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EXCELLENCE IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Research for RE website as a teacher development
resource

Dr Kevin O'Grady
Lead Consultant for Research



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Overview / Aims

- CStG's Research for RE website (<https://researchforre.reonline.org.uk/>): live since September 2017.
- Continual growth (106 research reports, 845 users).
- We'll continue to increase its content and encourage new users, but: how is the site being used?
- How are different research reports being used by teachers? How might they contribute to teacher development?
- So far, our examples are limited in number but good. One is a collaborative project including researchers from the University of Warwick and teachers in a South Yorkshire academy; another a training session given to PGCE RE students in different universities.
- The aims of this session are to take you through the examples and identify ways for you to help your schools use the website.

Teaching and learning based on research reports – example from a South Yorkshire academy

Y7 lessons on Christianity and the environment, enhanced by interventions based on –

- Using the Bible in GCSE and A level RS (Horrell and Davis) - *don't 'proof text', ask about meanings and interpretations*
- Signposts (Jackson) - *establish safe space for discussion*
- Talking about religion and diversity (Von der Lippe) - *make use of personal / family contacts to build positive encounters with religion*

Safe Space discussion rules

- 1) One person speaks at a time with no interruptions
- 2) Give reasons for what you say
- 3) Explain the reasons you give for what you're saying
- 4) Think of both sides of the argument
- 5) Don't insult other people
- 6) Think before you speak
- 7) Be mature and honest
- 8) Help others



HOMEWORK

Talk to a relative or a friend who is a Christian about why he or she is concerned about the environment.

Write down what they have to say.

Be prepared to feed back next week.

You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield, but on the seventh year you shall let it rest. (Exodus 23:10) In your groups, discuss –

- What might this have meant to people over 2000 years ago?
- What might this mean to people today?
- How might it mean different things to different people or be understood in different ways?

Benefits reported



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Teachers –

- More confidence
- More control
- More content coverage
- More scope to use specialist subject knowledge
- A sense of taking different angles on RE teaching

Pupils –

- Less interruption, more confidence
- More respect, more sensitivity
- More face-to-face 'real' engagement
- More awareness of difference even if content is 'touchy'



Reflections from PGCE RE students Bishop Grosseteste University 4 Feb 2019

TASK: Spend 10-15 minutes looking through the various research reports and finding your way around the site, with an eye for reports that you might find particularly interesting or useful. Then focus on one research report. Prepare brief feedback for the group, including research report title, key points and why you have chosen it – why is it interesting? How might it be used? How might it help to improve RE teaching?



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James Howard

Andrew Wright:

RE, Knowledge, Wisdom and Truth

“They're all values I strive to have . . . on further investigation, it's about students' critical abilities, and RE is not a place to tell them what to believe . . . a concern for truth and evidence is an expansion of ideas I was already having. It boosts engagement in RE and answers students' question – why do I do RE?”



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Lucie Fidlin

Terence Lovat:

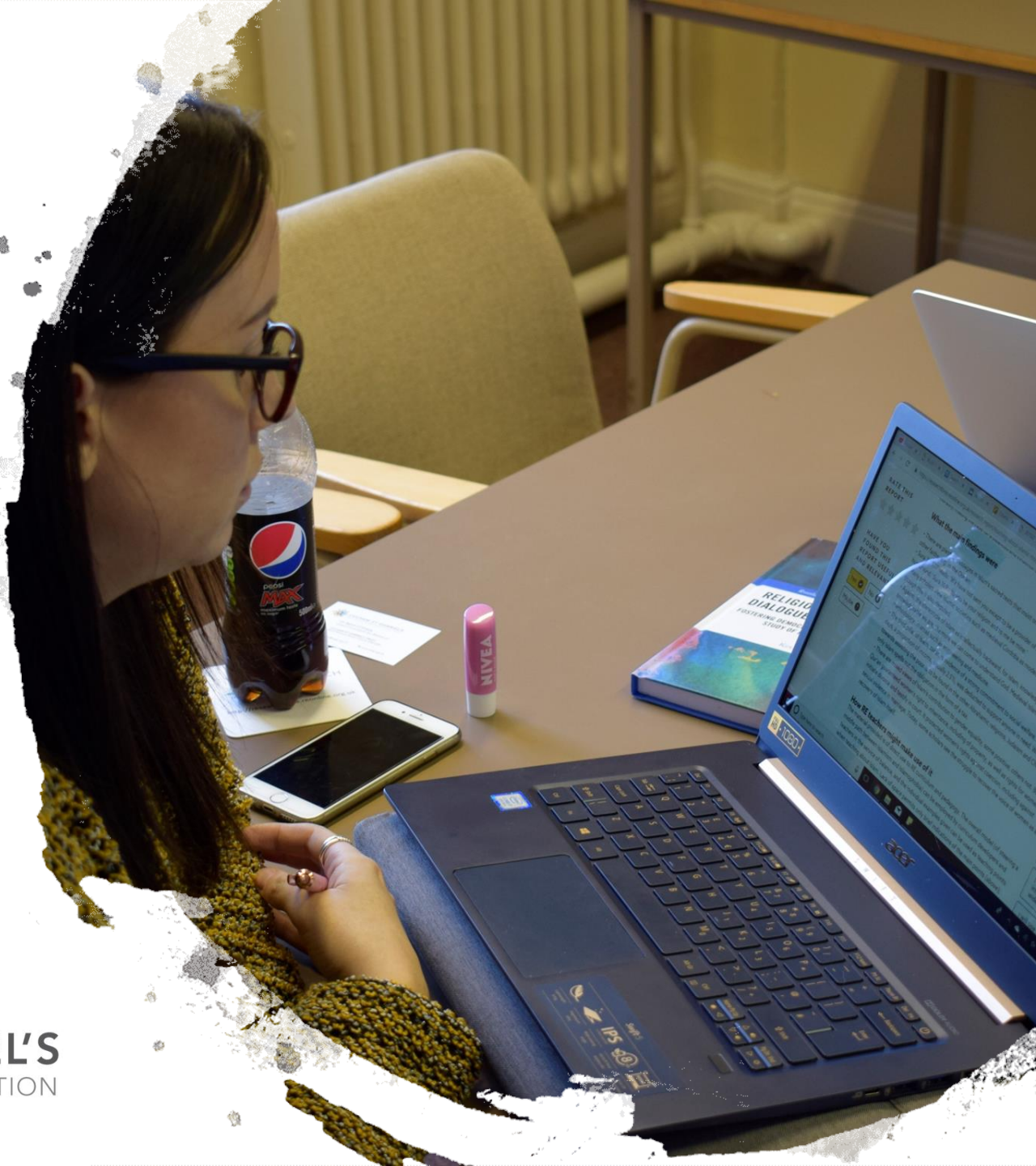
Teaching Islamic Morality

“Offers a more current view of Islam, introducing issues around the position of women in Islam – asks you to teach about the religion as well as confronting Islamophobia.”
(In the context of complaint about teaching practice department that teaching on Islam simplistically focuses on the Five Pillars.)

“I'll definitely use the website more, in planning lessons and writing assignments . . . when you see 'Research for RE', you wonder if it can be applied to teaching, but now I think yes.”



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Sabiya Naib

Annika Bergviken Rensfeldt *et al*:
Teachers using Facebook groups

“It gives you both advantages and disadvantages. I'm in Save RE and the AQA GCSE group . . . I never picked up the disadvantages, e.g. it can be used as an emotional platform rather than a resource. There are useful resources on the AQA page . . . in time, we'll (trainee RE teachers) relate to research more.”



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General Findings – what can engagement with research reports, or researchers, offer to teachers?

- New angles on teaching
- Increased confidence
- Increased awareness of different classroom factors
- Stimulation to innovate, pedagogically

Cf. Teachers' Use of Research Evidence: A case study of United Learning schools, NFER 2014



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What can you as a SACRE do?

- How might you follow up this session?
- How might you publicise the website to RE teachers in your schools?
- How might you encourage teachers to use the website to develop teaching and learning, and share the examples they create?
- See next slides . . .



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Suggestions from delegates

- SACRE representatives could refer to the website in presentations, in order to base points on reputable sources
- SACREs could refer to the website as part of communication with teachers, because it is good to keep teachers interested in research
- Teachers need help to engage with research: therefore the digests on the website and the examples in this presentation are useful



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Suggestions from delegates

- SACREs could alert their schools to the website, for use in teacher training
- SACREs could put a link to the website from their own websites
- A regular task for a SACRE, during a meeting or other session, could be to discuss a selected research report from the website



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