	B2	B2	B1	B1	
	M	MBR	Y	White - British	93.9	Y	N	153 M	4B	C	B	C-	C2	C												B3	C1	C1	C3	C2	C2	C3	C3	
	F	EWE	Y	White - British	100	Y	K	100 M	4C	C	B	D	B3	B											C2	A3	A3	B2	C1	C1				
	F	ABL	Y	White - British	90.9	Y	N	149 M	4C	C	B	D	D2	C												D2	D2				B3	B3		
	M	MBR	N	White - British	100	Y	N	153 M	4B	C	B	C-	C1	C												C1	C2	C2	C1	A3	A3	B2	B2	
	M	MBR	Y	White - British	100	Y	K	153 M	4B	C	B	D+	C3	C												C2	C2	C2	B2	A2	A2			
	M	PRS	Y	White - British	54.5	Y	N	153 M	4C	C	B	D	C3	C											F1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	D1	

**Appendix C – Grouping Information**

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>END OF YEAR 2015</b>
RED	1	F	B3
	2	F	C2
	3	M	C3
	4	M	B1
GREEN	5	M	C2
	6	M	C3
	7	F	B1
	8	M	C2
BLUE	9	F	D2
	10	F	B1
	11	M	B1
	12	M	C1
ORANGE	13	F	C1
	14	F	C1
	15	M	C1
	16	M	C2

**Appendix D – Classroom Layout**



**13.10.2015**

**Crime and Punishment**

**Name:**

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**Group:**

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# Workshop 1

## Effects of Crime and Aims of Punishment

### Activity One: Effects of Crime

*Consider the two scenarios below and discuss the following questions in your group.*

*What are the effects on each criminal?*

*What are the effects of each crime on the environment?*

*Does the crime have an effect on the rest of society? What are these effects?*

*How long will all these effects last for? Are they temporary or permanent?*

#### Scenario 1

Josh is 12 years old and lives in an overcrowded two-bedroom house with his three younger sisters and one brother. His dad is a heavy drinker and his mum is close to a nervous breakdown. Josh is left alone for most of the time and has built up a lot of anger and resentment. He has been excluded from school for a week for swearing at teachers and his is a very difficult student to manage. With little to do, he wanders around the streets and has already been in trouble for vandalism and getting drunk. He has been given an ASBO (Anti-social Behaviour Order) which requires him to be at home after 8pm. The police stopped him last night at 11pm and as this was the third time they had caught him breaking his order, he will have to go to court. It is likely that he will receive a fine and because he doesn't earn any money, his parents will have to pay it.



Notes

**Scenario 2**



On 12<sup>th</sup> February 1993, two boys called Robert Thompson and Jon Venerables (both aged 11) abducted a two year old called James Bulger. The pair then tortured and murdered the two year old. After, they left his body on the railway tracks where it was later found by police. Thompson and Venerables were found guilty on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1993, making them the youngest convicted murdered in modern English history. They were sentenced to custody until the reached adulthood, initially until the age of 18, and were released under new identities and on a lifelong sentence. In 2010, Venerables was sent to prison for violating the terms of his license of release, but was released on parole again in 2013.

Notes

**Activity Two: Aims of Punishment**

*Write the correct explanation of each term in the box to the side of it.*

<b>Reparation</b>	
<b>Vindication</b>	
<b>Reformation</b>	
<b>Protection</b>	
<b>Retribution</b>	
<b>Deterrence</b>	
<b>Punishment</b>	

*Design a poem that will help you remember the aim of punishment.*

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## Workshop 2

### Types of Crime



Crimes against...

Example:

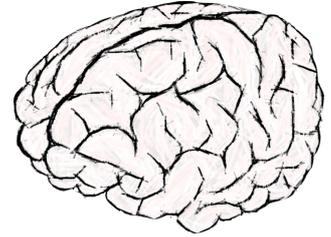
Why could this be considered wrong?

Is it always wrong to do this?

Respond to 'teacher challenge':



# Causes of Crime



Causes of Crime: -----

**Definition:**

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**Give an example of a crime caused by one of**

--

**Do you think this crime can be justified?**

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**Why?**

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**Respond to 'teacher challenge':**

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## Workshop 3

### What do Muslims believe about Crime and punishment?

**Keywords:**

<b>Sanctity of Life</b>	The belief that human life is sacred and belongs to God
<b>Khalifah</b>	Successor of the Prophet
<b>Yawmuddin</b>	Day of Judgement
<b>Haram</b>	Something that is forbidden
<b>Reform</b>	Making changes in something in order to improve it
<b>Shari'ah</b>	Islamic law
<b>Forgiveness</b>	Letting go of negative thoughts and resentment
<b>Justice</b>	Fairness in protection of rights and being punished of wrongs
<b>Deterrence</b>	Use of punishment to prevent people from offending again
<b>Judgement</b>	The ability to make a decision and come to a conclusion about something



Discuss the further questions with your group and write down what is discussed.

What is the purpose of punishment in Islamic societies? Explain the Islamic attitude towards punishing criminals.

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What are the 3 orders of sin?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_



What is the Muslim perspective on the following scenarios? Discuss.

- 1) A man steals money from his brother due to resentful feelings toward him, but he repented and was not happy about what he did.
- 2) A woman was jealous of her friends' new car, so she secretly damaged it. She did not feel bad about what she did.
- 3) A man murdered his neighbour out of anger as he was making too much noise. He repented for what he did.

In what cases would Allah forgive a person? Why would he forgive them?

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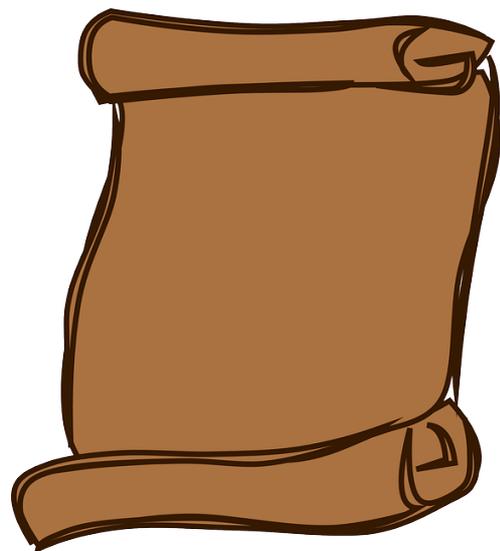
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## Key quotes:

- “Do not with your own hands commit to your own destruction” (Surah 45:26)
- “Allah fixes the timespan of all living things” (Surah 53)
- “Allah gives you life and death” (Surah 45:26)
- “Those who avoid major sins and acts of indecencies and when they are angry they forgive” (Surah 42:37)
- “The reward of the evil is the evil thereof, but whosoever forgives and makes amends, his reward is upon God” (Surah 42:20)
- “If you punish, then punish with the like of that wherewith you were afflicted. But if you endure patiently, indeed it is better for the patient. Endure you patiently. Your patience is not except through the help of God...” (Surah 16:126-27)
- “As to the thief, male or female, cut off their hands: a punishment by way of an example” (Surah 5:38)
- “Allah doth command you... when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice” (Surah 4:58)



# Christian law, order and forgiveness

## Workshop 4

Christians should obey the law because...

Christians should try and show forgiveness because...

Christians believe punishment is important because...

Christians believe punishment should be...

Very harsh and full of pain.

They believe in Agape/ 'Love your \_\_\_\_\_ as you love yourself'

Romans 13: 'Obey the \_\_\_\_\_, for God is the one who put it there.... Those who refuse to obey the \_\_\_\_\_ of the land are refusing to obey God, and punishment will

It is a way to \_\_\_\_\_ reformation.

Exodus 20: The 10 \_\_\_\_\_ give clear instructions e.g. 'Do not commit \_\_\_\_\_', 'Do not \_\_\_\_\_'

Fair and humane – criminals are still people that God knows and loves so they shouldn't be treated cruelly for the sake of it.'

They believe there will a Judgement \_\_\_\_\_.

Punishment removes all sins.

"For if you \_\_\_\_\_ men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your \_\_\_\_\_" (Matthew 6:14-15).

**Task 1:** Use the following words to fill in the gaps: forgive, sins, laws, steal, day, commandments, government, neighbor, murder, achieve, loves.

**Task 2:** Draw a line connecting the 3 dialogue shapes on the left with the correct box on the right. (Please note not all of them are correct.)

## Appendix F – ‘Workshop 2’ Methodology and Plan

### **Workshop 2 – ‘Causes’ and ‘Types’ of Crime – Workshop notes**

#### **Methodology**

- Utilise two theories of teaching compatible with the *4 principles* - Hookway’s ‘Mirrors, Windows, Conversations’ model and teaching methods from *Philosophy for Children* (2015).
- Students to analyse their own worldviews (mirror), before investigating the worldviews of others (window) and then engaged in a critical examination of all the truth-values they have touched on.
- The task should be primarily discussion based, although students’ are expected to take to complete the worksheet at intervals throughout the discussion to show their progress.
- Students shall be asked to remain silent whilst another others are speaking. Students will raise their hands during the discussion and the previous speaker will select the next student to speak. The new speaker will be required to analyse what the previous speaker has said before making their own point.
- As the facilitator of the discussion, I will intervene occasionally to ensure we move on to Hookway’s next stage and I aim to promote a model stance of *fabilism* – a willingness to amend or abandon one’s opinion in the face of a good argument.

#### **The Lesson Itself**

Begin the discussion by asking a question, for example, “What *is it* to steal from a bank?” (Questions that are controversial and critically-engaging) – is this a crime against the state, a property or against individuals?

At the end of the task I will ask them to fill out the rest of their worksheets in order to consolidate what they have discussed. If I haven’t set challenges already – review their work and set them a ‘teacher challenge’ as homework. Make this a critical question that challenges the truth-values the each pupil – what truth-claim has the pupil asserted during the discussion?

10 minute time constraint at workshop 2.  
Safeguarding – chairs in!

Recap and reiterate what they've learnt in previous lessons.  
Facilitate a discussion.  
Challenge/attack students' preconceptions/arguments.  
Get them to dig deep and argue back – H.O.T, A02 focus, student-centred.

### **Types of Crime**

Give some examples of crimes – a student can only give one answer each - must select the next pupil who speaks who has their hand up – what types of crimes are these? Against an individual, property or the state?

Ask the group for examples of each – be critical wherever possible – when they select the new student must assess their classmates point before making their own point. Go back and ask each student, is that wrong? Get them to write some answers down.

Answer the next question alone.

Teachers challenge - I will then go around and assess everyone's work and challenge them. This may come as a question, an argument against what they said – instructions will be given.

### **Causes of Crime**

What causes somebody to commit a crime? Facilitate a discussion and highlight the key distinctions that the students make. Try and get them to label them themselves without telling them the answers – the one-person pass applies again. Get them to explain their points and challenge them appropriately in order to bring to light the definitions of their terms.

Run through some examples and get the students to select one of their own. Help them identify key elements and facilitate a discussion if time permits.

Get students to justify their opinions in the *why* question. Then go round and give them teacher challenges. E.G. provide an alternative point of view, 'well if the situation was X then...', 'put yourself in this person's shoes', give the perspective of another person argue against them - get them to respond in their answers.

Appendix G – What the class had covered so far

What have I  
learnt so far?  
Revision.

How do we know what is  
right and wrong? - starter  
types of crime and effects  
religious offences  
Causes of crime  
aims of punishment } (c)  
christian / muslim beliefs.

## Appendix H – Interview A: Questions

### Teacher Interview

In compliance with: Cohen, L. and Manion L. (1994) *Research Methods in Education*, 4th Edn. Abington, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

**Objective:** To obtain a detailed description of the principles that guide secondary teachers' RE lessons.

#### What information is needed?

- What are teachers' views on RE's identity?
- How do pupils succeed in RE?
- How does a pupil acquire a deeper understanding in RE?
- What are the teachers' views on diversity and encouraging the variation of views – including non-religious views?
- Should an RE teacher challenge the concepts of a pupils own religion, culture and/or society?
- If time and resources weren't an issue – what would be the most effective method of teaching RE and why?
- An understand of a teachers' RE ideology

#### Questions v1:

1. Why did you decide to teach *Religious Education*?

2. What does *Religious Education* mean to you?

3. What makes an effective RE lesson?

4. What makes a successful RE lesson?

5. What do you think is *religious* about *Religious Education*?

6. How do you think a pupil acquires a deeper, higher-order understanding of the world/themselves in RE?

Clarification - I.e. methods/lesson plans/what do you do to get a pupil to engage in HOT?

8. Please respond to the following statement: an RE teacher should challenge a pupils' belief systems.

## Appendix I – Interview ‘Teacher A’: Responses

### Interview A: Secondary Teacher A of Religious Studies

1.

I enjoyed the subject and I like that it is a subject that can make a difference to people’s lives and help people understand each other. I believe that as an RS teacher I can make a difference.

2.

Educating students about religion; in order for students to understand each other’s beliefs.

3

An effective RE lesson is when students are respectful to all points of view even if they disagree with them. When students are reflectively thinking about their own opinions. There is a balance though; sometimes your discussion was very philosophical and struggled to fulfil the aim of teaching religion, it’s about finding a middle ground between the two – they do have exams to sit after all.

4

A successful RE lesson is a lesson where all students make progress.

5

Religious Education is less religious in the manner of learning facts and beliefs but can be seen as more religious as we are focusing on our own engagement with a religion.

6

By being able to have open confidential discussions about their own beliefs and others.

7

Agree, because by challenging them you’re putting them in apposition where they have to justify their beliefs and look further into an understanding of what they *do* believe.

**Appendix J – Student Feedback**

**J.1**

They have helped me to understand more about why punishment is good or bad

**J.2**

They helped with my revision because of the booklets

**J.3**

You helped me understand the key words and inputted them into my brain. And gave us alot of support

**Appendix K – Teacher Individual Feedback**

Name: [REDACTED]	
WWW	EBI
<p>You come across confident, you give the students time to think when you ask them questions and your manner with them in small groups means that they want to do their work for you. You are pushing the pupils through questioning and this is brilliant.</p> <p>You move around and this is good it shows the students that you are watching them their eyes follow you showing they are listening.</p>	<p>Re-inforce instructions and respect - only do the register in silence.</p> <p>When you ask the class to rotate remind them to tuck in their chairs - safeguarding - most of the time you DID do this.</p>
<p>All students are engaged and you all should be super proud of this lesson.</p>	

## **Appendix L – Interview ‘Teacher B’: Questions and Responses.**

### Teacher B – Questions and Responses

Do you think an RE teacher should challenge a student’s belief system?

I think it important for teachers to challenge beliefs in general but I wouldn’t target a particular student’s belief system as it may make them feel uncomfortable or lead to them questioning their own religion/beliefs. However, I think it is important for teachers to question their student’s to push them further in justifying what they believe and why.

–  
Why did you want to teach RE?

I wanted to teach RE as I really enjoyed it myself at school and I had a very good teacher who inspired me. I also thought it would be a useful subject to teach as we live in such a diverse multi-cultural society in which RE has an impact.

What do you think is the purpose of RE?

The purpose of RE is to educate students about world faiths and beliefs. It gives students the chance to share their opinions and views with others without making a judgment.

What do you think is Religious about Religious Education?

Learning about people’s faiths is religious. It is important for students to be aware of how and why people do/believe certain things. I think it important for students to have a chance to discuss their views about the similarities and differences between people’s religions and beliefs.

What do you think makes an effective RE lesson?

An effective RE lesson allows students to be curious and have a feeling of wanting to learn more. An effective RE lesson would be for students to expect the unexpected, being excited to attend your lessons.

What do you think makes a successful RE lesson?

A successful RE lesson gives students the chance to make effective progress. It should allow them to learn for themselves rather than just receiving the information from a teacher.

How do you make students engage in HOT?

Building good relationships with students will encourage them to engage. If the students feel comfortable with you and your lessons they should naturally engage. Positive reinforcement and rewards work depending on the age of your students. One to one communication with your students to find out a bit about them (relationship building) what activities they enjoy/don’t enjoy!

Do you think an RE teacher should challenge a student's belief system?

I think it important for teachers to challenge beliefs in general but I wouldn't target a particular student's belief system as it may make them feel uncomfortable or lead to them questioning their own religion/beliefs. However, I think it is important for teachers to question their student's to push them further in justifying what they believe and why.

## Appendix M – Teachers General Feedback

### *PgDipEd RE- your Lesson as a whole*

#### WWW

- All students are engaged and although some students at times wonder off daydreaming you are all quick to get them back involved in your activities.
- Your resources are wonderful, they are brilliantly suited to this class- you now have this resource to bank away and come back to whenever you need it in your placements and your teaching career 😊
- You all question the pupils; stretching their knowledge further- this is really good as you have the ability through this technique to understand where the pupils are at and move them forwards.
- You all seem confident, and this is noticed by the students. They know that you are teachers and should respect you and this is reflected by your actions towards them.
- You are all smiling by the end of the lesson- this is definitely a good sign!
- All students have progressed and this is down to you! All four of you should be proud today and I'm sure that each student will be thankful for you doing this lesson with them today.

#### EBI

- Remember: you are the teacher, do not give the students instructions until every last one of them has their attention on you. Yes, timing is tight but it is much more important that the students are listening to you. Re-iterate your instructions, check that they understand. At first, doing this may take time with your classes but the more you do it, the more you will notice that the students know what is expected of them and know that you will not tell them what is happening until they are ALL listening. This will also mean that students will respect you; they will grow to know your expectations.
- Face the students when you are talking to them but 'work the room', by moving around it allows you to recognise who is listening.