INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS PLURALITY

Edited by
Robert Jackson & Ursula McKenna
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‘International Education and Religious Plurality’ consists of research based discussions aimed at helping educators and policy makers to bring the dimension of religious diversity to intercultural education in Europe. The report is written by members of Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit as a contribution to the Oslo Coalition’s Project on Teaching for Tolerance and Freedom of Religion or Belief.

The Oslo Coalition of Freedom of Religion or Belief is an international network of representatives from faith communities, NGOs, international organisations and the academic world aiming at promoting freedom of religion or belief and strengthening interfaith cooperation worldwide. The Oslo Coalition is based on the notion that freedom of religion or belief in an universal standard as stated in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18 of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, and the 1981 United Nations Declaration Based on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based upon Religion or Belief. The Oslo Coalition seeks to promote freedom of religion or belief through dialogue and cooperation.

‘Teaching for Tolerance and Freedom of Religion or Belief’ is an Oslo Coalition project which seeks to develop a global interdisciplinary network in order to contribute to the development and dissemination of material for education, and to evaluate different educational models.
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Contents

Foreword: Oddbjørn Leirvik  
Preface: Robert Jackson

1: Intercultural Education, Religious Plurality and Teaching for Tolerance: Interpretive and Dialogical Approaches Robert Jackson  
2: Ethnography, Religion and Intercultural Education: Some possibilities for Europe Eleanor Nesbitt  
3: Pedagogy, Dialogue and Truth: Intercultural Education in the Religious Education Classroom Kevin O'Grady  
4: Motivating Able Students to Study Religious Diversity: Applying the Interpretive Approach Amy Whittall  
5: Pupil-to-Pupil Dialogue as a Tool for Religious Education in the Primary Classroom Julia Ipgrave  
6: Intercultural Learning: Education and Islam – A Case Study Bill Gent  
7: Citizenship Education and Religious Education: A European Perspective Robert Jackson and Karen Steele  
8: A Discussion of the Relationship between Intercultural Education, Religious Diversity and Religious Education Ursula McKenna

Contributors  


Foreword

*Intercultural Education and Religious Plurality* is written as a contribution to the Oslo Coalition's project 'Teaching for Tolerance and Freedom of Religion or Belief'. It is produced by members of Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (WRERU), which is based in the Institute of Education at the University of Warwick, UK.

The contributions of Robert Jackson and his colleagues at Warwick have been most important for the Teaching for Tolerance project, which aims at establishing a global interdisciplinary network of educators and scholars concerned with tolerance education in school (see the project's website: [http://www.oslocoalition.org/html/project_school_education/index.html](http://www.oslocoalition.org/html/project_school_education/index.html)). Robert Jackson contributed to the Project's first publication (Jackson 2002), was part of the Coalition's delegation to the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) in Rabat in May 2003 and gave the keynote address at the Oslo Global Meeting of Experts on Teaching for Tolerance, Respect and Recognition in Relation with Religion or Belief (hosted by the Oslo Coalition in co-operation with UNESCO) at the Nobel Institute in Oslo on September 2nd 2004.

The Warwick team focuses on interpretive approaches to religion and culture which respect the diversity of living traditions, and dialogical approaches to teaching religion in school which invite the pupils to become reflexive agents. Shaped in this horizon, the present report consists of research based discussions aimed at helping educators and policy makers to bring the dimension of religious diversity to intercultural education in Europe. It explores the interface between religious education, citizenship education and other subjects in school that may contribute to the overall aim of intercultural tolerance education.

The Oslo Coalition on Freedom on Religion or Belief appreciates the opportunity to present the report as the first volume of its newly established series "Oslo Coalition Occasional Papers" and commends it as a source of inspiration and reflection.

On behalf of the Teaching for Tolerance project,
Oddbjørn Leirvik, University of Oslo

Reference

Preface
For a variety of reasons, there is a renewed international interest in the contribution of studies of religious plurality to the broad fields of intercultural education, human rights education and education for democratic citizenship. Not least is to give an educational response to acts of extreme violence and their consequences, the latest being the London bombings of July 2005. In this respect it is vital that young people have an educated understanding of religious traditions. Two international projects have moved work in the field of religious diversity in relation to social and personal values issues forward significantly over the last few years.

The first is the Oslo Coalition's project on 'Teaching for Tolerance and Freedom of Religion or Belief'. In November 2001 the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, in co-operation with the Spanish Government, arranged an international conference in Madrid on the Elimination of Religious Discrimination and Intolerance in Education. The main aim was to develop strategies for combating religious intolerance and discrimination and promoting freedom of religion or belief through education. The conference resulted in a declaration with key recommendations on the need to strengthen human rights education and to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world views and religions of others. The Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief took on the role of following up the recommendations of the final document of the Madrid conference through initiating a project on 'Teaching for Tolerance, and Freedom of Religion or Belief', with a brief to develop a global interdisciplinary network. The project's aims include the encouragement of school education to increase understanding and respect between people of different religions or world views and combating discrimination and intolerance based on religion or belief (Larsen and Plesner 2002).

The second is the Council of Europe's project on 'Intercultural education and the challenge of religious diversity and dialogue', which was initially set up in response to the events of 11 September 2001 and their consequences. The project has the goal of producing materials for practitioners and policy makers across the 46 member states by 2006 (Council of Europe 2004). Both projects held major conferences in Oslo in 2004. The Council of Europe project put on a Europe-wide conference for educators and policy makers in June while the Oslo Coalition held an international conference at the Nobel Institute in September.

Although inspired by both projects, this working paper has been produced specifically as a contribution to the Oslo Coalition's 'Teaching for Tolerance and Freedom of Religion or Belief' project. The report consists of research-based discussions aimed at helping educators and policy makers to bring the dimension of religious plurality to intercultural education. The contributors are academics, research staff and research students who are members of the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (WRERU), based in the Institute of Education at the University of Warwick in England. Although the papers relate to recent work that has been developed at Warwick, they have not been produced in isolation from international debates. The authors have benefited greatly from opportunities to work with researchers and scholars from a range of national and international settings, through collaborative projects, research networks and conferences. They hope that their work will be of interest and relevance to others who are interested in developing pedagogies, teaching materials and policies in a variety of national and international situations.
The first paper provides a context for the chapters that follow. I argue that approaches to the study of religious diversity that require a sophisticated analysis of the concepts of 'religions' and 'cultures', grounded in recent work in ethnography and other social sciences, have something very positive to offer intercultural education, teaching for tolerance and citizenship education, as well as to school ethos and policy. In particular, I introduce interpretive and dialogical approaches developed at Warwick that draw on ethnographic theory and method, promote pupil reflexivity, develop skills of interpretation and combat stereotyping. Eleanor Nesbitt illustrates further how an ethnographic framework can provide theoretical insights and practical tools for an intercultural education that engages with religious plurality. Through his account of action research, Kevin O'Grady brings us directly into the classroom showing how the interpretive approach can be adapted through consultation with young people so that their interactions with religious and cultural difference relate to their own personal and social concerns. The contributions by Amy Whittall and Julia lpgrave complement O'Grady's account, offering further classroom case studies illustrating, respectively, the implementation of the interpretive and dialogical approaches in different school settings.

Moving from the state school to the faith community setting, Bill Gent's account of ethnographic fieldwork in Qur'an classes in Redbridge, London, demystifies a particular aspect of community-based education, but also documents a mutually enriching encounter between Muslims and non-Muslims. Especially, for Gent, the experience of the fieldwork opened up possibilities for state school teachers and mosque teachers to listen to and learn from each other. From the broader perspective of curriculum policy and development in Europe, Karen Steele and I argue that active and inclusive forms of citizenship education, which analyse social plurality and encourage independent investigation and interpretation, can be enhanced by interpretive and dialogical approaches to the study of religious diversity. Finally, Ursula McKenna's critical discussion of selected literature reinforces the importance of well-conducted studies of religious plurality to intercultural education.

Acknowledgements
The editors would like to thank Lena Larsen, Oddbjørn Leirvik, Ingvill Thorson Plesner and Bente Sandvig of the Oslo Coalition for their important work in this field and for their encouragement and enthusiasm for this publication. Warm thanks are also due to the St. Peter's Saltley Trust for financial support towards some of the research reported here and to the St. Peter's Saltley Trust and the Gaydon Trust for contributing to the cost of publication.

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1 For further information visit http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/wru
Chapter 1

Intercultural Education, Religious Plurality and Teaching for Tolerance: Interpretive and Dialogical Approaches

Robert Jackson

In this chapter I argue that interpretive and dialogical approaches to the study of religious plurality can make a very positive contribution to intercultural understanding and hence to teaching for tolerance. In England, these approaches have been used since the 1990s mainly in religious education (RE), a subject that is part of the curriculum in all state maintained schools. The approaches described in this chapter can be used in other curriculum subjects, such as education for democratic citizenship, or in intercultural education, where it is taught as a separate subject. It needs to made clear that the nature of the subject 'religious education', as understood in England, has changed over time. Also, views about the character and value of what has usually been called 'multicultural education' have also changed. 1 Something of the history of the relationship between these fields and that of 'antiracism' needs to be explained in order to see why some recent understandings of religious education pedagogy have something very positive to offer intercultural education, teaching for tolerance and citizenship education. Although the history relates to the English situation, the issues will be familiar to many others who are concerned to promote intercultural understanding and religious tolerance internationally.

At least until the late 1950s, religious education in English publicly funded schools was a form of non-denominational Christian instruction that had moral and civic objectives (Jackson 2004, Chapter 1). This view of religious education began to change in the 1960s. By the mid 1960s, religious education scholars were criticizing forms of religious education in state funded schools that fostered religious belief or a religious outlook, on the grounds of the increased secularity of society (Cox 1966) and because research evidence showed that young people wanted an open and undogmatic study of religions in schools (Cox 1967). By the late 1960s and early 1970s, Professor Ninian Smart and his team at Lancaster University had brought a global dimension to this 'secular' form of RE through their introduction of the study of the religions of the world, using theory and method from the phenomenology of religion (Schools Council 1971; Smart 1968). At about the same time, religious educators in some of Britain's increasingly multicultural towns and cities were beginning to use local religious diversity as a resource for this new vision of the subject. They were also finding a role in promoting good community relations at the local level, and it is significant that one of the first books to explore religion in a multicultural and multifaith setting in Britain was published by a council for community relations (Cole 1972). Many teachers of religious education joined the National Association for Multiracial Education, and RE was commonly regarded as a valuable contributor to multicultural education, along with other fields and subjects.

Then there was a schism. This was between those with fundamentally 'antiracist' concerns and those emphasizing multicultural understanding (Mullard 1984). The antiracists argued that multiculturalists had treated cultural issues superficially, unnecessarily reifying cultures and inadvertently emphasizing difference (Troya 1983). Rather than promoting understanding, it was argued, multiculturalists were playing into racist hands by creating stereotypes of distinct, separate cultures. These were allowed limited forms of expression by the beneficence of a tolerant national culture (McIntyre 1978). According to antiracists, multicultural education also
avoided issues of power, explaining racism psychologically in terms of attitudes that could be changed through acquiring knowledge and learning tolerance, rather than through challenging accepted power structures within institutions. These inequalities of power were regarded as the real explanation for the perpetuation of inequality. Because of its concern with changing structures, antiracism gave limited attention to the curriculum, offering ideas to promote a critical awareness of ‘institutional racism’, for example, but not addressing issues of culture. Thus multicultural education, with ‘multifait’ religious education as a subset, and antiracist education had an uneasy relationship for some years, although some contributors continued to pursue the interests of both fields (eg Richardson 1990).

It was not until the early 1990s that some writers began to heal the schism, recognizing the need for an antiracist stance, but criticizing antiracists for understimating the importance of issues of cultural and religious representation, transmission and change. Multiculturalists were also urged to take a fresh look at these issues. These writers included Mal Leicester (Leicester 1992), Ali Rattansi (Rattansi 1992, 1999) and Stephen May (May 1999) who appealed for reform through a synthesis of the two fields. Thus ‘antiracist multicultural education’ (Leicester 1992), ‘critical multiculturalism’ (May 1999, 33) and ‘reflective multiculturalism’ (Rattansi 1999, 77) are critical of essentialist views of culture while acknowledging the role of power relations in cultural formation. In Rattansi’s words:

...the multiculturalists will have to abandon their additive models of cultural pluralism and their continuing obsession with the old ethnicities. Antiracists...will have to move beyond their reductive conceptions of culture and their fear of cultural difference as simply a source of division and weakness in the struggle against racism. (Rattansi 1992, 41)

Multicultural Education and Citizenship Policy in the 1990s

These developments, introduced in the early 1990s, remained unnoticed by politicians in government in Britain. Policy in England and Wales during the period of Conservative Government between 1979 and 1997 marginalized multicultural education. There was a change in atmosphere with the election of a Labour Government in 1997, and a push towards the development of citizenship education through the establishment of an Advisory Group on Citizenship. This group published the Crick Report during the following year (QCA 1998). The introduction of citizenship education in 2002, as an optional subject in primary schools and as a statutory part of the national curriculum for secondary schools, has given a new impetus to multicultural/intercultural education in England and Wales. Citizenship education in secondary schools requires knowledge and understanding of ‘the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding’ (DfEE/QCA 1999a), while the non-statutory advice for primary schools encourages children to ‘appreciate the range of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom’ (DfEE/QCA 1999b). Thus, at last, a form of multicultural/intercultural education has been incorporated into the curriculum, but it needs to be developed along the lines suggested by Leicester and Rattansi and must not lapse into the simplistic multiculturalism of the 1970s. There is a clear role for specialists in religious education to contribute to this form of education (Jackson 2003; 2004, Chapter 8).

Intercultural Understanding, Religion and Social Cohesion

The need for including the dimension of religious diversity in a critical multicultural education was reinforced by riots in the northern English towns and cities of Oldham, Burnley, Leeds and Bradford in the summer of 2001 in areas inhabited mainly by people of Pakistani and
Bangladeshi Muslim origin (Home Office 2001a and b). The causes of the riots, which mainly involved young men, include social and economic deprivation in the areas involved as well as the political activity of the extreme right wing British National Party, which has for some time been expressing racist views in religious terms, especially through its vilification of Islam (McRoy 2001, 18-19). The Parekh Report on the future of multicultural Britain draws attention to the use of religious categories in extreme right wing propaganda circulated in Britain, including a document appealing to the government to use the army to remove all mosques, temples and synagogues from ‘this Christian land’ (Runnymede Trust 2000 para 17.3, 237). This equation of national and Christian identity, associating all other religious identities with difference and otherness, is a version of what Tariq Modood has called ‘cultural racism’ (Modood 1997). Racism directed towards religious groups, or justified on religious grounds, prompts the writers of the Parekh report to argue that strategies for countering it need to recognize the distinctive and powerful nature of religious identity.

There had been riots in Bradford in 1995, and Lord Ouseley’s report on the city of Bradford happened to be published at the same time as the 2001 riots. The Ouseley Report depressingly describes a city ‘fragmenting along racial, cultural and faith lines’, and the ‘virtual apartheid’ of education (Ouseley 2001). Two reports on the 2001 riots were commissioned by the Home Office. The report of the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion concludes that lack of communication contributed to the unrest, and it appeals for the promotion of dialogue between the different groups (Home Office 2001a: para 2.16, 13). The second report, by an independent review team into Community Cohesion (the Cantle Report), specifically recommends educational programmes promoting cross-cultural contact (Home Office 2001b, para 5.8.18, 36).

On a global scale, events such as those of September 11, 2001 in the United States of America and their aftermath, including the atrocities in Bali in 2002, in Casablanca and Jakarta in 2003 and Madrid in 2004, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, have also put religion on political, social and educational agendas internationally. Such events have prompted the Council of Europe project on ‘intercultural education and the challenge of religious diversity’ and the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief’s development of a global interdisciplinary network ‘to encourage school education that increases understanding and respect between people of different religions or world views and that fosters knowledge about and respect for freedom of religion or belief as a human right’ (Larsen and Plesner 2002).

Thus, the needs of citizenship education and responses to civil unrest in Britain, reactions to international terrorism in Europe, and attempts to apply codes of human rights globally, all invite forms of intercultural education that take full account of issues in religious diversity, promote communication and dialogue between pupils from different backgrounds, and foster social cohesion through the encouragement of tolerance, understanding and respect between peoples.

**Intercultural Education and New Pedagogies of Religious Education**

As we saw in relation to the work of Rattansi and Leicester, a critical or reflexive intercultural education needs to present more sophisticated analyses of culture than the reifications found in the multicultural education of the 1970s. Numerous ethnographic studies have informed academic discourse on the concepts of ‘culture’ and ‘cultures’, and this thinking needs to be reflected in intercultural education and religious education (Jackson 1997, Chapter 4). Such studies reflect an analysis of plurality that incorporates both ‘traditional’ aspects, such as overt
religious diversity, and ‘modern’ elements, such as competing rationalities and epistemologies and easy interpersonal contact by means of new technologies (Jackson 2004, Chapter 1).

Gerd Baumann's analysis of cultural discourse, based on his ethnographic research in Southall, England, is particularly illuminating. Baumann distinguishes between what he calls ‘dominant discourse’ in which people reify views of cultures, religions and ethnic groups, and ‘demotic discourse’, the language of interaction with others at the personal level, which creates new culture. Of course, ‘dominant discourse’ in relation to culture and religion is habitually used by politicians and the media. However, Baumann found that, in certain contexts, individual inhabitants of Southall, in their own interests, also used ‘dominant discourse, sometimes identifying themselves with categories such as Punjabi, Sikh or Asian. In different contexts, they interacted with others, creating cultural fusions and new cultural expressions. ‘Southallians’, says Baumann, ‘engage the dominant discourse as well as the demotic one. They reify cultures while at the same time making culture’ (Baumann 1996, 31). The reified categories are useful reference points, but they obscure the diversity, interaction and change that is the underlying reality. As Baumann puts it, ‘Culture...is not so much a photocopy machine but a concert or indeed a historically improvised jam session. It only exists in the act of being performed, and it can never stand still or repeat itself without changing its meaning’ (Baumann 1999, 26). This second view of culture – culture as process – was absent from the multicultural education of the 1970s, and indeed from much religious education to date.

In combating the stereotypes that characterize racist language, intercultural education needs to ensure that generalized cultural and religious categories are not taken to be uniform ‘wholes’. The complexity and diversity of cultural interaction needs to be represented. Baumann gives the following advice:

Try to unreify all accepted reifications by finding crosscutting cleavages. Whenever the reifying discourse talks about citizens or aliens, purple or green ethnics, believers or atheists, ask about rich or poor citizens, powerful or manipulated ethnics, married or sexual minority believers. Who are the minorities within majorities, who are the unseen majorities right across minorities? Combine every method of questioning to every possible category around you, for the permutations are endless when it comes to questioning reifications (Baumann 1999, 141)

There are several recent pedagogical approaches to religious education that are consistent with Baumann's observations about cultural discourse and with critical and reflexive approaches to intercultural education. These have been developed in England and in several other northern European countries, although some related work is going on in countries such as South Africa. Here I will draw attention to two approaches developed in England (Jackson 2004, Chapters 6 and 7). Some examples of their application will be given in subsequent chapters.

The interpretive approach, developed at the University of Warwick in England, aims to help children and young people to find their own positions within the key debates about religious plurality (Jackson 1997; Jackson 2004, Chapter 6). Drawing on methodological ideas from cultural anthropology, it recognizes the inner diversity, fuzzy edgedness and contested nature of religious traditions as well as the complexity of cultural expression and change from social and individual perspectives. Individuals are seen as unique, but the group tied nature of religion is recognized, as is the role of the wider religious traditions in providing identity markers and reference points. Pedagogically, the approach tackles issues of the representation of
religions, develops pupils' skills of interpretation and provides opportunities for reflexivity. Reflexivity includes giving pupils opportunities to make a constructive critique of the material studied at a distance, to re-assess their understanding of their own way of life in the light of their studies and to help to design and to review their own methods of learning.

The Warwick RE Project is a curriculum development project that applies the interpretive approach in a particular way, converting ethnographic source material into resources for use by children in class (e.g. Barratt 1994a, b and c; Jackson, Barratt and Everington 1994; Mercier 1996; Wayne et al. 1996). In designing experimental curriculum materials to help teachers and pupils to use this approach, the project team drew on ethnographic research on children related to different religious communities and groups in Britain, and on theory from the social sciences, literary criticism, religious studies and other sources (Jackson 1997, Chapter 5). The children's texts present individual children and young people from different religious backgrounds, drawing on interviews and ethnographic observation and presenting the children in different social contexts such as home, school and place of worship or meditation. The children and their parents assisted the writers in editing the texts for publication and in selecting original photographs. Community leaders were also consulted, but the editorial process was very much a matter of negotiation between ethnographers, curriculum developers, the children represented in the texts and their parents. The intention was to provide a methodology that was epistemologically open, that reflected the real lives of children from religious backgrounds in Britain and which, within the limits of using books as learning resources, was conversational in tone. The framework for teaching and learning encouraged sensitive and skilful interpretation, opportunities for constructive criticism (including pupils' reflections on their own use of interpretive methods), and reflection by students on what they had studied. The materials include books for primary age children (the Bridges to Religions series), including young children of 5-7 years. The Warwick RE Project is just one way of applying the interpretive approach. It is equally possible to start with children's reflections on their own ways of life and family traditions, with children designing methods of studying someone else's religious culture or with an analysis of newspaper representations of religions. Kevin O'Grady's adaptation of the interpretive approach to meet particular classroom needs and Amy Whittall's use of the approach with able adolescents are reported below in Chapters 3 and 4 (see also Jackson 2004, Chapter 6).

One of the developments from the Warwick interpretive approach is a dialogical approach developed by Julia Ipgrave, initially for her PhD degree at Warwick. Other valuable dialogical approaches have been developed independently by Heidi Leganger-Krogstad in Norway and by Wolfram Weisse and his colleagues in Germany (Jackson 2004, Chapter 7). All claim the relative autonomy of the individual, but recognize the contextual influence of social groupings, such as family, peer, ethnic and religious groups. There is common agreement that the personal knowledge and experience that young people bring to the classroom can provide important data for study, communication and reflection. All also introduce further source material; religious education does not only consist of the analysis and exchange of personal narratives.

Julia Ipgrave conducted research on the inter-influence of children from Muslim, Hindu and Christian backgrounds in her multicultural primary school in the city of Leicester (Ipgrave 2002), and developed an approach to RE based on her findings and on the process of conducting the research. Her pedagogy capitalizes on children's readiness to engage with religious questions and their ability to utilize religious language encountered through interacting with children in school. The teacher often acts in the role of facilitator, prompting and clarifying questions, and
considerable agency is given to pupils, who are regarded as collaborators in teaching and learning. Ipgrave finds that her approach raises children’s self-esteem, provides opportunities to develop critical skills, allows underachievers to express themselves and generates a climate of moral seriousness through the discussion of basic human questions (Ipgrave 2001, 2003; Jackson 2004, Chapter 7).

Ipgrave’s research project developed a threefold approach to dialogue which has been incorporated into the pedagogical work derived from it. Primary dialogue is the acceptance of diversity, difference and change. Secondary dialogue involves being open to and positive about difference – being willing to engage with difference and to learn from others. Tertiary dialogue is the actual verbal interchange between children. The basic activity here is discussion and debate. Throughout, the approach encourages personal engagement with ideas and concepts from different religious traditions and children are encouraged to be reflective about their contributions and to justify their own opinions. They are also encouraged to consider how they arrived at their conclusions, to recognize the possibility of alternative viewpoints and to be open to the arguments of others. Ipgrave has now extended this approach through the use of email communication between children from different backgrounds, initially in schools in Leicestershire and currently in schools in Leicestershire and East Sussex (see Chapter 5 for further details of Ipgrave’s approach).

The interpretive and dialogical approaches share stances on the analysis of cultural and religious discourse and views about the agency of pupils with writers on critical or reflexive multicultural education. Such approaches can make a direct contribution to the goals of intercultural education. There is, however, scope for further creative collaboration between specialists in religion and in intercultural education.

Teaching for Tolerance

I will now attempt to draw some general conclusions from the above discussion and to add a few new points. Firstly, if the presentation of the religious dimension to intercultural education is to avoid the weaknesses of early multiculturalism, then flexible representations of religions and cultures are needed in teaching and learning materials. These should take close account of the ongoing debates about the portrayal of religions and cultures. Religions can be represented, not as homogeneous systems of belief, but in terms of a relationship between individuals, groups and wider contextual traditions. Cultures can be pictured as dynamic, internally contested and fuzzy edged, while individuals can be shown as reshaping culture through creating new syntheses which utilize cultural ideas and expressions from a variety of sources, including their own ancestral traditions.

Secondly, pupils should be taught skills of interpretation and should be given opportunities for reflexivity, considering the impact of new learning on their own beliefs and values and applying critical judgements in a constructive, rational and informed way. Moreover, pupils should be given a role in selecting topics and in designing and reviewing methods of study used, being treated as co-learners with the teacher. There is an increasing amount of research evidence (including evidence from projects on children’s dialogue) showing that children and young people are motivated to learn if they are given agency.

Thirdly, pupils should be provided with materials that reflect the real lives of children and adults from a range of religious and cultural backgrounds and, whenever possible, should be given opportunities for personal interaction. Strategies for this include classroom dialogue, email dialogue, outside visits and welcoming guests into the school.
I have argued that it is important to establish effective approaches to teaching and learning – such as the interpretive and dialogical approaches – that are informed by research in the social sciences. However, I would add a cautionary note about the relationship between knowledge and attitudes. It is a mistake to assume that understanding and knowledge necessarily foster tolerance. There are some very well informed racists and bigots. I would argue, however, that knowledge and understanding are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the genuine removal of prejudice. Moreover, not everything learned about and understood will command respect. A reflexive intercultural education requires an analysis of the negative as well as positive influences of religion (Gearon 2002).

Furthermore, there is little point in modifying the curriculum if the ethos and general policies of the school do not value plurality and promote positive values. Schools need to confront racism of all kinds, including institutional and cultural racism, recognizing the equal worth of all members of the school community. They need to promote the tolerance of difference, mutual respect and encouragement of rational argument, helping individuals to confront prejudice. In achieving such goals some schools employ strategies to resolve conflict (eg Bodine and Crawford 1998) and to explore positive values in different aspects of school life (eg Farrer 2000).

Finally, while education and schooling can do a great deal to promote inter-religious and inter-cultural understanding, we must not expect too much from schools. Other institutions in society must play their part. In particular, especially in acknowledging the plural identities and transnational and global commitments of many citizens, governments need wisdom in their social and foreign policies.

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1 The term ‘multicultural education’ gained currency in Britain and in the USA, while ‘intercultural education’ has been used more in continental European literature. Although the expression ‘multicultural education’ has been criticized for its suggestion of closed and reified views of culture, in Britain it has remained the preferred term by some of those having much more sophisticated views of cultural discourse than the early multiculturalists. ‘Intercultural education’ is being used more widely now in the UK, partly under European influence through Council of Europe projects.
Chapter 2

Ethnography, Religion and Intercultural Education: Some possibilities for Europe

Eleanor Nesbitt

Introduction
This chapter is based on the following principles: Education entails providing a safe and stimulating environment as well as the teaching and the facilitation of learning within it: it involves not only the curriculum but also what is extracurricular. Consequently, intercultural education must encompass both, and it is certainly not restricted to particular subjects in the curriculum that might seem to be especially germane such as, in the UK, religious education. Education that is intercultural enables all concerned – and certainly educators and students – to question stereotypes and so to think critically about the meaning of such terms as culture, religion, ethnicity and race. Intercultural education affirms human diversity and has as its goal greater communal harmony as well as individual enrichment. The goal of moving towards greater communal harmony is grounded in the view that mutual respect, and indeed friendly, open-minded interest in others, are fostered by having a sound basis for understanding social diversity. Sensitively respectful open-mindedness to one’s neighbours’ assumptions, preoccupations and priorities is a prerequisite for insights which extend one’s capacity for appreciating difference and so for forging friendships. Such a capacity is integral to individual enrichment. Another term for this socially-oriented expansion of personal horizons is education. In other words effective education (‘leading out’, as a glance at the Latin root reminds us) is inherently and necessarily intercultural.

The needs of an increasingly interconnected global society require that education should be intercultural in all schools in all societies, whether or not the school, its local community or the country to which these belong are generally regarded as culturally diverse. Even the most ‘monocultural’ of schools and localities is culturally diverse in terms of gender, generation, social class, interest groups, even if it is not ethnically or obviously diverse.

I shall briefly summarise the ‘Warwick studies’ before explaining how ‘ethnography’ and ‘religion’ are to be understood in this chapter. After that I shall suggest how insights arising from the Warwick studies can be applied to teacher training, to the school curriculum and to ‘pastoral care’ and the school ethos.

The Warwick Studies
The ‘Warwick studies’ are a cluster of projects of varying scale. They consist of a series of externally funded projects which commenced in 1983, under the direction of Professor Robert Jackson, and also include pieces of research conducted at Masters and doctoral level by our graduate students.

For more information about the research projects of the 1980s and 1990s, which looked at the lives of young Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Jews and Muslims see Nesbitt (2001 and 2004). For one of the more recent projects, concerned with the values education programme for mainstream schools that has been developed in association with a Hindu-related new Religious Movement see Anweck and Nesbitt (2004). All these studies, over two decades, have been ethnographic explorations.
Among the studies carried out by our students is Sissel Østberg's authoritative examination of the processes underway in the identity formation of young Norwegians of Pakistani Muslim family background (2000a and b; 2003). Currently in progress are doctoral studies by Bill Gent of the educational significance of the experience of young Muslims, in part of East London, in their Islamic supplementary classes. These classes include both madrasa and hifz classes. In madrasas (or, more correctly, maktabas), which are attended by many Muslim children, pupils learn how to read the Qur'an in Arabic. Hifz students, a much smaller constituency, are committed to learning to recite the Qur'an in its entirety from memory (see Gent, chapter 6 this volume).

Ethnography
Ethnography is literally, in its classical Greek roots, nation- (or people-) writing and it has come to have several related meanings in contemporary European languages. The term is used for a qualitative style of social research that relies mainly upon field studies. For these studies the principal tools are interviews and observation. Where possible the interviews are not rigidly structured but are flexible enough to allow the interviewee to share ideas and experiences in depth. The observation often involves the observer in sharing in the life of the community concerned.

To varying degrees the observer is a participant, and so it is not surprising that, increasingly, ethnographic researchers reflect upon the ways in which, as interviewers and participant observers, they influence the data that they collect. The way in which a question is framed affects the type of responses that interviewees offer. What they say will also depend in part on how they perceive the interviewer in terms of gender, age, social standing, ethnic community and so on. The extent to which members of a community perceive the observer to be 'one of us' or 'different from us' affects their interactions, at least with the observer. Among the many ethnographers who have published their musings on the complex interrelationship between themselves and 'the field' are Lubna Nazir Chaudhry (1997), S. C. Heilman (1973, ix-xiii), and Dhoolieka S. Raj (2003 especially 10-13). Searching reflection of this sort is essential to the researcher's reflexivity.

Ethnography as we know it today has developed from the forays of enquiring administrators in nineteenth-century colonial settings, and the investigations by western anthropologists in (usually non-European) societies in the first half of the twentieth century. Martin Stringer, in a study of Christian congregations in the UK, endorses the view that ethnography entails prolonged immersion in the community concerned (1999). This is certainly the ideal, but my contention is that small-scale qualitative studies can also be accurately called ethnographic. Thus, small-scale studies (lasting perhaps one term), of the sort that our students at the University of Warwick conduct as part of their MA in Religious Education course, are ethnographic insofar as the students are trained in the practical and ethical issues and conduct their enquiries both reflectively and reflexively. Moreover, an ethnographic approach to life, whether as a student or an educationist or both, is possible by looking critically for one's own buried assumptions, while looking enquiringly at another person's (Nesbitt 2004, especially 5-7).

Intrinsic to this ongoing reflectiveness is what my colleague Robert Jackson terms an interpretive approach. Jackson has elucidated and developed this in many publications (notably 1997 and, more briefly, 2000), by discussing an anthropologically-based study of religions that encourages learners and teachers to make conscious connections. One set of connections
links their own experiences and those of members of another group; the other set involves recognising the ways in which ‘parts’ (e.g. a denomination, a personal belief or a religious rite or a scripture) relate to the ‘whole’ – in this case a ‘religion’ or a ‘faith tradition’.

Religion
Religion and faith are terms which are often used in English interchangeably, although the spectrum of meaning for each is not an exact match. By many religious educationists the terms ‘faith tradition’ and ‘religious tradition’ are used in preference to ‘religion’ in the hope that ‘tradition’ suggests something less bounded and reified. The Warwick studies have focused upon religion, in the sense of focusing on the experience of young people who identify themselves by a religious label such as ‘Hindu’. As members of particular faith communities (Sikhs, Hindus etc.) their religion was an aspect of their identity which they readily voiced. Their family’s first language and country of origin were other aspects, which they tended to conflate. Thus some children regarded ‘language’ and ‘religion’ as equivalent terms and used, for example, ‘Sikh’ and ‘Punjabi’ or ‘Hindu’ and ‘Gujarati’ or ‘Hindi’ interchangeably. (Looked at from another angle, it is a contemporary western tendency to disaggregate experience artificially.) When one young person spoke of his religion as something which could not be changed in the same way as one could alter one’s nationality and passport he probably spoke for many others.

Young people were selected for the purposes of the studies conducted in the 1980s and 1990s out of those who attended regular activities which were explicitly linked to a faith community. These activities included (for Christians) Sunday school, an institution now known by a variety of names, and for young Muslims supplementary classes for learning to read the Qur’an.

The Warwick studies’ focus on ‘religion’ went far beyond these activities and was, indeed, almost as wide as the young people’s daily life. The studies recorded and reported aspects as diverse as their attendance at supplementary classes (held in community centres and places of worship) and celebrations in their Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh or Christian community, and their ideas about God and about what happens after one dies. They took into account, among other things, their participation in religious education lessons in their state schools, their assumptions about diet, and their experiences of racism.

The decision to investigate the experience of young people from the UK’s ‘principal religions’ followed naturally from the fact that syllabuses for religious education in UK schools are based on the assumption that there are six ‘world religions’ and that these are distinct from each other. This framework for viewing society is now, arguably, further justified by the signs that religion is an increasingly evident form of self-identification. In the UK, government discourse and strategy have shown an upsurge of interest in faiths since 11 September 2001.

At the same time the Warwick studies’ focus on ‘religion’ raises several issues. One objection to using religion as a basis for selection is that our young people did not include those who are unaligned with any religion and so answer ‘I am nothing’ to the question ‘What is your religion?’ (Rudge 1998). In many schools in the UK, and in some other parts of Europe, such young people are in the majority.

A second problem is that of artificially ‘isolating out a Hindu sample, rather than studying an existing social matrix’ (Searle-Chatterjee 2000, 503). This ‘isolating out’ is problematic because it assumes that ‘religion’ and ‘Hinduism’ can be separated out from the rest of an individual’s or a group’s experience. It suggests a ‘pre-existing identity’ (ibid). According to this argument we
damage our understanding of society by defining and selecting out ‘religion’ and its assumed bearers.

Insights from the Warwick Studies
However, it was this very experience of examining the experience of young people, with whom contact had been made through their families’ religious organisations, which undermined and so challenged any tendency that we might have initially had to conceptualise religions as homogeneous, bounded or discrete. Moreover, as the basis on which Jackson’s interpretive approach was developed, these studies have provided tools which may be applied to more ‘secular’ communities and settings. The Warwick studies left no doubt that some of the imagined boundaries between, for example, ‘Sikh’ and ‘Hindu’ are arbitrary and porous, and that, whether pupils identify with a faith community or not, their values and attitudes (for example on gender, diet or leisure) are formed to varying extents by influences via the media (e.g. soap operas and popular music). Such influences override any imagined boundaries between individuals who identify themselves as ‘Hindu’ or ‘Catholic’, ‘religious’ or ‘non-religious’.

Diversity
What was clear too, in study after study, was the diversity of individuals who might share the same religion-related designation. Among Hindus, for example, not only were there differences of gender, generation and personality but also of ethnicity (as Punjabis or Gujaratis, with mother-tongues, cuisine, devotional styles that belonged to specific regions of India) and of sampradaya. Sampradaya is sometimes translated as ‘sect’, a word, imbued with the history of European Christianity, which does not convey the sense of sampradaya as a succession of gurus and their devotees. Britain’s Hindus include devotees of Sathya Sai Baba, Swaminarayan and Pushtrimag as well as those influenced by the Arya Samaj (with a rather Protestant resistance to worship focused upon images of deities) and many other teachings and groupings. Members of some faith communities (for example the Muslim families in Birmingham) presented their faith as an undivided unity, but diversity along lines such as ethnic background, tariqa (i.e. a Sufi order) and exposure to western-style education provided clues to a divergence of assumptions and aspirations.

The research also disclosed the fluidity and change underway among adherents to a particular faith. During the research period some Sikh families were strongly influenced by the political violence in Punjab. In the eight years between two phases of the study of young Hindus, some reported movement from being non-vegetarian to vegetarian by themselves or by other family members. Some young people from Christian families (which could be described as Evangelical and charismatic) described the changes associated with ‘asking Jesus into their lives’ or being ‘filled’ with the holy spirit.

Challenging Boundaries
Evident too were overlaps between the assumptions and practices of Punjabis who identified themselves variously as Hindu and Sikh. The issues concerning the historical reasons for ‘religions’ (in this case ‘Hinduism’ and ‘Sikhism’) being defined in the way that they are can be explored elsewhere (Nesbitt 2005). One overlap between supposedly separate communities concerned festivals. For example, not only Hindus but also many Sikhs celebrate Diwali, the autumn festival of light, and Raksha Bandhan, the festival in August when sisters honour their brothers by tying a special ornate thread round their wrist. Moreover, society as a whole, and above all most primary schools, ensure that children of all faith backgrounds and none are involved in preparation for Christmas and, to a lesser extent, Easter unless vigilantly non-
Christian parents make a very definite stand. Young British Hindus and Sikhs whom I interviewed spoke of their enjoyment of Christmas meals and Christmas presents (Nesbitt 2004, 52-4).

Another overlap was the matter of caste, since in the UK young people from South Asian families belonging to the lowest castes suffer prejudice from Sikhs probably more often than from Hindus. It should be explained that the ‘caste system’ is a social hierarchy that is rooted in the Hindu tradition, with which it is often identified, but that South Asians of other faith communities are also implicated in a number of ways. For example, in a particular part of India Muslims or Christians may be from families which are still associated with the ‘low’ caste to which their forbears belonged. Families that immigrated to the UK from Punjab (in North West India) identify with different religious labels. For a marriage to be arranged (or at least approved) by older members of a family frequently means not only that marriages should take place between coreligionists but also within the same hereditary community or caste. Not surprisingly, Punjabi families living in the UK may still feel and voice certain prejudices and preferences that are based upon their perceptions of another Punjabi’s caste. Children, with no first-hand experience of India, still used caste-based stereotypes which on occasion fuelled incidents of playground name-calling.

Widespread media coverage, backed by the work of some scholars, pictures young people from ethnic and religious minorities as being torn between the two cultures that they attempt to straddle. Without playing down the pain or the ingenuity of many individuals, the studies at Warwick have suggested a more complex scenario in which young people demonstrate their multiple cultural competence (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993, 75) and their integrated plural identity (Östberg 2003, 218ff).

Terms and Concepts
The Warwick studies also revealed that individuals from different faith backgrounds used certain apparently shared words and phrases differently from each other. One of these was ‘God’. The following quotation from an interview with a ten-year-old Sikh boy illustrated two issues. (It needs to be explained that in colloquial English in some parts of the UK ‘ain’t’ is used in lieu of ‘aren’t’):

Sikhs ain’t allowed to smoke. Our Gods ain’t smoking, that’s why.

Here we find God in the plural, as commonly happened when Sikhs or Hindus were speaking. Speakers moved from the singular to the plural and back without any concern. The statement also shows how, as was the case with many Sikh interviewees, ‘God’ served for ‘Guru’, one of their ten historical spiritual masters. For both Hindus and Sikhs the word ‘God’ in fact covered a spectrum of meaning that overlapped with Judaeo-Christian understandings of God, but included, for example, living human ‘incarnations’ of God. Thus a Hindu might refer to Sathya Sai Baba or another living spiritual leader or guru as ‘God’.

Similarly ‘baptism’, when used by Sikhs, referred to the rite more correctly known as khande di pahul or amrit sanskar i.e. initiation with the two edged sword (khanda) or the holy water (amrit) life cycle rite (sanskar). Sikhs used the word ‘priest’ for the granthi, the person who attends to and reads from the scriptures, regardless of the fact that the English word has, on the one hand, strongly Christian connotations of vocation and ordination (and a job-description that includes pastoral care for a flock), all of which are absent from the Sikh tradition and, on the other hand, the connotations of a hereditary priestly class (as in the Hindu tradition).
Thus fieldwork revealed ways in which minorities incorporate English words into their articulation of their faith, and (conversely) instances of English words are gaining new areas of meaning. Clearly teachers need to be aware of the ways in which their own understanding and use of particular terms may differ from their students'. Words may be shared to a greater extent than meanings, and the very fact of sharing words obscures differences in understanding.

**Culture and Choice**

The Warwick studies also highlighted the need to question assumptions that are made, by teachers among others, about their pupils' cultures and choices. If we take a young person's diet – for example, a diet that excludes all meat or that excludes the flesh of particular animals – it is easy as educationists to talk about this in terms of that young person's 'culture', or we may use the words 'tradition' or 'religion'. If so, we are assuming that this is a collective matter, an example of an ethnic or religious minority conforming to its own customs. Alternatively, someone may use the language of 'choice' and 'decision'. In these terms young people decide what they will eat and the attitudes that they have towards eating some food and avoiding others are their individual preferences. Our four ethnographic studies of young Hindus showed a spectrum of attitudes and practice and the inadequacy of using either the language of 'tradition' or 'choice'. These individuals' behaviour resulted from interacting factors and might differ in varying social contexts or at different stages in life. Several had moved from being non-vegetarian to being vegetarian, and – in some instances – had returned to eating meat, and their reasons were not all specifically Hindu or Indian.

**Educational Insights from Supplementary Classes**

In 2004 Bill Gent has been reflecting upon the challenges to educationists of values that underpin the Islamic supplementary classes which he has studied as an ethnographer. Rather than strengthening western prejudice against Muslim practice, his data are an encouragement to European educationists to re-evaluate more positively the role of memorisation in mainstream schooling and the degree of agency exercised by young Muslims opting for rigorous out-of-school application to learning to recite the Qur'an.

**Teacher Training**

Clearly insights from ethnographic study of faith communities, and the benefits of adopting an ethnographic approach more generally, are relevant to educational practice. As such they need to be included in both initial teacher training and continuing professional development. Here, however, there is the problem of competition for trainees' and teachers' time from the many other components of teacher training. In the UK, where both religious education and citizenship are statutory elements of the curriculum one way forward is for a 'cascade' process, whereby trainees and participants in in-service training who specialise in these subjects are grounded in an ethnographic approach and encouraged to share this with colleagues. Thus, in primary schools, the co-ordinator of religious education has a responsibility for providing some in-service training for non-specialist colleagues whose timetable also includes religious education, and this facilitates the spread of information and ideas. However, the inspection- and assessment-driven character of primary and secondary education provides a continual challenge to this sort of dissemination.

This ethnographic approach that I am advocating as a strand in training will involve, firstly, developing a deliberate stance of questioning what one takes for granted, while being open to others' assumptions. Often members of a majority community have particular difficulty in even identifying their assumptions about, for example, individual autonomy, gender roles or humour. Or, their acute awareness of a historical struggle, perhaps for female emancipation, may make
it all the harder to enter imaginatively into the thought-world of, say, a recently arrived minority community whose attitudes and practices appear ‘backward’ and ‘repressive’.

Secondly, an ethnographic approach will require that one subjects curriculum materials, whether published or home-made, to ongoing critical appraisal. Questions to ask will be: Do the text and the images reinforce particular stereotypes? Look for the portrayal of women, men, members of visibly different ethnic groups. Does the material generalise unnecessarily? Is it out of date? A recurrent instance in the UK is the depiction of Inuit (labelled as ‘Eskimos’) living in igloos, homes built of snow.

Thirdly, an ethnographic approach will become the basis of a style of pedagogy that encourages pupils to ‘build bridges’. At the University of Warwick, closely related to the ethnographic studies, Jackson’s interpretive approach was exemplified in curriculum books, the Warwick RE Project. Two examples provide the flavour. Pupils were helped to connect a Pentecostal child’s experience of the Holy Spirit with the narrative of Pentecost in the Biblical book of the Acts of the Apostles (Everington 1996, 28). Later they were invited to make a connection between an important event in their own lives and the preparations that Paul, a Roman Catholic boy, was making for his confirmation (Everington 1996, 32). This involves the pupils in acquiring the ethnographic skills of (a) reflecting on what they are learning about the young Hindu’s or Greek Orthodox Christian’s experience and concepts in the light of their own and (b) reflecting on their own experience and concepts in the light of the young Hindu’s or Greek Orthodox Christian’s. But this attention to ‘bridging’ between ‘parts’ and ‘wholes’ and between oneself and others should not be restricted to the study of religion.

Intercultural education requires its wider application. As stressed at the outset, the whole curriculum and indeed the school’s ethos need to be planned to maximise their potential for intercultural education. For example, those with responsibility for school management will need to reconsider criteria for recruitment to teaching and auxiliary staff. Consideration of ‘equal opportunities’ and representation of minority or less privileged groups will be necessary. What follow are examples, some arising from the Warwick studies, of practical guidelines for curriculum subjects and for pastoral care. For more detail see Nesbitt (2004, 154-66), and for the particular relevance of ethnography to religious education see Nesbitt (2002).

**Drama**

Events factual or imaginary from different times and places can involve participants in expressing emotion in situations of which they have no direct experience. Their imaginative engagement and reflection upon it may generate sympathetic understanding of, for example, ‘gypsies’, asylum seekers, and refugees (see Winston 2000 and 2004).

Through role play it is possible to learn different ways of greeting each other and expressing respect (for example, among Hindus and Sikhs pressing one’s hands together with the fingers pointing upwards, or in some Indian contexts, touching another person’s feet). Dealing with food too provides scope for learning different norms (lifting food to the mouth only with the right hand is one example, again from South Asian communities).

**Numeracy**

Have pupils ever thought why the number system that they use is ‘Arabic’? Mathematics affords opportunities for introducing the Arab contribution to European culture and (in this case, at least) the debt to India, where the number system incorporating a zero originated. Mathematics teaching is not culturally neutral, and the style of teaching and the examples given
can promote justice, inclusiveness and moral, social and cultural awareness (Gates 2001; Joseph 1990).

**Physical Education**
This provides opportunities for individuals from different backgrounds to co-operate. It is a crucial area for teachers to show sensitivity regarding some families' concerns about modesty. Muslim parents may not be the only ones to be concerned about the need for girls to avoid exposing their bodies. Fasting, in particular during the month of Ramadan, does affect Muslim pupils in particular and teachers and pupils need to be aware of lower energy levels. Teachers can find guidance from Redbridge SACRE (1997). Physical Education teachers should consider incorporating minority sports. (In Britain the Punjabi game of *kabaddi* is increasingly popular.) Yoga offers exercises and an understanding of breathing techniques, and pupils can be introduced to its Indian origins.

**Beyond the Curriculum**
Pastoral care in UK schools includes attention to pupils' welfare in school and outside it. It entails awareness of relevant family circumstances which may affect children’s academic performance or social integration. In practical terms it may mean contact with parents and guardians and spending time in counselling individual pupils. In what follows only three areas i.e. names, body language and diet receive attention. Other areas are language, the calendar and celebrations (Nesbitt 2004).

**Names**
It is easy to make assumptions about how we address and refer to people, and about the sequence and pronunciation of the names of pupils, parents and teachers. Across Europe conventions differ from community to community. Children can learn a lot by finding out the meanings of each other's names and that one adult may wish to be called ‘Mrs X’, another may wish even young children to use her first name, while another (for instance from a South Asian background) is more comfortable being addressed as ‘Aunty’. In some parts of the world it has been customary for the same family names to be shared by both parents and by their children. In others there may be no shared name in use. Instead female members may use a gender-specific title (such as ‘Begum’ among Muslim women) while their husbands, fathers and brothers use other gender-specific names. A shared name may have a gender-specific ending (in Polish families, for example). In much of Asia the individual’s given name comes last, and the family name may be first. With Chinese and South Indian families, among others, one must check which name is the ‘forename’ and which is the ‘surname’.

Names have meanings in their language of origin, and mispronunciation cuts them adrift from their meaning. Often this is inspirational e.g. a quality such as Asha (‘hope’ in Hindi), or Manjil (‘one who has overcome the mind’ in Punjabi) or it has religious associations. Many Muslim names come from the Qur’an and many Sikh children’s names have a spiritual as well as a cultural significance. It may be embarrassing to ask someone to repeat a name slowly, but by attentive listening one is better able to approximate the correct pronunciation and so demonstrate respect for another's identity.

**Body Language**
Fieldwork among families of different backgrounds brought home to us the importance of body language i.e. non-verbal communication through posture and gesture. In many Asian societies respect for elders, especially of the opposite sex, is shown by lowering the gaze. Yet there are
still teachers who reprimand a child for not looking the teacher straight in the eye when speaking.

**Diet**

As suggested above, our fieldwork among young Hindus showed a complex relationship with vegetarianism, with many regarding it as part of being a strict Hindu. Certainly they knew that beef was to be avoided because of the sanctity of cows. They were familiar with the practice of giving up certain foods, and certainly abstaining from non-vegetarian foods on certain days of the week, the lunar month or the year. Individuals' accounts illustrated experiences of insensitivity in school. One told of being expected to dissect a rat in her biology lesson on the day when she was observing a vrat (vow involving abstention). Another recalled her sense of outrage at being advised by a teacher to press raw steak to an injury to make it heal. For the teacher it is important to understand that among individuals from a faith community there will be diversity and that any one person's stance may alter over time. This is the case whether one thinks of Orthodox Christians (in relation to the fasts before Christmas and Easter), Muslims (in relation to halal meat, the avoidance of pork, and to the month of fasting, Ramadan) or Jews (regarding the rules of kashrut including avoiding pork).

**Conclusion**

Religion's inseparability from culture, both historically and in contemporary Europe, means that field studies of faith communities are relevant to resourcing intercultural education. In particular they provide insights into the plurality of individuals' identities. We risk forgetting the increasing cultural plurality of the individual, whether as a result of the influence of the media and of personal contacts, social mobility, intermarriage or spiritual questing (Nesbitt 2003). As we have seen, education about diversity must not stop with an assumption of diverse societies that consist of fairly distinct, homogeneous 'communities', but must take account of individuals' capacity to integrate a variety of group identities (such as Pakistani, Muslim and Norwegian or Asian, British, Hindu and Scottish). Reflective practice requires educationists to consider their own plurality – perhaps as a politically liberal, non-religious, fair-complexioned person who is involved in particular types of sport, music or other leisure activities - and how this interacts with others in a variety of contexts (e.g. in school, in one's family, in one's preferred social setting).

The examples mentioned above of studies conducted in England (and Norway) are intended to illustrate the power of the particular individuals, groups and behaviour that one observes locally to challenge generalisations. Such examples also affirm and celebrate young people as agents rather than as passive receptacles of 'culture'. Any reader who is interested in exploring further the contribution that an ethnographic approach can make to intercultural education, or who wishes to gain a fuller picture of the Warwick studies, is recommended to look at a recent publication, Nesbitt (2004). Anyone seeking further assurance of ethnography's key role in education is commended to access the exposition by Francesca Gobbo of Turin University (2003).

**References**


Chapter 3

Pedagogy, Dialogue and Truth: Intercultural Education in the Religious Education classroom

Kevin O'Grady

Introduction
My aim is to exemplify the view that Religious Education (RE) has much to contribute to intercultural education, by reporting and discussing two research projects of my own. The first was a masters' dissertation (O'Grady 2002, 2003; see also Jackson 2004, 103-5); the second is a doctoral thesis in progress at the time of writing. Both projects have taken place in comprehensive schools in Sheffield, England, under the auspices of the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit. I will refer to the two projects as study 1 and study 2. Study 1 was undertaken in a school in north-west Sheffield which has an almost exclusively white student population. At the time of the study there was some evidence of racist attitudes within sectors of that population, including graffiti, the use of spoken racist language and racist bullying. Shortly before the study's commencement the school had been placed in the category of 'serious weaknesses' as an outcome of an Office for Standards in Education inspection. This is a category used by the inspectorate to define schools providing broadly satisfactory standards of education, but where there are worrying signs of fragility. In study 1's school, the behaviour of a significant number of students was found to be anti-social. Study 2 is being made in a school in south-west Sheffield with a much more diverse constituency, about one-quarter of students representing ethnic minority populations, of which the most numerous are Pakistani and Somali. This school has a strong record of successful inspection and impressive public examination results. For the most part relations between students of differing backgrounds are good, but tensions are occasionally in evidence.

Both studies have focused on the RE lessons experienced by school students in the early years of adolescence (12-13). Both were studies of one school class, with thirty students in the study 1 class and thirty-one in the study 2 class. Study 1 took place over one school term, during which the class studied Islam as their RE topic. Study 2, which is a follow-up to study 1, is scheduled to take place over four terms, in four cycles of research and teaching (see below, Research Methodology). At the time of writing two of these cycles had been completed, but what I say about study 2 will be confined to the first cycle, also a study of Islam. Originally the studies were meant to clarify the issue of motivation in RE, and this has continued to be the case. But as far as intercultural education is concerned, my material indicates strong possibilities in that direction also (we will see that students can be motivated by the chance to learn from different cultural and religious ideas).

I am happy to use Denise Cush's discussion of 'positive pluralism' (Cush 1999, 9) as a framework for my remarks, especially because Cush acknowledges her indebtedness to Robert Jackson's treatment of religion, culture and education: I also take Jackson's interpretive approach to RE as a starting point (Jackson 1997). Cush's work is useful to my present purposes because she assesses RE's contribution to intercultural education in a very direct way. She argues that in countries like England and Wales, which have pioneered a multi-faith approach to RE, the subject can be the main locus for multicultural education (1999, 8). Yet Cush's 'positive pluralism' is
advanced as an improvement on multicultural education, because it embraces plurality as a positive educational opportunity, rather than as a set (perhaps reified or stereotyped) of cultural artefacts to be studied: it accepts that the student's own background assumptions cannot be screened out of the educational process, but must be brought forward for consideration. Her discussion has important consequences for our understanding of 'intercultural education'. It is reminiscent of Gerd Baumann's language of dominant and demotic discourse, discussed elsewhere in this report by Robert Jackson. For Baumann, dominant discourse reflects the reified view of cultures as monolithic, whilst demotic discourse happens in individual interaction across boundaries and serves to create new culture (Baumann 1996). Dominant discourse may supply useful terms, but demotic discourse is vital to the process of understanding. In relation to RE Cush suggests that:

The 'positive pluralist 'approach views the plurality of religions, worldviews and cultures as a positive opportunity rather than a problem. It is possible to learn from the views and practices of others without necessarily losing your own religious and cultural roots. (1999, 9)

So I will show. But before moving to reports of my two studies, I might add to Cush's comments the point that you can also learn from others' views and practices from a position where you perceive yourself to be rootless. Several of the young people who have been respondents in my studies would ascribe no fixed religious abode to themselves; they are part of Linda Rudge's 'I am nothing' generation, towards whom RE must also reach if it is to maintain its relevance in the twenty-first century (Rudge 1998). However, the general point remains, that educational activity can reveal the often rhetorical quality of cultural and religious boundaries.

Research Methodology

I have developed a methodology which so far as I am aware is original, certainly as far as research into English RE is concerned. It involves a combination of action research and ethnography, and it means that I have the dual role of teaching RE lessons to my respondents and recording their views on those lessons. The idea is to plan the lessons to suit the interests and preferences voiced by the students. At the same time I must ensure that the content of lessons falls within the requirements which are set down by the Sheffield Agreed Syllabus for RE (Sheffield 1996, 2004). From action research I adopt the idea of iterative cycles of praxis, in which the students' reflections on their past learning become principles to guide me in my planning of their future learning (Elliott and Adelman 1996; Elliott 1991,1997; Posch 1996). From ethnography I take the strategies of participant observation, student diaries and group interviews, as devices to monitor the students' responses and to encourage the students to be reflective (Davies 1999; Mac an Ghaill 1991). The principle of empowering the young people to help to direct their own education further reverberates with recent English research on the importance of listening to the pupil's voice (Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace, 1996; Rudduck and Flutter, 2000, 2003; Quicke 2003).

In study 1, students were given a copy of the topic plan before the teaching began, and asked to add to it their own questions about Islam and their preferred methods of learning. The topic plan

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1 I am influenced by Keijo Eriksson's work in Sweden, in which RE lessons were structured around students' expressions of personal interests and concerns. Eriksson's study was of older students than mine (Eriksson 2000).
was then redrafted in response to their comments. As the topic progressed, participant observation, student diary writing and group interviews were all used to record factors in the students' motivation. Study 2 has utilised the same basic methodology but with some alterations; here, the students are not involved in topic redrafts, but because the study continues over several topics I can take account of what they say about one topic as I plan the next. Additionally, a shorter form of questionnaire has replaced the student diary writing.

Study 1: Key Findings
The study revealed much about the motivation and creativity that the students could bring to RE lessons, but here I will be concerned only with what RE brought to the students' intercultural education. As far as this particular study went, intercultural education meant education about Islam for non-Muslims who began from a very low point of prior knowledge and understanding. Some of my examples will be drawn from my participant observation notes, others from the students' interview responses.

The first lesson was about clothes, the students working together in small groups. Most pooled ideas on the question, what do clothes show about a person? Simultaneously, others used text books to research Islamic beliefs about dress. The attention centred on bullying (some students had personal experience of being bullied for what they wore). It was pointed out that Muslims are sometimes bullied in Sheffield, a focal point being dress styles. One group presented a drama sketch on French schoolgirls and the banning of hijab. They now understood the links between Islamic dress and Islamic beliefs about marriage and sexuality; the resultant discussion included speculation about why not all British Muslims observe traditional dress codes.

In the third lesson, about family life, groups of students again prepared drama sketches about what is important in family life, whilst there was again a 'research group'; this time, the research was on Islamic beliefs about family life, and they noted five key factors on a poster for display. We saw and discussed each sketch, making points of contact with the research poster. There was a discussion about extended families: there are some traditional working class patterns of extended families in the local area of the school, and the students prized care for the elderly. In their diaries, some students had written of Muslims 'sticking together in large groups in one area'. But now Muslims became less exotic, through the experience of cultural comparison. In the interviews, the cultural comparisons were extended, so that students gained in self-awareness. One student reported that:

The link is because, when we learn about different religions, you find out who you are . . . whether you're Christian, or some people don't want to be different things . . . you find out who you are inside.

There were further comments in support of an edifying intercultural dialogue:

We learn about Muslim life, then about whether it relates to us, in our life.

In Islam, they have set rules, like you should always help your elders, and it's made people think that we should always help our parents, too.

RE is a good place to learn about different cultures, to work with other people, and to become more sociable.
What is noteworthy is that the students did not only engage willingly with the study of a hitherto remote culture, but they ended by using their study as a vehicle for enhanced self-understanding. In learning of a different set of cultural and religious formations, they were inevitably pressed to re-examine their own. This phenomenon is known as reflexivity (Clifford 1988, 245; 1997, 66-8; Geertz 2000, 15-16).

**Study 2: Key Findings**

I have already said that the methodology and scope of study 2 were different from those of study 1, but these were not the only new nuances, nor the most significant in terms of intercultural understanding. Study 2’s class comprises white middle-class students and white working-class students including Christians of various denominations and members of the ‘nothing’ generation, Pakistani and Somali Muslims, and students of various permutations of dual heritage (English-African Caribbean Christian, Pakistani-African Caribbean Muslim and Jewish-Chinese Humanist). In study 1’s Islam topic, there was intercultural education but no Muslim awareness of it or response to it. In study 2’s Islam topic, Muslim students were present to consider their own religion, sometimes through the lens of the outsider; they were exposed to the perspectives on Islam of non-Muslims, yet at the same time their presence, actions and words helped to shape those perspectives. As with study 1, in my presentation of study 2 I will discuss some participant observation data and some interview data.

A rich strand in our work – both in terms of classroom learning and the research activities that accompanied it – originated in a lesson about zakah (the injunction in Islam to give to the poor). The students had listed questions that they felt were raised by the practice and had then developed drama pieces out of their questions: How can giving money bring happiness? Of what is zakah a test? The drama pieces had then prompted much discussion about the various situations that poor people can find themselves in; and when one of the Muslim students spoke to the class about what zakah meant to him personally, the lesson’s atmosphere intensified. It was an affecting example of direct intercultural dialogue. My notes also record the appearance of ‘translation’ throughout the lessons on zakah, as students attempted to fit the Islamic teaching to their own moral and spiritual concerns (Clifford 1997, 11). The interviews made it clear that the Muslim students were not immune to this need to translate zakah into personal meaning, one Muslim student saying:

> I think it (the situation of the poor)did make you feel bad. Later on I asked my mum how old you have to be to pay zakah. She said not till you’re old enough, like an adult. I can’t give my pocket money, but like when you’re older I can give money away to the poor. It didn’t make me feel too bad, but it made me feel good that you can give money away to the poor.

A striking note in the interview responses was that religious concepts like zakah owe their educational power to their ability to remind us of existential challenges. This was evidenced in several exchanges, including the following:

> O: Why do you agree with zakah?

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2 The social psychologists Furnham and Stacey have reported that adolescents assess religious beliefs by trying to clarify their own emergent personal values and attitudes (1991, 132).
CS: Because it's good to give things to other people.
O: Fine, but you know, couldn't you work that out without the concept from Islam to draw on?
JC: It just makes you think about it even more.
RJ: Yeah, because most people don't go around 'oh, I must give to the poor'.
They would only think about it if you make them.
O: So, the religious concepts could be a stimulus to make people think about questions like this? And when you JC said it just helps you think about it more, how does it?
JC: As RJ said, you don't think about giving to the poor all the time.
O: You need to be reminded?
JC: Yeah.
OH: Yeah because sometimes you forget. You can't think about giving to the poor all the time.
RJ: Because until you've attained nirvana, you can't be perfect.

We must marvel at the ease with which twelve and thirteen year-olds move backwards and forwards from an Islamic belief to their own concerns, before summing up their thoughts with a reference to Buddhism! Thus, whether the population is relatively monocultural or multicultural, and whether or not a student is studying his or her 'own' religion or culture, all are subject to the effects of reflexivity and all can benefit from dialogue.

Discussion
The key findings from study 1 and study 2, as far as intercultural education is concerned, may be summarised as follows:

- It is clear that twelve and thirteen year old students can handle sophisticated cultural comparison. Through such a process their self-understanding is increased. Work on Islam in the RE classroom may certainly fulfil these objectives. RE teachers must give attention to reflexivity in learning.
- Whether the setting is culturally homogenous or heterogenous, and whether for individual students the material under study is familiar or not, opportunities for dialogues with one another and with religious concepts are of real importance.
- Religious concepts wield educational power, provided they can be used in the examination of students' own concerns. There is little point in learning about religion for its own sake. For a lively intercultural dialogue to take place, students must feel that its substance relates to their own lives.

The purpose of this section is to review an aspect of the present debate over RE pedagogy in England and Wales, in the light of my key findings. Through my analysis I will show that some pedagogical ideas are better than others at placing RE to benefit intercultural education. Pedagogy must be concerned with what is true, and I will argue that whilst its students should debate propositional truth claims as a part of their activity in the subject, RE should be based on the truth of dialogue. This will require some criticism of Andrew Wright's religious literacy approach to RE (especially Wright 1996; 2003).

Wright attacks an allegedly dominant 'experiential-expressive' model of religion and RE (1996, 166 ff.). The distinguishing feature of that model, he argues, is its assumption that we need to transcend external expressions of religion to gain understanding of an experiential core. But for
Wright, developments in hermeneutics have exposed weaknesses in the experiential-expressive model. He therefore proposes an alternative paradigm that aims at linguistic competency rather than existential capacity. RE, or in Wright’s terminology ‘critical RE’, has the search for ultimate truth as its key driver.

In a more recent article Wright makes explicit the ‘enlightenment heritage’ of his position, by which he means that students of RE must grapple with its underlying philosophical and moral questions. In Wright’s epistemology, knowledge is born of critical enquiry and therefore modes of interrogation, not facts, must be inculcated. Academic Theology and Religious Studies provide the model for RE, and when student motivation is low, this may often stem from a lack of academic rigour. Wright recognises that his approach can be seen as remote from young peoples’ life-worlds and from the affective domain of religion, but he attempts to meet these objections through ‘an appeal to wisdom’: despite the enlightenment’s ‘dissociation of sensibility’, true knowledge has a personal character and religious questions include existential demands (2003, 284-5). For these reasons, critical RE embraces a realistic notion of truth, refuses to see faith traditions relativistically and seeks to induct students into debates over truth claims:

This is no quest for abstract academic knowledge, since the truth of the actual order of things in the universe impacts us on an existential level. (Wright 2003, 288)

Wright is to be commended for his insistence that young people should engage in sophisticated debate and that teachers must not foreclose issues of truth and existence. These principles resonate with the empirical data I have reported, as does Wright’s emphasis on religious language and concepts. Nonetheless, his opposition of language to experience is a step too far: my data shows how for my students, religious terms have their use as tools to interpret experience. Wright may also overstate the cognitive element in RE. Plurality has an equal claim with truth to be the context of RE (Jackson 2004, 20-1). If Wright’s realism is sufficiently hard to alienate those of different persuasions from one another, then it may risk breaches of intercultural understanding. We must be sceptical of our chances of arriving at a truth that will satisfy everyone. For similar reasons the philosopher Richard Rorty advocates the dropping of the term ‘truth’ in favour of a pragmatic stand against intolerance (1989, 176-7). No doubt here I will be accused of relativism, but mine is not a relativistic stance. It is a stance based on what is plain in my data. Amongst young people is a plurality of beliefs, and although for some young people their beliefs represent absolute obligations, they still show a need to investigate these. Dialogue with others seems to be the appropriate mode of investigation, and such dialogue takes on an unbounded quality. I agree with Wright that young people must debate truth claims, but I also agree with Wilna Meijer (1995) that their search for meaning will be life-long.

How do these comments amount to a dialogical view of truth to be embraced by RE? The answer becomes clear when we consider an essay by Keith Ward (1990). Although Ward probably intends to address themes in academic Religious Studies, his recommendations are also very relevant to RE pedagogy. He traces philosophical understandings of religious truth in the context of modern plurality, and concludes in favour of a form of realism in which religious traditions are seen as paths to a truth held by all believers to be inexpressible. Because religions are inadequate to the truth they seek to express, ‘there is a necessity for dialogue which may lead to a mutual transformation of belief, as each seeks more adequate forms of expression’ (Ward 1990, 229). Influenced by Ninian Smart and Wilfred Cantwell-Smith, Ward speaks of the need for a global ethic for Religious
Studies. Philosophical debate will be a major part of its practice, so that dogmatism is avoided; and to maintain vitality, religious questions of ultimate meaning are needed too. As religious believers engage with issues of meaning and justification, it may even be that forms of religious belief will change, but much change has already taken place within each practice of faith. We can see like patterns of review and cross-fertilisation amongst my students. Their exchanges in lessons and interviews are exercises in what Hans-Georg Gadamer calls bildung (1975, 12 ff.), that is, a mutual fusing of horizons.

Ward's vision is inspirational, even if he may fail to make clear that those of no fixed religious abode, or of atheistic or agnostic persuasions, must be included as participants in the dialogue. Eleanor Nesbitt expresses the same vision in a more inclusive and more poetical way when she speaks of truth as 'betruthal'. In this sense, truth is not a fact or a proposition, but an orientation of love and service towards others (Nesbitt 2003, 98 ff.). In a spiritual paradox, truth can never be defined, but when we realise its indefinability, we realise the truth. Nesbitt would celebrate the fact that this insight is shared by several traditions (e.g. Rüm 1968, 79; Lao Tzu 1963, 57).

That spiritual wisdom offers cues for RE practice is intriguing, but I shall now return briefly to literature of a more professional cast. In recent years dialogical pedagogies of RE have been developed in several European contexts (Ipgrave 2001, 2003; Leganger-Krogstad, 2003; Weisse, 2003). What seems to be important is that dialogue should be not only a methodology, but also an epistemological position, because as was suggested at this section's beginning, pedagogy must be about what is true. In Michael Grimmett's terms, dialogue should be not only a pedagogical strategy but also a pedagogical principle (2000, 16ff.). Julia Ipgrave comes closest to this in offering a threefold model of dialogue, where dialogue as method (aspect three) follows dialogue as the essence of human communication (aspect one) and dialogue as a positive orientation (aspect two) (2002, 208 ff.). But in this case, Ipgrave's consideration of pedagogy is indirect. Wright's pedagogical strategy is dialogic, but his principles enshrine a view of truth weighted too far towards the propositional. In my data and in this subsequent discussion, truth takes the form of an ongoing dialogical relationship. RE's purpose is to place young people in such a relationship with religious plurality.

Conclusion
In this paper I have shown that early adolescent students of RE can benefit from religious and cultural comparison. My reports of my research studies have given instances of Cush's positive pluralism in practice. Not only do my students develop knowledge and understanding of religions and cultures other than their own; they also sharpen their self-awareness through their studies. This applies whatever the extent of cultural diversity in the classroom, or whether or not the religious material under study is familiar. To make potential intercultural education real, I have argued, RE teachers must be aware of reflexivity in learning. We must provide opportunities for our students to experience dialogues with one another and with religious concepts. At the same time, the educational power of religious concepts is in relating to students' own concerns. If students do not relate RE's content to their lives, it will be experienced as empty. Finally, dialogue must be more than a method of RE, it must also be the philosophical basis of the subject. Because I have

3 For Cantwell-Smith - he is speaking here of the dynamic, cumulative character of religious tradition, but also intends this to be a general statement - what really exists cannot be defined (1991, 144).
argued that RE should place young people in an ongoing dialogical relationship with religious plurality, I can conclude that intercultural education is the basis of RE.

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Chapter 4

Motivating Able Students to Study Religious Diversity: Applying the Interpretive Approach

Amy Whittall

Introduction
My task was to design and teach an approach to the study of religious diversity that would help to motivate particularly able1 pupils who previously had felt there was little challenge in their studies. Through the study of religious diversity I wanted pupils to be well informed, but also to engage with the material studied so that it gave them opportunities to consider their personal response to key questions. I wanted them to be able to evaluate their own and others' responses and as a result reflect on their initial ideas. My work considered ways in which to address this question – how should the study of religions engage, encourage and precipitate the highest achievement of the most able pupils? The context for this in England was religious education, but this work could be done through other subjects or fields, such as education for democratic citizenship or intercultural education.

Pedagogical Principles and Strategies
My work utilised the interpretive approach, developed by Robert Jackson, which deals with the representation of religions, methods of interpretation and issues raised by reflexivity (Jackson 1997). I also made use of Michael Grimmit’s idea of pedagogical principles and pedagogical strategies (through which the principles are put into practice) and applied these to the interpretive approach in order to develop appropriate classroom methods (Grimmity 2000).

The Interpretive Approach and Gifted and Talented Pupils.
The interpretive approach originally developed from ethnographic studies of children from different religious and cultural backgrounds in Britain. These studies concentrated on individuals and groups in a religious context. Classroom methods were designed using insights from these (Jackson 1997). These aimed to give pupils a knowledge and understanding of religious traditions and to enable them to ‘build bridges’ of understanding between their own lives and the lives of members of the tradition. Three principles for the study of religious diversity were formulated. These deal with:

- **representation** whereby religious education should seek to portray traditions as dynamic, living traditions which respond and develop, rather than as homogeneous and uniform systems of belief.
- **interpretation** which encourages
  - (a) the process of comparing and contrasting learners’ concepts and views with insiders from a tradition
  - (b) moving between examples from a religion (eg information about a person who belongs to particular groups) and the broader religious context in terms of key concepts.
- **reflexivity** – the relationship between the experience of the students and that which is studied. Attention to reflexivity

1 In England, able students are called ‘gifted and talented’.
(a) can develop and deepen students' understanding of their own views and assumptions,
(b) can help them to formulate a sensitive critique of what they have studied
(c) can help them to review and revise the study methods they have been using.

The Application of the Interpretive Approach
In order to apply these ideas for able (gifted and talented) pupils, I developed a generic pedagogical principle and two specific pedagogical principles, plus seven pedagogical strategies which allowed me to put the principles into practice:

Generic Pedagogical Principle: Challenge, Thinking Skills, Flexible Learning
- Challenge must be an integral part of all lessons
- In order to challenge pupils, lessons should involve cognitive thinking skills such as problem solving and investigation
- All learning should be flexible. Pupils should approach information openly and allowed be opportunities to empathise with the material. Lessons should give pupils opportunities to think and make decisions about the knowledge they gain and to transfer information between different areas of the subject.

Religious Education Pedagogical Principle 1:
The study of religions should wherever possible encompass the principles of representation, interpretation and reflexivity.

Religious Education Pedagogical Principle 2:
Gifted and talented pupils should be challenged in their work in order that they can aim to achieve at the highest levels in terms of knowledge, understanding and reflection.

Pedagogical Strategies
The study of religions for gifted and talented pupils should employ wherever possible the following strategies, as related to the principles above:

1. Select areas within schemes of work and individual lesson plans which allow pupils to move backwards and forwards between the 'parts' of a tradition (eg individual believers) and the broad context of the tradition.
2. Allow pupils to raise and address individual questions and areas of interest
3. Provide pupils with opportunities to pose a question and develop a hypothesis about the answer using previous knowledge and understanding
4. Allow pupils to decide upon the methods to be used to investigate their hypotheses
5. Give pupils opportunities to develop a dialogue between themselves, their peers and members of the tradition in order to investigate their hypothesis
6. Encourage pupils to compare and contrast concepts from the religious tradition with their own nearest equivalent concepts.
7. Give pupils the opportunity to reflect upon their discoveries both in terms of their knowledge of the tradition and their own ideas and values (Cope 1997, 44-50).

Classroom Application: Introducing Buddhism
The principles and strategies outlined above were developed into a scheme of work for a class of 11 and 12 year olds. This pedagogical approach was placed within a scheme of work on Buddhism. Pupils had previously done very little on Buddhism and therefore as suggested in
strategy one, pupils had to more constantly between the small picture of Buddhism they had and fit this together with the individual parts they discovered. As there was little prior knowledge, strategy two was used and allowed pupils to raise questions they had about Buddhism. Pupils were given time to discuss in groups the questions they had written individually and explain why these were of interest to them. The groups focused on the two questions they would like to address and these became their focus. It was important, as suggested in strategy three, to allow pupils to develop a hypothesis using previous knowledge. To enable the pupils to do this, they were asked to record their initial answers to the two questions drawing on any previous knowledge. This became their hypothesis.

Pupils were then given time in lessons to decide how they would investigate the answer to their two questions. As suggested in strategy four, they were able to choose the methods used, the resources needed, the tasks for individual group members and the homework set. It was important that as part of this, pupils were involved in a dialogue (strategy 5). This took many forms. Some groups wrote to Buddhist communities and then analysed the answer they received in comparison to the 'textbook' answer. Other groups spoke to Buddhist children in other year groups in the school. All groups were encouraged each lesson to combine their work, through discussion, with pupils in the classroom who were investigating different areas of Buddhism. This helped them to build up a bigger picture of the tradition into which their questions fitted as a part.

Strategy six and seven focus on reflection of learning. This was achieved when pupils wrote a final report on their investigation. For strategy six, pupils were asked to consider if they had learnt anything about their own ideas from their studies. Could they see any connections between their own ideas and those of Buddhism? One pupil considered the way in which the idea of nirvana in Buddhism and that of paradise in Islam appeared similar to him. Finally pupils were allowed to look back at their hypothesis. They were asked to analyse how accurate they had been in their initial ideas and try to explain this. Had they drawn on knowledge about other faiths and applied this to Buddhism? Had they made accurate or inaccurate assumptions? The process allowed them to consider how they had used their knowledge of religious diversity and applied this to one specific tradition.

**Adaptation of the Learning Approach**

Throughout this work, pupils were involved in a process of moving inside and outside of the religious tradition, making conceptual links and drawing on previous knowledge. Each individual pupil was challenged at a level appropriate to them – the boundaries for the task were removed and the work met the varying academic needs of the pupils. Pupils gained an emergent picture of the Buddhist tradition as well as engaging in a process of reflexivity between Buddhism and their own ideas. Classroom work utilised the skills of analysis, reflection, and investigation and proved engaging for all involved. Pupils showed increased motivation through their individualised learning and hermeneutical activities.

These principles and strategies for teaching able pupils can be utilised in different subject areas.

- The responsibility for task setting can be placed with the pupils. This allows them to structure their work independently and challenge themselves at their own level. Boundaries are removed from the task allowing able pupils to work without restraint.
- Pupils can choose areas of interest from within a wider topic. This increases motivation but also places the ownership of learning with the pupils at a level appropriate to them.
• The use and choice of resources, both inside and outside of the classroom, becomes a decision for pupils to make.

• Pupils should be encouraged to enter into dialogue with others in their group and the wider community. Opening channels of conversation brings the learning to life and allows able pupils to discover the diversity within knowledge and understanding.

• Pupils are also enabled to make, analyse and investigate their own hypotheses. Once pupils are given this opportunity, the field of learning opens from a narrow subject or topic to wider education and pupils can learn to be reflective about their work and their ideas. They are also encouraged to make connections between individual areas of study and different subjects in the curriculum.

• Able pupils can also be given the opportunities to reflect on their learning and therefore make connections between themselves and their studies. They can be challenged to consider the impact of learning and compare and contrast their own views with those held by others.

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Chapter 5

Pupil-to-Pupil Dialogue as a Tool for Religious Education in the Primary Classroom

Julia Ipgrave

The Learning Approach

**Context of Religious Diversity**

In England’s state (community) schools, the main curriculum subject for teaching about religious diversity is religious education (RE). This subject is concerned with knowledge and understanding and with encouraging students to reflect on their learning. My approach to religious education arose from a particular context of religious diversity and change. The inner city primary school in Leicester, where I developed a dialogical model of religious education, has a mixed population of children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds (including among others, Gujarati, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali, Afghan, African Caribbean, Turkish and White British heritage), the large majority of whom are Muslim though there are also children of Hindu, Christian, Sikh and Rastafarian traditions. Working with these children, talking with them and observing them relating to each other, it became evident to me how significant religious identity is to their self-understanding and to their understanding of and encounter with those of different backgrounds from themselves.

The relevance to such a school of a multi-faith religious education, encouraging understanding and respect for those of different religious beliefs, was clear. At the same time recognition that all the British children, whatever the demographic profile of their immediate locality, are members of an increasingly diverse nation in an increasingly interconnected world has led to a demand across Britain for pedagogical approaches that help young people engage positively with different religious perspectives within society. Traditionally the study of religious diversity has been the responsibility of religious education, but, since the introduction of Citizenship as a new curriculum area in 2000, it is now also part of the citizenship agenda. My work therefore, has focused, not only on dialogue between faith perspectives within the classroom, but also on the meeting of different perspectives across cultural and geographical barriers by enabling encounter between children from contrasting schools.

**Dialogical RE**

Dialogical religious education has its pedagogical roots in the interpretive approach developed by Robert Jackson (Jackson 1997, 2004a, 2004b). Interpretive RE integrates issues of representation, interpretation and reflexivity as pupils reflect on what they study by relating it to their own beliefs. They interpret and reinterpret their own views in the light of encounter with those of others. It is this bringing together of different perspectives, and the creation of new understandings and meanings as a result, that is the basis of the dialogical model.

The pedagogical principles and strategies for a dialogical approach emerged from research on the religio-cultural and theological influence of children from my school on one another. Data were collected from a series of discussion events during which the young participants explored issues of faith and religious identity. Involvement in the research discussions stimulated the children’s interest in religious questions, provided a safe forum for sharing issues that concerned them, provided them with opportunities to exercise their critical skills, gave
underachievers a voice and encouraged a sense of moral seriousness as they tackled, and suggested their own solutions to, some of life’s ‘big questions’.

A threefold understanding of dialogue emerged from the project:
- Primary Dialogue: the recognition of diversity and change, a daily encounter with different viewpoints, understandings and ideas.
- Secondary Dialogue: a positive response to primary dialogue, openness to difference and to the possibility of being changed through encounter.
- Tertiary Dialogue: the activity of dialogue itself; the forms and structures of verbal interchange that draw on primary and secondary dialogue.

Applying Dialogical Approaches to the Classroom
Following the research project, this dialogical model was applied to the multicultural primary school where I worked and subsequently influenced developments in religious education in other Leicester schools. Applications of the threefold understanding of dialogue are set out below with examples from my own school practice (Iggrave 2001, 2003).

Primary Dialogue
- Acknowledging the diversity of experiences, viewpoints, understandings and ideas within the class.
- Using these as a resource for class discussions about beliefs and values.
- Introducing further viewpoints into classroom discussion.

The school where I introduced dialogical RE has a particularly diverse intake drawn from a variety of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds that became a resource for discussion. The children’s experience of encounter with difference has been extended further through interviews with visitors from other faith communities and by email partnerships set up with children from a suburban Roman Catholic school in the same city and from a primary school in more rural East Sussex. Material for discussion is introduced from several religious traditions. Other voices heard in the classroom, include quotations from people holding a variety of beliefs or viewpoints or taking contrasting positions on moral issues debated by the children.

Secondary Dialogue
- Promoting a class ethos in which children are willing to engage with difference, to share with and learn from others.
- Involving children in the establishment of principles for RE.
- Encouraging questioning to develop interest in others’ experiences and points of view.

The children with whom I worked have had reason to be aware of the tensions that often accompany religious difference. International tensions (the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Palestinian conflict and inter-communal troubles in Gujarat) affected local feelings among the various communities in the city. Against this background the children have been taught the skills of listening to and learning from others. In religious education they are encouraged to discuss and set out the basic rules for the study of religions themselves. A class of 9 and 10 year olds, for example, selected from their discussions three principles to guide their studies: respect for each other’s religion; talking and thinking seriously about differences; being ready to learn new things ‘even about our own religion’. These rules are revisited and used as success criteria when the pupils evaluate their learning at the end of lessons. Pupils are encouraged to formulate their own questions when they engage with other religions and viewpoints. They are also taught to try to view their own tradition from another’s point of view. Muslim children, for
example, were asked to view a video of the hajj pilgrimage as though they were visiting from another planet, to pick out elements they would find particularly strange and put together a list of questions they might ask.

**Tertiary Dialogue**

- Employing a variety of methods, strategies and exercises to facilitate dialogue in the school.
- Structuring activities that encourage pupils to express views, negotiate and justify.
- Providing various stimuli to initiate and support discussion and debate (e.g. pictures, films, videos, case studies, stories, teachings from different traditions).

Children use sorting exercises in which they had to classify or sequence cards with different statements, words or pictures. As they do so they organise their thoughts, negotiate with each other and justify their choices. A class of eight year old children beginning a study of Islam were asked to find different ways to finish the statement, ‘A Muslim is someone who …’. In groups they then had to choose four of these to record on cards. All the statements were then shared and classified firstly under the headings ‘belief’ and ‘practice’ (leading to discussions about the relationship between the two) and then according to whether the statements applied only to Muslims or could also apply to various categories of non-Muslims. Another activity that helps children engage with different viewpoints is role-play in which different groups or individuals have to argue a case from the point of view of a particular interest group. One case used in this way is the story of a man-eating tiger terrorising a Indian village where the children take on the roles of conservationist, tourist, mother, bereaved grandfather and government official as they debate whether or not the tiger should be hunted and killed.

**Dialogue beyond the Classroom**

A dialogical approach to RE has been successfully extended beyond the classroom to promote inter-religious and inter-cultural understanding by email between pupils from a number of primary schools in contrasting regions of the UK. Using a model of interfaith dialogue by email developed in two Leicester schools, inner city schools have linked up with suburban schools, city schools with rural schools, largely ‘white’ schools with schools that are ethnically mixed. Individual children communicate by email with their partner in the school with which theirs is twinned. The exchanges between the children follow a structured schedule that is tied in with the religious education schemes of work used at the two schools. Questions and ideas from RE lessons are fed into the email dialogue and material from the exchanges in turn is used to feed further discussion in class.

The dialogue progresses through four stages:

- Introduction: making friends, discussing interests and hobbies, favourite tv programmes and football teams
- Sharing Experience: finding out about each other’s family traditions and religious practices
- Questions of Faith: discussing their beliefs about some key questions such as life after death, the existence of angels, the beginning of the world
- Ethical Debate: engaging in moral debate about issues such as the use of violence, the rights of animals, gambling

In some cases the schools have been able to build on the friendships developing between their pupils to organise other activities for inter-cultural meetings including exchanges of assemblies, sports activities in a city park, video conferencing and shared residential trips. For two years running children from the predominantly Muslim Leicester school and their Roman Catholic friends have shared a places of worship day on which Muslim children guided their Christian
friends around their mosque and the Christian children guided their Muslim friends round their church. After the tours the children then got together in the school ICT suites to produce jointly electronic guides to the two places of worship. The children’s own words give their views on the success of the email dialogue in promoting positive intercultural understanding.

'[The project] made Christians seem like real people. We use different names for our gods and prophets but it’s the same god and some of our prophets are the same’ (Muslim child, Leicester)

We’ve really enjoyed it because we have been able to communicate with children who are far away and have different beliefs’ (Christian child, East Sussex).

This approach could be adapted for use in other national or international contexts and could be employed in other curriculum fields such as intercultural education, education for democratic citizenship and human rights education.

References


Chapter 6

Intercultural Learning: Education and Islam – a case study

Bill Gent

Context

Geographical and Demographic Context

Redbridge is a London Borough that stands about nine miles to the north-east of the city of London. It elects its own council. It is also a local educational authority (LEA); that is, it finances and administers those state schools that lie within its boundaries. At present, there are 17 secondary (age 11-18) schools and 51 primary (age 4-11) schools. There are also a number of schools and units that specialise in addressing particular learning and behavioural needs.

The population of Redbridge is about 240,000 and, over the last three decades, has become increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-religious. The national census that was held in 2001 asked people to give their religious affiliation. For Redbridge, this revealed the following proportions: 50% count themselves Christian, almost 12% Muslim, almost 8% Hindu, just over 6% Jewish and 5.5% Sikh.

The Muslim population, which stands at about 28,000, is the sixth largest in London and the twelfth largest in England and Wales. The proportion of Muslim students in local authority schools, however - about one in five - is surprisingly high because over half of the Muslim population is under the age of 25. Though the local Muslim population is varied and many refugees from countries such as Somalia have added to its numbers in recent years, the majority of Redbridge Muslims are either of Pakistani or Indian heritage.

Professional Context

LEAs supply a diverse range of services for their schools, including advice on the curriculum and school improvement. Much of the latter work is carried out by local advisers and inspectors, the exact terms used for the latter varying from authority to authority. At one time, LEAs employed specialist advisers that covered most areas of the curriculum – history, geography, physical education, and so on. Increasingly, however, schools turn to independent consultants for such advice, LEAs focusing their own advisory staff on national priorities such as English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

My own current role within Redbridge is as a general School Improvement Adviser. Some years ago, however, I served as Religious Education (RE) Adviser. This was a particularly interesting role in that, in England and Wales, the scope and style of religious education in schools is determined by each LEA, unlike other subjects of the curriculum where schools must follow a national curriculum.

Given the nature of the Redbridge community and the national requirement that students explore across a range of religious traditions in their school RE, my work as RE adviser naturally involved me in working with people from a range of religious and cultural traditions. This enabled, amongst other things, school students to visit religious centres and for visitors from religious communities to visit schools in order to deepen the students' understanding of what it means to be a follower of a religious tradition in today's world.
Having built up contacts with the local religious communities, I was also contacted by other council groups within Redbridge who wanted information or advice. One such group was the Area Child Protection Team (ACPT), a group that had the responsibility of advising and acting on child protection issues across the borough. It was a sub-group of this team that asked me to contribute to a publication that was being prepared in order to give advice to professionals working in a multi-ethnic community such as Redbridge. During meetings with this group, I was asked about the local Muslim community. The motivation for this was that, over a period of years, there had been a number of child protection issues involving mosque schools; that is, children who attended them had complained of being roughly treated by adults there. The ACPT had had difficulty, however, in responding to such complaints productively. It became apparent that there was huge uncertainty about what ‘mosque schools’ actually were, how they functioned, what their role was, and where leadership resided. Given a natural reluctance to breach cultural protocols, a significant impasse had developed.

Drawing on the confidence and contacts that I had developed over a number of years, I suggested that an ‘LEA-Mosque Schools’ group be formed, consisting of members of the ACPT and Muslim leaders connected with mosques and their schools.

The first meeting of the group took place in one of Redbridge’s mosques and, as trust developed between members of the group, questions began to be asked about mosque schools and their role within the Muslim community.

**Education within the Muslim Community**

*Education, Learning and Knowledge within Islam*

From its beginnings in seventh century Arabia, the Islamic community (*umma*) has placed great store on education, knowledge and learning. The first words reputed to have been revealed by the Angel Gabriel to the prophet Muhammad in about 610 CE made reference to God revealing to humankind that which they did not know (*Surah 97*) and two well-known sayings (*hadith*) of the Prophet are ‘Seek knowledge even as far as China’ and ‘An hour of study is worth more than a year of prayer’. One of the revered images of the Prophet is as a teacher and it is said that the activities that took place in the first mosque in Medina included teaching and learning.

A fundamental duty of a Muslim, then, is to learn. And, indeed, there is much to learn.

The *Qur’an* repeatedly points to the world, telling believers to look at the ‘signs’ (*ayyat*) that point to a Reality beyond. And, of course, the *Qur’an* itself – as the record of the words of God revealed directly to the prophet Muhammad during the last 23 years of his life – has a central place within Islam and within the hearts and minds of Muslims. And then there are the reports (*hadith*) of what the Prophet Muhammad said and did; if the *Qur’an* sets out the principles, it is the details contained in the *hadith* that show Muslims how these principles are to express themselves in all aspects of daily life – from the positions of prayer to the cleaning of teeth. And then, again, there are the fundamentals of daily living as a pious Muslim, particularly those actions and intentions related to prayer and worship (*salah*); washing (*wudhu*) before prayer, the conventions related to worshipping with others in the mosque or at home, and the physical positions and spiritual attitudes associated with each of the units (*rakah*) of prayer.

Within Islamic history, a great body of learning developed and, associated with it, world-renowned centres of learning (such as Al-Azhar in Egypt) and a community of scholars and religious functionaries (*ulama*).
The Mosque School

Mosques are thought of as places of prayer and worship; indeed the Arabic word *masjid* means 'place of prostration'. But they are also centres of learning in which young members of the local Muslim community learn all about being Muslim.

Within the London Borough of Redbridge, there are a growing number of mosque buildings, about eight at the time of writing, one of which is wholly purpose-built. Each of them organises classes for children from about age five onwards who spend several hours there each weekday evening following a short break of an hour or so after their 'day' (state) schooling. Such mosque schools, each consisting of a number of weekday children's classes held at or adjacent to a mosque, are often called *madrasahs* but the more technically precise name is *maktabhs*.

Actually, the picture is rather more complex than this for, as my own field work revealed, rather than attending mosque school, a significant number of children are taught by their parents at home or by tutors in private houses.

But how is a mosque school organised, on what principles and by whom? As already stated, it was uncertainty about this that provided a stumbling-block for members of the ACPT. This, in fact, only mirrored an uncertainty within the wider community as a whole. General members of the public will often see children wearing long white robes and an embroidered skull cap (boys) or head scarf (girls), clutching a cloth book-bag, streaming to and from mosque buildings each weekday evening. Teachers in LEA schools often have a more jaundiced or cynical view for stories abound, whether true or otherwise, of Muslim children being roughly treated by mosque school teachers, some of whom have little facility in the English language. Such suspicion both draws from and feeds into that general distrust of all things Muslim – often referred to as 'Islamophobia' – that is such a marked feature of Western society and its media.

To state this, however, is only to state half the picture. For there is also a fierce debate within the Muslim community itself, in Britain and beyond, about the efficacy of traditional forms of mosque education. There is concern about the demands made on young Muslim children, about the ability of many of the mosque teachers to connect with the world of young British/European Muslims, and about the methods of teaching and learning used.

Though there is much literature available about Islamic education in general and, within the British context, the continuing debate about whether there should be state-funded Muslim day schools, there is remarkably little literature available about mosque schools: their underlying principles, organisational practices and classroom pedagogy.

Muslim Madrasahs in Redbridge

Within the LEA-Mosque Schools group referred to above, it was decided to produce a small publication entitled *Muslim Madrasahs in Redbridge* (Redbridge SACRE 2003). This would be an attempt to articulate, for Muslim and non-Muslim readers alike, what mosque schools are and what takes place within them. I worked closely with a local imam (Muslim community leader who, amongst other mosque activities, leads worship) in drafting the text of this small booklet before it was discussed, clarified and amended by the larger group. The final booklet was divided into a number of sections, including 'What happens at a Madrasah', the text of which was as follows:
• Madrasah will probably have both single sex and mixed classes, depending on the internal arrangements and the age of the children.

• Children will sit in on a carpeted floor in rectangular or square-shaped groups with wooden benches in front of them on which the texts books they are using will be placed. The teacher will sit either in the middle or at one end of the group with all the children facing him or her.

• Before starting their lessons, it is desirable that children perform wudhu (ritual washing) either at home or at the faculties provided within the mosque.

• Some madrasah require their children to wear a uniform. For girls, this might be a long white jubba (tunic) and head scarf and, for boys, a long white thaub (tunic) and topi (cap).

• Learning at madrasah is focused on two things: the Qur’an and the Muslim way of life.

• In learning to read and recite the Qur’an at madrasah, children will move through different stages, each one building on from the last. For example:
  o the process will start with children learning to recognise the shapes of Arabic letters and the sounds that they make;
  o after this, they will learn how the different letters combine together to form words or a sequence of sounds;
  o they will practice recognition and pronunciation (though they wouldn’t know what the Arabic actually means in their own everyday language);
  o small portions of the Qur’an would now be learned;
  o children might now learn the Fatiha, the first surah of the Qur’an, together with rules about how to recite the Qur’an;
  o after three or four years, the whole Qur’an will be read through.

• Alongside learning Arabic and the Qur’an, children attending madrasah will also be learning about the Muslim way of life. Again, they will move through different stages, learning about:
  o important duties and beliefs;
  o prayers traditionally used by Muslims at certain times (leaving home, before and after eating, and so on);
  o how wudhu is performed;
  o the prayers which are recited during salah;
  o Islamic law relating to such things as prayer, ritual washing and travelling;
  o principal Muslims beliefs, about God, angels, the prophets and the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, the Day of Judgement, and so on.

• In addition to these studies, some madrasah also include learning Urdu – the language of Pakistan, the original homeland of many British Muslim families.

The creation of the booklet *Muslim Madrasahs in Redbridge* (Redbridge SACRE 2003) was significant in a number of ways. It sought, for example, to ‘demystify’ what takes place in mosque schools and to present accurately the activities within a Muslim context. But perhaps more significant still, the text was the product of both Muslims and non-Muslims working
together for the common good. This latter idea was to become increasingly important in my own thinking.

Memorising the Qur'an within the Islamic Tradition
The Concepts of Hifz and Hafiz
The production of the Madrasah booklet naturally led to me visiting a number of mosque schools in Redbridge to learn more about what took place in them at first-hand. This, in turn, led to a major piece of ethnographic fieldwork, part of a doctoral research degree that I was doing with the University of Warwick.

In talking about mosque schools with local Muslim leaders, and observing both boys’ and girls’ classes in a number of them, I became aware of the term hifz: for example, this was the room in which, I was told, the hifz class met. Put simply, a hifz class is made up of those individual students who wish to become a hafiz (plural huffaz), a person who has memorised the Qur’an by heart. To understand why anyone should want to follow this path, it is important to understand a little more about the place of the Qur’an within the Islamic tradition.

Muslims believe, as we have already stated, that the words of the Qur’an were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad during the latter stage of his life. He was told to ‘recite’ (iqra, the root of the term Qur’an) them and they were learned by his companions who themselves passed them on to others. In time, the revealed words were collected together to form the Qur’an.

The problem with this very brief outline is that, to the Western mind, the concept of ‘book’ – as in the statement ‘The Qur’an is the Muslim holy book’ – immediately presents the idea of text, of words on paper. This has been the dominant way in which Western scholars have approached the Qur’an, as the sacred text of Islam.

But, for Muslims, the Qur’an is less of a book and more of a living, aural experience. As the American scholar Kristina Nelson (2001) put it, ‘The Qur’an is not the Qur’an unless it is heard’. This explains the peculiar and special place of the sound of the Qur’an within the Islamic tradition in general, and within Muslim societies in particular. In Egypt, for example, there is a long-standing tradition of people gathering together in order to hear the Qur’an being recited, celebrity status being accorded to renowned reciters.

In memorising the Qur’an, then, a Muslim is doing what the first companions of the prophet did and, at the same time, internalising not only God’s words, but the sounds of God’s words. In memorising the whole Qur’an, it is as though a person becomes a ‘living Qur’an’ with all the responsibilities that this brings. The hafiz, the person who has memorised the whole Qur’an, is much esteemed within Muslim society and there are many hadith that speak about the rewards that this status brings in the hereafter, not only to the hafiz him or herself, but also to their families.

Fieldwork with a Hifz Class
As well as carrying out a series of life-story interviews with local Muslims, in order to establish the place of education and learning within Muslim life histories, I decided to carry out some research into one of the two boys’ hifz classes that met in a Redbridge mosque. Setting up the fieldwork was a delicate matter, however. What were my motives in wanting to carry out the fieldwork? Would I disturb the activities of the class? How would I go about obtaining data? What would be the product of the fieldwork? These and other important questions had to be talked through not only with mosque teachers but also with members of the mosque committee.
Luckily, the imam who had assisted in the production of the Madrasah booklet acted as ‘gatekeeper’ and was willing to advise on protocols and possibilities throughout the research exercise.

It was agreed that the fieldwork would be carried out through a series of semi-participant observations and semi-structured interviews with boys in the class. As ever, research methods changed and expanded during the course of the research period (June-July 2004). With permission from the hifz class teacher, for instance, I took a series of photographs of the class at work. During interviews with boys, I introduced some of the photographs as prompts for discussion: ‘Can you explain to me what is happening here?’, and so on.

In all, I was able to talk with 13 students, whose ages ranged between eight to 17 years. 11 of them had been born in the area. I wanted to clarify a number of issues with them, including how they came to be in the hifz class, their perception of the significance of what they were doing, how they went about memorising the Qur’an, and how training to become a hafiz was affecting the rest of their lives, including their work and attitudes at school.

Two sections from the final research piece follow: those relating to the students’ perceptions of what they were doing and the ‘sacrifice’ entailed in becoming a hafiz. (To protect anonymity, pseudonyms have been used when students are referred to directly.)

The students’ perception of what they were doing

Membership of the hifz class involved an extraordinary degree of commitment from students. But why did they want to become a hafiz in the first place? This central issue formed a major part of discussions with the students.

Considering the age range in the class and the subtlety of the question, it is not surprising that student responses varied in terms of depth, breadth and detail. It is useful, however, to categorise their responses in terms of ‘religious’, ‘social’, ‘educational’ and ‘personal’ reasons. It is also important to remember that these distinctions are artificial and that all responses were related to key Islamic beliefs and values.

‘Religious’ reasons - those in which explicit reference was made to Islamic doctrine or beliefs – predominated and were usually the most substantial. At its most general, there was reference to the ‘blessings’ that accrued to both self and others from learning the Qur’an by heart. There were, however, a number of specific references to the Hereafter. Kazim, for example, stated that ‘We believe that if you become a hafiz, you go to Paradise’. Some other students developed this further by stating that entry to Paradise was not only assured for oneself but also for others: ‘When you pass away, you can take seven generations with you to heaven’ (Hassan). But there was strong evidence that this was not understood in purely instrumental terms – that hafiz status guaranteed entry to Paradise. Both Maruf and Jamil expressed this in their own ways: ‘If you become a hafiz and have been good, it’s good for you on the Day of Judgement’ (Maruf; stress added); ‘When you get old and go to heaven, you are allowed to take a certain amount of people to heaven – but only if you have been a real hafiz’ (Jamil; stress added).

Another particular reference made by several students was to preserving the Qur’an. Rafiq, for instance, referred to a story about an attempt to destroy all copies of the Qur’an but this had been impossible because, in the case of those who had memorised it, it was ‘in
people's hearts'. A variation on this theme was the focus on preserving the text/sound of the Qur'an as, for example, 'There will always be at least one person who can read the Qur'an. This will prevent those people who want to change it' (Jamil).

Other more personal religious reasons included Tahir's it is 'better for you as a person because you know the whole religion. When you become a hafiz you remember God more' and Mukhtar's 'it brings me more closely to my religion'.

Social reasons for becoming a hafiz were all related to the high esteem in which the hafiz is traditionally held within Muslim communities. Thus, the 'respect' and 'status' that would come with achieving hafiz status were referred to as were the pride that parents and family would take, even more so in the case of Hassan, because 'There is no-one in my family who is a hafiz'.

Several students offered reasons relating to education and learning. At its most general, Umran expressed his response as a truism: 'It's better to push your education further, isn't it?' Other responses were cast within an Islamic framework. Jamil, for example, said that 'You don't just do it for yourself ... someone who doesn't know how to read, you can help them to do this stage'. The reference to 'stage' here is explicable in terms of the immediately preceding focus of our conversation in which he had explained that becoming a hafiz was a kind of 'bridge' between learning how to read the Qur'an and going on to higher Islamic studies. This simile had apparently been introduced to Jamil by his cousin, himself a hafiz.

Finally, several students responded in terms of personal factors. Abdul, for instance, said that becoming a hafiz affected him as a person through making him feel 'clean inside', giving him 'a sense of peace' and by making him 'stronger inside'. Mukhtar, by contrast, said that it 'feels like you're achieving something'.

But if these are the kinds of reason that students themselves give in trying to explain what they are doing, both their language and physical appearance are indicative too. That memorising and reciting the Qur'an is seen as a devotional activity was indicated by the use of the concept of prayer by a number of students. In talking about what happens at both morning and evening sessions, for example, Rafiq said that he would 'pray a new page' in the former and 'pray one quarter of a juz' [a section consisting of one-thirtieth of the Qur'an] including the passage learned in the morning, in the latter. In being shown a photograph of himself reciting to the teacher and asked to explain what was happening, Maruf said, 'I was praying to him and had to think quite a lot - to pray what I'd learned before'. In being asked directly about the use of the word 'praying' in this context, Abdul's explanation could not have been clearer: 'When we're reading the Qur'an we're praying - it's worship'.

The devotional dimension of what takes place in a hifz class is also shown, for course, by the dress worn by students - the topi (cap) and the thaub (white tunic). But, at a slightly more subtle level, it is also shown by the physical position that students adopt whilst reciting the Qur'an: the kneeling position which is also one of the basic positions of formal worship. The extent to which the rocking motion that both teacher and students adopted, so reminiscent of dovening within the Jewish tradition, is a devotional as well as a mnemonic device is tantalising issue.
The 'Sacrifice' of Becoming a Hafiz

For a young Muslim to aim at becoming a hafiz is no mean decision. Not only will this involve years of attendance at classes and practice outside class hours, but the continuous intensity of the work is highly demanding and requires great personal discipline. Not all people who set out on the path to becoming a hafiz arrive there.

The students in the target group were fully aware of the demands of the route they had chosen. When asked which kind of work was hardest, school or hifz class, Mukhtar was emphatic: 'Hifz, but sacrifices have to be made'. Kazim also used the language of 'sacrifice' in saying that, even when you were tired after school, 'you have to sacrifice in coming to the mosque'. Several said, however, that once a person got used to the routine, it became easier. But that there were still difficulties to be encountered was illustrated by each of the two students who had recently become huffaz. Bilal said that he had sometimes felt very low - 'I never thought that I would finish' - but that he had been 'encouraged to stick at it'. Abdul, on the other hand, stated that 'It's easy to learn it but it's hard to remember it'.

But that there was also a different kind of demand placed on people aiming to become huffaz – the demand of becoming a certain sort of person - was also referred to by a number of students in response to the question, 'What are the qualities of a good hifz student?' Though there were references to such things as having a good memory and 'reading' regularly, by far the greatest number of references was to spiritual qualities, such as commitment, dedication, intention (a group of students saying that, of the two qualities, will and memory, the will was the most important) and respect for Islam. There were also references to moral and social qualities, such as: acting as a role model for others, including younger children; acting in a respectable manner; showing respect for elders; using no bad language (Maruf saying of the person who is learning the Qur'an but also swearing, 'If he is swearing outside, he is using the same mouth to pray the Qur'an'); and, avoiding bad influences.

But the notion of both self-discipline and sacrifice are put into even higher relief with the realisation that, in a profound sense, becoming hafiz is not only an end but a beginning. Both Bilal and Abdul had recently finished memorising the Qur'an and, in mid-May 2004, had both recited the final verses in front of the male congregation after Friday jumma prayers. Following their recitation, there had been hugs, hand-shaking and the giving of money followed by a meal at the mosque. In the evening, there was a meal at Abdul's house for family and friends as well as mosque teachers. Later still, the boys were presented with framed certificates.

But, in the middle of all this celebration and sense of achievement (described by Bilal as an 'amazing feeling'), Abdul said, 'Then I realised what I had taken on and what I have to do now'. For, he clearly realised, he was now faced with the responsibility, not only of being a hafiz but also of behaving like a hafiz. And more than this: the Qur'an had been memorised but, unless it was repeated regularly, the memory would fade. As Bilal eloquently put it, 'The easiest thing is to finish but the hardest thing is to remember' – a comment reminiscent of the Muslim poet who declared: 'I memorised the Qur'an. Then I forgot the verses and remembered the words'. 
The Fieldwork and Beyond

The Outcomes of the Fieldwork

The outcomes of this fieldwork are both obvious and less so. At the most obvious level, and despite potential obstacles, the fieldwork was carried out; the mosque community was content for it to take place and was, I was told, pleased with how the interviewed students had presented themselves.

At a more subtle level was the fact that this fieldwork constituted an encounter between the Muslim community (the mosque school and its hifz class) and the non-Muslim world (the researcher and those at Warwick University with whom I am working). And, assuredly, this encounter was mutually-enriching. The mosque community felt that its educational work, marginalized in colonial societies and for long both ‘invisible’ to and demeaned by outsiders, had been taken seriously, on its own terms, and affirmed. Given general Western attitudes to Muslims – the ‘infidel within’ as Humayun Ansari (2004) has dubbed it – this was a significant achievement.

And I too, as the ‘outsider’ moving in, was affirmed by the fieldwork and the relationships that were formed during it. As a professional adviser involved in the world of the local authority school, I sensed that I was moving between two educational traditions. In the one – the local authority school – pedagogy was based on students understanding learning outcomes, being encouraged to challenge, and taking risks with their learning. Here, the teacher is increasingly seen as the ‘facilitator’. In the other – the mosque school – pedagogy was based on being inducted into truths that had already been revealed and learning sounds (the Qur’an) was regarded as a prerequisite to a later understanding of what they all meant. Here, the teacher is seen as the link in the chain through whom revealed truths and ways of living are transmitted to those who will, in their turn, become transmitters too.

But, at a more subtle level still, could it be that teachers in mosque schools and those in local authority schools could share insights and experiences into how children best learn and respond? Have local authority teachers got something to learn in looking at the role of memorisation and repetition in the mosque school tradition? And have mosque teachers got to take far more seriously the ways in which young British Muslims are thinking and trying to make sense of their lives in a largely non-Muslim society? Should local authority schools, many of which in Redbridge have high numbers of Muslim pupils, take more note of the experiences and achievements of these pupils within the mosque school environment? And should teachers of religious education concentrate far less on the Qur’an as a book and more on it as a heard experience?

A Postscript

At an early stage of my research, I came across an article called ‘The pedagogy of the Prophet’ (Al-Sadan 1999). The author described many teaching methods that, it was reported, were used by the Prophet: drawing in the sand, repeating things three times, asking questions, and so on. I passed a copy on to the inam, my gate-keeper, only to learn that, later, he had passed on copies of the article to all mosque teachers for their edification.

A sign of things to come, perhaps?
References

Chapter 7

Citizenship Education and Religious Education: A European Perspective

Robert Jackson and Karen Steele

Introduction
The concept of citizenship in Europe has been challenged by the fall of communism, increased immigration and demographic changes, an expanding political and economic union, together with the impact of global developments and events such as the attacks on American targets on September 11th 2001. In addition, there is the diversity inherent in a collection of countries that have their own languages, histories and political systems. This is further complicated by the perceived challenges posed by the ‘Europeanization’ of the nation-states, and by the difficulties that national diversity poses to the concept of a European citizenship.

Thus, it is not surprising that citizenship is very much on the agenda of education systems in Europe. Whether influenced primarily by fears of the young’s disengagement with political processes, by concerns about social cohesion in culturally diverse societies, or by political change in former communist countries, citizenship education has emerged, either as a discrete curriculum subject or as a dimension of the wider school curriculum (Paludan and Prinds 1999). In those societies, such as Norway, where the term ‘citizenship’ (or its equivalent) is not used, other elements are emphasized such as democratic values, virtues and political literacy (Skeie 2003). On a major Council of Europe project in Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC), the subject is inclusive of Human Rights Education, Civic Education, Peace Education, Global Education and Intercultural Education as well as activities in which participation in society can be learned, exercised and encouraged (http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/EDC/). In relation to intercultural education specifically, another important Council of Europe project on ‘intercultural education and the challenge of religious diversity and dialogue’ aims to incorporate the study of religion within this subset of citizenship education (Council of Europe 2004).

This chapter sets out to discuss the relationship between citizenship education and religious education in Europe, arguing that, understood in certain ways, these fields can be seen as complementary elements contributing to a broadly conceived values education. In a chapter of limited length, it is impossible to do full justice to the range and diversity of ideas in these fields across the whole of the continent. However, by dealing with selected examples, we hope to convey the main issues in the debate and to indicate some positive ideas about the relationship between the two fields. The backdrop for such a discussion is the increasing plurality to be found within Europe, both ‘traditional’ plurality, the overt religious and cultural diversity resulting mainly from the migration of peoples, and ‘modern’ or ‘postmodern’ plurality, the multitude of cultural, moral and spiritual choices available to individuals as a result of massively improved global communications (Jackson 2004; Skeie 1995). Education in citizenship and in religion needs to take account of these different but inter-related forms of plurality.

The Nature of Citizenship Education
A wide range of terms is used world-wide to denote a form of teaching and learning that encourages good citizenship. These include citizenship education, civics, social studies, life skills and moral education. In addition, there are connections with a variety of subjects (e.g.}
history, geography, economics, politics, languages, environmental studies and religious education). Discussion of citizenship education therefore encompasses a diverse and complex curriculum area.

Following an analysis of the over 300 known definitions of democracy, David Kerr identified a number of linked themes and concepts that are common to citizenship education:

They include the themes of: the preservation of something, such as democratic society and its associated rights; the notion of participation in society; the preparation or capacity building of young people for active and informed participation; a focus on inclusion or integration into society; a concentration on contemporary society, the encouragement of partnerships; and the promotion of an international perspective...The definition also highlights a number of key concepts that underpin citizenship education, including democracy, rights, responsibilities, tolerance, respect, equality, diversity and community...Citizenship education also involves the dimensions of knowledge and understanding, skills, attitudes and values. These dimensions are brought together through teaching and learning approaches, which have the primary goal of shaping and changing the attitudes and behaviour of young people through into their adult lives. (Kerr 2003, 7-8)

Much of what is described above reflects what McLaughlin (1992) calls a ‘maximal’ interpretation of citizenship. This definition of citizenship education is broad and inclusive, encourages investigation and interpretation, and is as much about process as content. However, there can also be a form of citizenship education that leans towards a ‘minimal’ interpretation of citizenship. This form of ‘civics education’ promotes a narrow and exclusive view of citizenship. It is content led and knowledge based, allowing little opportunity for students to question and challenge.

Kerr provides a further framework for analysing approaches to citizenship education, distinguishing between education about, through and for citizenship (Kerr 1999, 12f). Education about citizenship involves developing knowledge and understanding of national history and the structures and processes of government and political life. Education through citizenship requires a more active approach on the part of students, where they participate in school and community life; this practical experience reinforces the knowledge component. Education for citizenship includes the two approaches already described, but also equips pupils with skills, attitudes and values which enable them to take an active and responsible role in adult life. Education about citizenship is closest to the ‘minimal’ end of the continuum described by McLaughlin, and is clearly the easiest to deliver. McLaughlin explains that this ‘minimal’ interpretation is open to a number of objections; the most notable being ‘...that it may involve merely an unreflective socialisation into the political and social status quo, and is therefore inadequate on educational, as well as other, grounds’ (McLaughlin 1992, 238). There is considerable support for a more ‘maximal’ interpretation of citizenship education. Will Kymlicka, for example, argues that citizenship education should include ‘how we think about and behave towards others, particularly those who differ from us in their race, religion, class and so on’ (Kymlicka 1999, 88).
Citizenship Education in Europe

Print and Smith distinguish between the Central and Eastern European regions and the Western European countries. The former have developed an interest in citizenship education as a result of their status as newly established democracies, while Western European societies have faced problems ‘based on a mix of new demographies, growing prosperity and voter apathy’ (Print and Smith 2002, 103). Despite the differing motivations, it is clear that citizenship education is central to the idea of a modern, integrated, yet diverse Europe.

Naval and her co-writers have identified a ‘new approach to democratic citizenship’, for 21st century Europe based on scholarship and an analysis of policy and curriculum documents on civics and citizenship education worldwide. They advocate programmes which:

...draw not only upon traditional views of civics and citizenship education, characterised by learning about government, democratic institutions, national allegiance, the legal system, national constitutional and political history, as well as the responsibilities of citizens, but also expand them in the context of a globalising world where most countries are now democracies. Furthermore, learning about democratic citizenship emphasises understanding democratic principles and processes, broader conceptualisations of national identity, democratic values, citizen rights and responsibilities (including human, social and political rights), global and multiple citizenships, the rule of law and judicial independence, all designed to foster active, engaged, democratic citizens. (Naval, Print and Veldhuis 2003, 110)

Similarly, the Education for Democratic Citizenship project,2 supported by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, identifies its main goal as creating responsible and informed citizens in the context of European integration. It provides a set of practices and activities aimed at equipping young people to participate actively in democratic life. The focus is on the provision and application of information, values and skills linked to democratic procedures and principles. Such projects and approaches fit well with Kerr's notion of education for citizenship, sitting on McLaughlin's maximal end of the citizenship spectrum.

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education Study (http://www2.hu-berlin.de/empir_bf/iea_e.html) researched 28 countries (23 of which were European) and found that students with higher levels of civic knowledge are more likely to participate in political and civic activities as adults. Moreover, the study found that schools that model democratic processes are most effective in promoting civic knowledge and engagement. However, the study also found that an open and participatory approach to citizenship education is unusual, with only about 25 per cent of pupils across all countries reporting that they are often encouraged to state their own views during lessons, and an equal proportion stating that such discussion occurs rarely or never (Kerr 2003, 21).

The IEA study was unable to distinguish clear patterns between different parts of Europe in relation to civic knowledge, engagement and attitudes. Kerr (1999, 3) has identified a number of ‘broad contextual’ factors (historical tradition, geographical position, socio-political structure, economic system, and global trends) which interplay with ‘structural factors’ (organisation of education, educational values and aims, and funding and regulatory arrangements) to influence the definitions of and approaches to citizenship education taken by different countries. It is therefore unsurprising that there is little uniformity or pattern to the delivery of citizenship education in Europe. Nonetheless, Torney-Purta (2002, 134) does speculate on a possible
trend where it seems that some of the post-Communist countries have succeeded very well in educating students to understand democratic principles, but were less successful in transmitting skills (Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia). In contrast, students in England, Sweden and Switzerland performed at or above the international mean on the skills subscale, but below the international mean on the subscale measuring knowledge of democratic concepts and principles.

Trends in Religious Education in Europe

The Nature of Religious Education in Europe

Comparative data show that religious education is present as a compulsory or optional subject in many school systems of Europe (Kodelja and Bassler 2004; Schreiner 2002a, 2002b). Where religious education is not a subject in its own right, there is usually some treatment of religion in, for example, history, literature, philosophy, sociology or other studies. Moreover, there is increasing discussion about how and to what extent the treatment of religion in schooling shapes an individual’s self-concept and world view. There is also an increasing interest in how far studies of religion contribute to social tolerance or to intolerance, stereotyping and prejudice. In some countries, there remain more fundamental struggles between those wishing to include religion in schooling, often led by religious institutions, and those who seek to exclude religion from schools (Kodelja and Bassler 2004).

As with citizenship education, all models and approaches to religious education have their own history (Schreiner 2002a, 2002b). Influences range from the religious landscape of the country, the role and value of religion in society and the structure of the education system, to the relationship between the state and religion and the historical tradition of each country. These have to be taken into account in order to understand the nature of RE in each country.

John Hull analyses the different approaches taken by European countries to religious education in terms of reactions to plurality (Hull 2002). One reaction is that experienced in France (with the exception of Alsace-Lorraine), where religious education is not permitted in publicly funded schools. Another reaction, says Hull, is ‘...a pluralization of learning religion in which students are offered a system of parallel instruction’. Yet another reaction is to adopt a position that views religion from the outside.

Schreiner (2002a) suggests that we can roughly differentiate between two main models of RE in Europe: the religious studies approach and the denominational or confessional approach. There has been considerable academic debate about the labels attached to religious education. Cush (1999) makes a strong case not to view non-confessional RE as ‘watered down religious studies’, and makes a clear distinction between a non-confessional approach to the subject that simply conveys academic knowledge to pupils in schools (religious studies) and another that aims to enhance the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (non-confessional religious education). Moreover, there is a debate about whether any form of religious education can be completely impartial (eg Jackson 2004). However, for the purpose of this chapter, the terms confessional RE and non-confessional RE will be used as broad descriptive categories.

Confessional Religious Education

The defining feature of confessional RE is its assumption that the goal of the subject is to transmit or nurture faith and that the contents of RE, the training of teachers, and the development of curricula and teaching materials are mainly the responsibility of religious
communities as opposed to the state. In some cases there is an opportunity to opt out and to choose alternative subjects such as ethics or philosophy.

In countries with a predominately Catholic population (Italy, Spain, Portugal and Poland for example), Catholicism is deeply embedded in the culture, which has an influence on how RE is taught. In Italy, for example, about ninety per cent of students attend the voluntary RE lessons which are taught by teachers who are in possession of a certificate recognised by the diocesan authorities, are appointed by the Catholic authority and are paid by the state (Gandolfo-Censi 2000).

Where there is a 'mixed' religious situation as in Germany, the Netherlands or Switzerland, religious education is predominantly religious instruction in the majority religion, or church of the state. Teaching about other religions may be included, especially at secondary level, but the teaching tends to be from the point of view of the dominant religion. The subject may be taught by professionally trained teachers, with or without a special and close relationship with the church, but they may also be clergy or teachers appointed and educated by the church.

**Non-Confessional Religious Education**

This approach is carried out under the authority of the state. RE is placed in the hands of the Ministry of Education and the local school authorities who produce the syllabuses and educate and appoint the teachers, although representatives of the religions may have a role in contributing to syllabuses. We find such non-confessional religious education approaches in England, Wales and Scotland, as well as in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. The aims are to develop knowledge and understanding, as well as to reflect on that understanding and to explore fundamental human experiences and questions. Within the group of countries mentioned there are, however, many variations and differences. For example, in England, the state and local school authorities involve religious communities (along with teachers and local politicians) in drawing up syllabuses. Denmark, however, places all responsibility for teacher training and curriculum development with the state (Jensen 1998).

**Models for Religious Education in Europe**

Michael Grimmett’s three models of RE teaching have been highlighted as useful tools in analysing approaches to RE in Europe (Hull 2002; Schreiner 2002a, 2002b). The first is educating into religion, which describes a confessional approach, where a single tradition is taught as the religious education curriculum by insiders. Teachers are themselves expected to be believers in the religion and the object of the instruction is to enable pupils to come to believe in the religion or to strengthen their commitment to it. A variation of the 'learning religion approach' presents various religions in separate teaching, but still from the point of view of one religion. Many central and eastern European countries give this form of RE a high priority (Schreiner 2002b).

Educating about religion refers to the religious studies approach. Instead of being taught from the inside, religion is taught from a descriptive and historical perspective. This approach involves learning about the beliefs, values and practices of a religion, but also seeks to understand the ways in which these may influence the behaviour of individuals and how religion shapes communities.

Educating from religion gives pupils the opportunity to consider different responses to major religious and moral issues, so that they may develop their own views in a reflective way. This
approach puts the experience of the pupils at the centre of the teaching. The question is to what extent, and in what ways, children and young people can gain educational benefit from the study of religion. The principal objective of this kind of RE is sometimes stated as making a contribution to pupils' moral and spiritual development or as helping pupils to develop their own point of view on matters relating to religion and values. Hull highlights the strengths of this third approach:

... in speaking of the benefits which young people and society may derive from the study of religion, one is moving away from the domestic concerns of the religious communities, and the internal questions about the best way to study religion, into the wider issues with which government and the community at large are rightly concerned. (Hull 2002, 109)

The implications for citizenship education here are obvious.

The second and third of these approaches are often integrated, as in Michael Grimmett's approach to the subject, combining 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion (Grimmett 1987) or Robert Jackson's interpretive approach, in which understanding, knowledge, reflection and constructive criticism are regarded as essential elements of an integrated learning process (Jackson 1997, 2004).

**Emerging Trends in Religious Education in Europe**

Peter Schreiner discerns a trend towards unity in the development of RE practice in Europe, despite some different theoretical perspectives, with an increased attention to active learning and to the development of pupils' personal views. Schreiner also detects a new understanding of the relationship between religion and culture. Both are seen as dynamically interwoven areas and every definition has no more than a provisional status (Schreiner 2002a). This is a something of a generalisation, although it is true of developments in northern European countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries and England, Wales and Scotland. However, the increase in conversation about the place of religion in schools, as facilitated by the Council of Europe project on intercultural education and religious diversity, and by a growing range of European research and development networks may lead to more consensus.4

**Religious Education as Citizenship Education**

Having examined the diverse and complex natures of both citizenship education and religious education in Europe, it is now possible to explore the possible relationship(s) that can exist between the two subjects. It is important to acknowledge the fears and concerns that are inherent for some educators in proposing this relationship.

The case of England and Wales highlighted some of these when a compulsory national curriculum for secondary citizenship education was introduced in 2001. Some feared that the 'new subject' was a direct secular threat to RE, whilst others saw a conflict between the aims of the two fields. These fears are based on very specific understandings of RE and citizenship education which need to be explored in each particular context (Jackson 2004). In the case of England, many have overcome the fears, and the subject teacher association for RE professionals in England (the Professional Council for Religious Education: PCiRE) has stated its intention to 'promote an open frontier between RE and citizenship' (PCiRE, 2001). One
indicator of this is the trend towards recruiting teachers to take responsibility for both curriculum areas (Blaylock 2003, 25).

With regard to this relationship in a wider European context, a variety of factors need to be considered in relation to approaches taken in individual countries. A discussion of some possible models for RE and citizenship education in Europe is set out below. It is by no means exhaustive.

Confessional and Non Confessional Approaches to Religious Education in Relation to Citizenship Education

Conservative confessional approaches to RE tend to present a view of citizenship that is on the ‘minimal’ end of McLaughlin’s citizenship spectrum. At the extreme, they could be seen to promote a single unified national, cultural and religious identity, which clearly raises ethical and political issues. However, liberal approaches to religious education within confessional contexts can contribute positively to ‘maximal’ forms of citizenship education that are concerned with issues of plurality and globalisation. For example, the contextual and dialogical approaches proposed by writers of a Christian Protestant background such as Heimbrock (2001), Schweitzer and Boschi (2004) and Streib (2001) from Germany or Bakker (2001) and Wardekker and Miedema (2001) from the Netherlands or the pluralistic approach from the German Catholic educator Hans Georg Ziebertz (2003), deal directly and deeply with issues of plurality at local and global levels.

As discussed, an important element of the citizenship debate concerns issues raised by social plurality, including issues of religious and cultural diversity. There has been an increase in discussion about citizenship education and issues of religious diversity and the contribution that the study of religions might make to our understanding of citizenship. Any such discussion must consider the aims of religious education. For example, in the Council of Europe project on bringing the dimension of religious diversity to intercultural education mentioned above, specialists in intercultural and civic education have found non-confessional forms of religious education (as found in England and Norway, for example) to be more compatible with the goals of a ‘maximal’ form of citizenship education than the more confessional approaches.

One ‘non-confessional’ pedagogy for religious education is the interpretive approach, associated with the University of Warwick in England (Jackson 1997, 2004, 2005; see also Chapters 1, 3 and 4 above). It is concerned with developing skills to engage with religious traditions, and with the diversity and complexity of religions in relation to concepts of culture, ethnicity and nationality. Careful consideration is given to the representation of religious traditions and students’ own perspectives are seen as an important part of the learning process. This approach encourages reflection, constructive criticism of the material studied (at a distance) and involvement in the interpretive process. Learning can begin at any point on the hermeneutic circle (e.g. an overview of key concepts, or the experiences of class members). There are also various non-confessional dialogical approaches which concentrate on pupil interaction in the classroom. Like the interpretive approach, these give agency to pupils; students are the starting points as well as the key resources and actors. Various forms of this approach have been used in Norway (Leganger-Krostad 2003, 169-90), Germany (e.g. Weisse 2003, 191-208) and England (Ipgrave 2003, 147-68) (see also Chapters 1 and 5 above). These interpretive and dialogical approaches view RE as making a valuable contribution to citizenship education. They are concerned with social and personal identity, with the exploration of values and develop skills that lead to an understanding of various aspects of plurality (local, global and national) in relation to the students’ own experiences.
Conclusion

Whilst we must not diminish the diverse nature of religious education and citizenship education across Europe (Kodelja and Bassler 2004), there do appear to be trends in each subject area, especially (as far as religious education is concerned) in Northern Europe. There is a move towards a more ‘maximal’ form of citizenship education, which takes greater account of social plurality. It is broad and inclusive; it encourages investigation and interpretation, and is much more about process than content. In parallel, religious education in some parts of Europe uses a family of approaches that encourage learning from religious diversity, while enabling the exploration of values and focusing on the lifeworld of the child. Inherent in such pedagogies is an understanding of religion and culture that takes account of recent empirical and theoretical work on plurality and pluralism as reflected, for example, in the work of Baumann (1996), Heimbrock et al (2001), Jackson (1997, 2004, 2005), Skeie (1995, 2003), Ziebertz (2003) and Østberg (2003).

Where these forms of religious education and citizenship education meet, there is potential for developing a close relationship between the two fields that enables a common contribution to values education. Interpretive and dialogical approaches to RE, for example, place students at the centre of the learning process, so that they may use the knowledge that they gain about different religious traditions to reflect upon and develop their own sense of identity in a way that acknowledges social plurality. Both the content and the skills promoted by these approaches to RE are directly relevant to a ‘maximal’ form of citizenship education in Europe.

References


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1 See Jackson (2003) for international contributions to the debate about citizenship, education and religious diversity. The book includes European contributions from Germany, the UK and Norway.

2 For more detailed information see http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/E.D.C/ (Accessed online, 20/7/04) and Naval et al. (2002, pp. 112f).

3 However over the last few years a serious discussion has started about the need for knowledge about religions in schools. Teachers have become increasingly aware that pupils do not understand history, art or even French without a basic knowledge of religion(s). Additionally Islam has an increasing influence on the French society. Following the publication of the Debray Report, initiatives are being developed to provide opportunities for teachers to include knowledge about religions in different subjects (Debray 2002; Jackson 2004, Chapter 10).

4 These include the Coordinating Group for Religious Education in Europe (CoGREE) (http://www.cogree.com/), the European Network for Religious Education through Contextual Approaches (ENRECA) (http://enreca.isert-network.com/docs/index.htm), the European Association for World Religions in Education (EAWRE) (http://www.eawre.org/) and the Institut Européen en Sciences des Religions (IESR), based in Paris and set up following the publication of the Debray Report (http://www.ephe.sorbonne.fr/IESR/accueil.htm).
Chapter 8

A Discussion of the Relationship between Intercultural Education, Religious Diversity and Religious Education

Ursula McKenna

Introduction
It is widely recognised that countries throughout the world are made up of communities characterised by cultural diversity. The challenge as Coulby et al (1997, 19) points out is how such countries ensure those of different faith communities and non-believers receive equal treatment. For some, schools and education have an important role to play in creating an environment where pupils from different faiths and the religiously non-aligned feel safe and secure. The aim is to help pupils develop in such a way that they are aware of different cultures and can engage critically with them. Examination of pupils’ own cultural background is integral to this. In recent years in European literature this part of the curriculum, aimed at helping young people to live in a democratic and multicultural global society, has often been termed ‘intercultural education’.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss existing literature (available in English and mainly from UK sources) on intercultural education from a British and European perspective. It would not be possible to discuss the whole range of literature on this topic in the space here. Rather, this chapter limits itself to literature which has a particular relevance to the relationship between intercultural education, religious diversity and religious education. It also includes a brief look at the curriculum forerunners to intercultural education; multicultural education and anti-racist education. It is not possible to cover these in depth so reference to literature by writers who have already done this is made. The paper then examines the absence, until recently, of the dimension of religious diversity from the literature on intercultural education and the neglect of religious education as a subject with potential to contribute to this area of the curriculum. It briefly outlines the reasons for growing interest in this area now. The relationship between intercultural education and associated terms such as human rights education and citizenship education is also outlined. Literature is referred to from those academics writing about education in general (Gundara 1997, 2000a, 2000b; Hapgood and Fennes 1997; Coulby et al 1997; May 1999; Gardner 2001), those more specifically concerned with religious education (Cush 1999; Jackson 1997, 2002, 2004), teacher educators (Nesbitt 2004, 2005 see Chapter 2 above) and writers with a European perspective (Wimberley 2003; Batelaan 2003). In addition, work by teacher-researchers (Ipgrave 2001, 2003; O'Grady see Chapter 3 above) is used to illustrate theoretical debates with practical examples from UK classrooms. The purpose is to explore the extent to which education and, in particular, religious education can contribute to a wider intercultural education.

Reflecting Diversity
That the curriculum must give regard to the diversity present in society can be traced to DES (1977, 41).

Our society is a multicultural and multiracial one, and the curriculum should reflect a sympathetic understanding of the different cultures and races that now make up our society (cited in Tomlinson and Craft 1995, 2).
This was also noted in The Swann Report (HMSO 1985) and Curriculum 2000 (DfEE/QCA 1999). For society to be cohesive, without culturally driven misunderstanding or conflict pupils must be prepared to live with diversity. Such education must go beyond helping pupils to understand that diversity or plurality exists and must also guide pupils’ development so they are better skilled at living and working effectively with others. Teaching young people to respect each other, and to prepare for a multicultural world, have been given various names. These include multicultural education, anti-racist education, religious education, human rights education, and intercultural education. The last of these has become the most common term currently used in Europe. There are however, issues of both content and pedagogy which relate to the incorporation of intercultural education into the curriculum.

Multicultural Education and Anti-Racist Education
Throughout the 1970s and 1980s it was through the concept of multicultural education that schools responded to diversity. Pupils were to be given opportunities to celebrate cultural differences. Through this it was thought they would become sensitive to and respectful of cultural diversity and of the idea of a multicultural society. In practical terms, as Cush (1999, 1) notes, this involved subjects like music and art recognising contributions from Africa and India and emphasising the contribution on non-western people to fields such as maths and science. Whilst there were innovative and positive developments in this area the approach was, however, subjected to criticism (see Jackson, Chapter 1 above). At times examples were found that oversimplified other cultures and in some instances perpetuated the worst kind of stereotypes. Short and Carrington (1999), using examples from religious practice, showed how multicultural education taught via minority faiths in school resulted in reinforcement of the view that minorities are alien, and did nothing to promote social harmony, tolerance or inclusive notions of national identity. Short and Carrington (1999) were led to conclude that teaching had to do more than supply the ethnic majority with information about the lifestyles and cultural achievements of ethnic minorities. Moreover, such an approach assumed that those belonging to the majority or dominant culture were themselves 'not ethnic' (Gundara 2000b, 24). A true understanding of multicultural education needed to include an awareness of pupils’ own opinions, attitudes and assumptions learned within a particular cultural setting. Multicultural education was also criticised by proponents of anti-racist education who felt more direct action was needed to address the underachievement of some groups of pupils, to challenge racism and to promote equity and social justice. Anti-racist education itself was not without criticism. In particular, it was accused of focusing too heavily on black issues - marginalising class, gender, and ethnicity differences within this group and completely ignoring the issue of culture (Gundara 2000a).

Summaries of the key aspects relating to the relative merits of both multicultural education and anti-racist education can be found in Cush (1999), Donald and Rattansi (1992), Leicester (1992) and Rex (1997) with the differences between the two approaches being outlined by Gardner (2001, 11-12). Whilst some writers may have seen the two approaches as incompatible (Troyka 1986) others tried to combine them. Hence, approaches were developed such as ‘anti-racist multicultural education’ or ‘new multiculturalism’ (Grinter 1985 cited in Pilkington 2003, 167), ‘critical multiculturalism’ (May 1999), ‘reflexive multiculturalism’ (Rattansi 1999), ‘critical anti-racism’ (Gilborn 1995 cited in Carrim and Soudien 1999, 153). These writers tried to draw attention to areas of overlap between multiculturalism and anti-racism. Hence, the critical anti-racism espoused by Gilborn (1995) dealt directly with the multiple expressions of ‘difference’ in identity. It addressed the criticism of Donald and Rattansi (1992) who claimed neither multicultural education nor anti-racist education engaged with the new ethnicities defined by Hall (1992) encompassing intersections of sexuality, ethnicity and class. Likewise,
critical multiculturalism, through combining multiculturalism with critical pedagogy, aimed to confront cultural essentialism, acknowledged difference and incorporated the power dimension of racism. Building upon this Rattansi (1999, 102) preferred the term 'reflexive' to that of 'critical' because he viewed the term 'critical' as placing limitations on how far individuals could become involved in debates and participate in change. In contrast, being 'reflexive' encouraged involvement in reform.

The ferocity of these debates throughout the 1970s and 1980s contributed to the marginalisation of intercultural issues in educational policy in England and Wales during much of the period of Conservative Government (1979-1997). For example, the National Curriculum, as Gardner (2001, 19) points out, rejected the term 'multicultural' in preference for 'Education for All'. There were specific instructions to remove references to multicultural education from the National Curriculum (Graham 1993) (cited in Tomlinson and Craft 1995, 5). In Curriculum 2000 (DfEE/QCA 1999a) the terms 'multicultural' and 'anti-racist' were not used. The term inclusion was preferred. This had three principles, one of which was the need for the curriculum to respond to pupils' diverse learning needs. Specific reference was made to the need to ensure that all pupils, including pupils from all social and cultural backgrounds and pupils of different ethnic groups, were able to achieve. The emphasis was less on learning about each other and more about using curriculum reform to raise standards (Tomlinson and Craft 1994, 4).

**Intercultural Education**

More recently the term intercultural education is being used to refer to pluralistic initiatives in relation to education. There are some writers who use the terms multicultural education and intercultural education interchangeably (Figueroa 1998, 122; Nesbitt 2004). Others see the boundaries as blurred, the only difference noted being that the former tends to be used in North America (except Quebec) and Great Britain and the latter in Europe (Batelaan 1983; Cushman 1998). However, according to van Driel (2004, 3) a distinction can be made between the two, with intercultural education having a much wider scope than either multicultural or anti-racist education. Multicultural education often implies teaching minority individuals about their own culture or the majority learning about other cultures. Intercultural education, in contrast, implies interaction with others and, as a result, requires the learning of interactive and co-operative skills. Intercultural education also includes a global dimension and the need to know and understand the world as a unitary interconnected place.

Although definitions of intercultural education may overlap with multicultural education the two can be distinguished from each other. The literature would seem to suggest a much greater pedagogical aspect to intercultural education. For example, intercultural education goes beyond the belief that gaining knowledge about difference will, on its own, foster positive attitudes. As Grant has shown, with examples from Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland:

...it is an illusion to expect that 'getting to know' other peoples will guarantee that all will be well. Prejudice can be aggravated by ignorance but knowledge can also be fragile, knowing can be open to distortion (1997, 188).

For Wimberley (2003, 205) intercultural education is about equipping individuals with the competences and attitudes needed in a society that is multicultural. It should enable individuals to engage with others from different backgrounds and so to enrich each other through a critical empathy. Intercultural education is not just learning about and celebrating diversity but about learning how to live together and illuminating one's own identity. According to many writers
(Hapgood and Fennes 1997, 2; Cushner 1998; Ricco 2001, 132-33) it has a methodological component. For Ricco, intercultural education

...considers the world as a community of people rather than as an association of countries... Intercultural education opens people up to each other and sees diversity as an opportunity to think again of one's own cultural identity. Intercultural education's aim is to give knowledge and understanding of its own and other cultures, to elaborate values that respect the rights of everybody and to favour methodological capabilities needed to support interaction (2001, 132-33).

In many ways what is being described is very similar to the aims of some forms of religious education. The interpretive approach of Jackson (1997) stresses the importance of knowledge and understanding about religion combined with reflection and constructive criticism. Likewise the approach of Grimmett (1987) combines 'learning about' the beliefs and practices of a religion and the way they influence individuals and communities with 'learning from' religion where pupils develop their own views in response to religious issues. In both approaches the learning process and pupils own experiences are central.

According to Ricco (2001), Gundara (2000b) and Nesbitt (2004) intercultural education should not be seen as a separate subject but as part of the whole educational process. It should be integrated into all subjects and should involve the whole school environment. If it is to avoid the criticisms levelled at earlier multicultural initiatives it must not be a bolt-on extra to the existing curriculum. It must be viewed as an ongoing part of the process of education. Viewing it as an ongoing process means recognising that its goal may never be fully attained. This recognises that when prejudice or discrimination against one group is reduced it may become directed at another group or take different forms. Schools and educators need to be alert to this.

**Importance of Culture**

In any discussion of multicultural, anti-racist or intercultural education key areas would appear to be definitions of culture, of identity formation along with the relationship between race, ethnicity, gender, class and religious belief. Understanding of these terms is judged by Nesbitt (see Chapter 2 above) and Clay and George (2000) to be part and parcel of intercultural education. There is no space here to discuss all of these terms. Cush (1999, 5-7), Pilkington (2003) and Jackson (2004) discuss the terms race, ethnicity and nationality. Ethnicity is also explored by Rattansi (1992, 258), Gundara (2000b) and Parekh (2000). These writers view such terms as social constructs and hold that they need to apply equally to all individuals and groups in society. The diversity that exists within the majority group itself must not be overlooked.

The term 'culture' is central to any understanding of intercultural education so it is briefly explored. Jackson discusses the debate about culture in relation to studies of religious diversity (1997). Examination of culture is particularly important because of the increase in 'new racism' (Barker 1981 cited in Short and Carrington 1999, 172) or 'cultural racism' (Modood 1992 cited in Pilkington 2003, 167). It was the emergence of Islamophobia that prompted Modood to emphasise the importance of 'cultural racism' as well as 'colour racism'. Rather than a racism based on biologically factors new racism/cultural racism views cultural difference as a threat to national identity and unity. A variety of cultures and religions are seen as a threat to the dominant way of life. Within this context Jackson and Steele write of the need to consider debates about identity and belonging in relation to the nation state, and also in relation to global and more local issues (see Chapter 7 above). These are related in a variety of ways, but
especially so in multicultural societies where some citizens have transnational links with other family members or co-religionists (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993, Østberg 2003).

The problems associated with multicultural and anti-racist initiatives, it has been claimed (Donald and Rattansi 1992, 38-41), have arisen because of their failure to grasp the issue of culture and to understand that teaching about other cultures cannot consist only of work on festivals, religions, worldviews and lifestyles. The shape and character of cultural formations is too complex to be treated in this way. Taylor (1997, 59) stresses the need to understand different concepts of culture, and also that there are many layers of culture, that these layers overlap, and that culture is permanently changing. Increasing empirical work on plurality and pluralism with children and classrooms has highlighted the ways in which culture and identity formation are evolving (Jackson and Nesbitt 1993, 75; Baumann 1996; Jackson 1997, 2004; Skele 1995, 2002; Østberg 2003). Cush (1999, 5) claims an individual does not so much belong to a culture, but engages with a number of cultural resources. She cites research evidence from Jackson (1997) who found children not caught between two cultures but rather, using a term borrowed from Ballard (1994), as 'skilled cultural navigators' (cited in Cush 1999, 5).

Many writers, whilst acknowledging that society has always been diverse, point to the increasing cultural plurality and diversity that has arisen in the last half century (Skele 1995; Pilkington 2003; van Driel 2004, 3; Nesbitt 2004, 145; Jackson and Steele see Chapter 4 above). This plurality expresses itself not only within society generally but within individuals who may choose to draw upon a range of possibilities when describing their identity. Jackson (2004) refers to this diversity as both 'traditional' and 'modern'. The former results from migration of peoples, while the latter involves the choices open to the individual as a result of improved global communication. Whilst acknowledging this fluidity it is also wise to bear in mind the words of McLennan in a review of The Parekh Report:

Whilst Parekh (2000) accepts that every culture has dynamic and sometimes ambiguous elements, since its 'dominant' and 'emergent' aspects variously coalesce and separate, he emphasises that not everything changes in a culture all at once. Overall the impact on individuals of their cultural roots is very strong. It is not desirable, he claims, to imagine that we can jump, magpie-like, between very different cultural reference points. Cultures are not choices though we rightly choose to be loyal to our cultures in recognition of their profound shaping of what we are. He wants people to value their own distinctive cultures, but also to be open enough to understand and respect the value of other cultures (cited in McLennan 2001, 986-987).

Here it is being stressed that culture must not be allowed to become vague and fragmented to the point of being shallow.

Religious Diversity
Even as late as the 1990s reference to religious diversity as an aspect of multicultural education, antiracist education, intercultural education and culture more generally has been absent in much educational literature. This neglect of religion occurs at two levels. First religious diversity has been neglected as an aspect of cultural diversity and as a consequence is left out of discussion on multicultural or intercultural education. Secondly religious education as a subject able to contribute to a curriculum addressing cultural diversity in school has been neglected. No mention is made of religious diversity in works by Cushner (1998), Hapgood and Fennes (1997), Coulby et al (1997) and Osler (1994). When focusing on educational activity
these texts limit themselves to subjects like history and language teaching. Likewise, antiracist literature primarily focused on the structures of inequality and discrimination. Religion rarely entered the debate. Taylor (1997) details how specific programmes undertaken by the Council of Europe often excluded religious education. History, language tuition, linguistic skill, school links and exchanges and teacher training were, however, covered (p59-60). In some instances where religion is indexed in publications this has been with reference to the different religious backgrounds of members of society with this being linked to historical discussions of patterns of immigration (Pilkington 2003).

That more writers and organisations are now addressing religious diversity as a dimension of intercultural understanding has come about especially as a result of the events of September 11th 2001. As Wimberley (2003, 201) states:

"Council of Europe policy since 9/11 has been to promote intercultural understanding in general and to address within this framework issues that arise in religion. They decided 'to promote a wide intercultural and inter-religious dialogue to permit our societies to find greater cohesion and reduce the risk of misunderstanding.'"

To this end the Council of Europe initiated a project on intercultural education and the challenge of religious diversity - looking at how schools can contribute to a process of integration which includes the promotion of inter-religious dialogue (Batelaan 2003, 2).

Religious diversity as an aspect of cultural diversity cannot be ignored. Religion is a major dimension of cultural diversity and hence as a consequence for intercultural education (Gundara 2000a; Bakker et al 2001; Batelaan 2003; Jackson 2004; Nesbitt 2004). Moreover, Gundara (2000a, 129) and Batelaan (2003, 3) claim that without an understanding of the religious factor there cannot be a full appreciation of values. The values held by many people are influenced by their religious beliefs. Likewise, the development of beliefs and values are at the centre of all religions. They too can be found at the heart of education itself.

Batelaan (2003, 10) advocates discussion about values across different religions and philosophies. Within a context of interdependency and pluralism the importance of the need for awareness of common basic values is stressed. By common basic values Batelaan is referring to relations between persons, between persons and culture, and between persons and nature (Gundara 2000a, 135). Respect for cultural diversity, he maintains, needs to be a common basic value. In schools these are not values to be imposed but to be negotiated with parents and pupils. In this way the concept of common basic values is not about consensus but about negotiation which can only take place through dialogue. Pupils need to learn the skills of conversing with others, being able to express their own views, respond to the views of others and respecting each others views even when they might disagree. As Puomatkka proposes, promoting genuinely democratic values in pluralistic contexts requires a sophisticated and rich vocabulary:

"The beginning of values education includes teaching a rich vocabulary of values and helping the child to gradually relate his own value cognition to value terms and in this way making him more conscious of his ability to recognise values and to state them in words. (Puomatkka 1990 cited in Batelaan and Gundara 1993, 73)"

In many countries dialogue about values will take place in a secular context. Gundara (1994) uses the term 'positive secularism' to describe the type of society needed to be able to achieve
this. This goes beyond the mere toleration of other groups and moves towards the notion of 'belongingness' of all groups in society and with the state having a role to protect the citizenship rights of all (cited in Coulby et al. 1997, 20). Batelaan and Gundara (1993, 62) and Gundara (2000b, 154) expand on this concept of positive secularism. They view it as the necessary legal framework to nurture equality for all citizens at the public level and safeguard the sacred at the private level. This is not, however, straightforward. In the view of Batelaan and Gundara (1993, 67), the division between public and private domains, with education seen as part of the public domain and religion as part of private space, is seen as the basis of the secular state. This division between public and private itself is problematic in a multicultural society; it is relative to different histories of civil religion and is open to negotiation (Jackson 2004 Chapters 3 and 10). Moreover, as Gundara (2000b, 152) points out whilst in Great Britain the state is largely secular a 1992 DES white paper (Choice and Diversity) emphasised that regard should be paid to the nation's Christian heritage and traditions in both religious education and Collective Worship (circular 1/94). In this way the Christian faith is represented as the religion of the state and school. Children of other faiths either have to worship or withdraw. As well as being divisive, the privileging of Christianity in this way, Gundara concludes, raises issues for the multi-faith nature of society in Great Britain and secular nation states (2000b, 152).

Human Rights Education
According to Gundara (2000a, 134) the way to build bridges of understanding between and among people of various cultures and religions will require an increased appreciation of human rights and the basis for these. There is a need for shared values and generally accepted principles as a grounding. It is dialogue within a democratic framework that can lead to the discovery of such shared values. Likewise the Parekh Report (Runnymede Trust 2000, cited in Olsson 2004, 184) outlined six principles, one of which was that, while respect for deep moral differences is important, every society needs a broadly shared body of values, including human rights and ethical norms, which respect human dignity. According to Parekh, human rights principles provide a sound framework for handling differences and a body of values around which society can unite.

Gundara (2000b, 219) holds that human rights can be the interfacing edge of religion and culture in any society, in the search for an articulation of social values. The notion of human dignity, out of which broadly accepted human rights standards have evolved as law, can be an important consideration which allows different religious positions to be put on the educational agenda. This is important because, as Grant (1997) maintains, human rights values are international values. They are valuable since local, national and exclusive religious or secular formulations of values are inadequate to considerations of global responsibility and intercultural understanding.

In this way Gearon (2002, cited in Jackson 2002, 21) looks at wider aspects of religious education and human rights. He argues for a heightened awareness and practical implementation of human rights education within the subject. This involves not only examining the positive contributions of religious people to human rights, but also the role of religious traditions and religious people in denial of human rights, especially in the repression of women and indigenous peoples. A similar point is made by Batelaan (2003) who agrees with Gundara that principles held by religious groups when in the public domain are subordinate to human rights legislation.
The theoretical underpinning of intercultural education with a human rights foundation is one way forward. If the aim is for a society with a social and cultural cohesion then education for citizenship, it has been recognised, also has a contribution to make.

**Citizenship Education**

According to the Council of Europe (2003, 2) education for citizenship is a factor for social cohesion, mutual understanding, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. In the UK the citizenship curriculum for secondary school pupils (DfEE/QCA 1999b) requires ‘knowledge and understanding of the diversity of national, regional and ethnic identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding’. Non-statutory advice for primary schools ‘encourages children to appreciate the range of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the UK’ (DfEE/QCA 1999c). Jackson and Steele (see Chapter 7 above) provide an overview of and explore different conceptions of such citizenship education. The introduction of citizenship education into the curriculum, they point out, has placed on all schools a need to explore with pupils the multi-religious and multi-ethnic nature of British society. In this way the subject citizenship education (CE) is inclusive of human rights education, civic education, peace education, global education and intercultural education.

However, the model of citizenship found in the Crick Report (QCA 1998), and upon which the English curriculum subject ‘citizenship education’ is based, has been criticised. This model draws upon the conception of citizenship developed by T H Marshall (1997). Marshall identifies 3 elements to citizenship - civic, political and social. The Crick Report modified the first by placing greater stress on reciprocity between rights and duties, and endorsed the second and third (cited in Olssen 2004, 180). The Report also focused on concepts such as ‘national identity’ and ‘common citizenship’ which, in the context of ‘new racism’ and ‘cultural racism’ (see above), show a limited approach to cultural diversity in the context of multicultural societies. It is when culture is viewed as unitary and static that differences become a threat to cohesion. This criticism has been highlighted by many writers and their work is examined by Olssen (2004). To make all peoples irrespective of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, race, class or culture adhere to the same norms or standards of citizenship, is to fail to respect each particular group’s own distinctive cultural values, attitudes and practices. Hence, Osler (2000), Osler and Starkey (2001) and Pearce and Spence (1999) argue that the Crick report fails to respect the ‘politics of difference’ and thus encourages an overly consensualist model of society (cited in Olssen 2004, 182). Moreover, as Modood and Webner (1997:20) point out, the notion of citizenship being espoused by some Muslims is an ideal of equality which is not just based on:

...the right to assimilate to the majority/dominant culture in the public sphere...and toleration of difference in the private sphere

but also includes:

the right to have one's difference ...recognised and supported in public and private spheres (cited in Plinkington 2003, 259).

Despite such criticisms of the model of citizenship advocated in the Crick report, Olssen (2004) does acknowledge the contribution that the report makes in terms of pedagogical and educational designs (civic participation, social and moral responsibility, political literacy). These areas are perhaps most important to schools, teachers and pupils.
The Contribution of Religious Education

If human rights education and citizenship education can incorporate aspects of religious diversity, then the question might be raised, as it is by Larsen and Plesner, as to whether human rights or civic education would be better at achieving the aims of intercultural education. They advise caution with regard to religious education, especially regarding the issue of the representation of religion in the classroom. Questions they ask include: Should religious education only focus on majority religions and traditions? What about minority religions? What beliefs should be explored? The representation of religion, they claim, gives a message on what is valued and hence must be carefully considered in order not to have an exclusive effect (2002, 9). Similarly they claim that with human rights education a solid basis for freedom of religion or belief can be built but with religious education in school there is always a danger of focusing too much on the particular identities of the pupils and hence on what separates instead of what unites human beings (Larsen and Plesner 2002, 12).

These issues are especially important when we consider that there are those who still query whether religious education itself should be the task of the school. Indeed, across Europe there are differences, not just in the type of religious education to be found in schools but also as to its presence in the curriculum at all. It is this inconsistency which Cush (1999, 7) identifies as the main cause of religious education's limited contribution to intercultural education. In contrast, other authorities point out that, despite differences across and within countries, religious education's presence in many school systems in Europe offers opportunities for various contributions to intercultural education (Jackson and Steele see Chapter 7 above; Kodelja and Basler 2004).

That religious education has much to offer intercultural education is now also recognised by recent writers on intercultural education. For Batelaan (2003, 3), if a goal of intercultural education is 'learning to live together' then religion cannot be ignored. It is difficult to learn to live together, he argues, if issues of importance, relating to the values that groups and individuals embrace are ignored. There is a need for subjects where values can be discussed. Religious education as understood in state education in England and Norway, for example, covers the values held both in religious and non-religious belief systems.

One framework for an intercultural education that incorporates religious diversity and addresses the modernity/postmodernity debate makes use of the concepts plurality and pluralism (Skeie 1995). Through exploring religious and cultural plurality students can be enabled to form their own views on pluralism (Jackson 2002, 21-22). Indeed, religious education's potential contribution to plurality is not a recent development. Cush (1999, 8) cites evidence from Leicester (1989) and Bigger (1995) of its early contribution to multicultural education. Religious education syllabuses in England and Wales, she adds, have long taken seriously the plurality of faiths and have been concerned with attitude formation (SCAA 1994). In addition Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) were according to Tomlinson and Craft 'one of the most significant innovations of the Educational Reform Act for cultural diversity'(1995, 7). However, these early approaches did not take on board Skeie's distinction between 'traditional' and 'modern' or 'postmodern' plurality.

Within the classroom religious education has also been found to be ideally suited to dealing with diversity and difference. Research from Verma, et al (1992) (cited in Pumfrey and Verma 1993, 67) found religious education as the subject where pupils were most likely to learn about each other's cultures and to discuss matters such as building friendships and countering prejudice. More importantly, whilst religious education is an important factor in helping children
to become aware of the culture of other people, it also expects pupils to reflect critically on their own beliefs and values in light of what they learn about religion and this includes thinking about their own identity and culture (eg Jackson 1997).

Cush calls her approach to religious education ‘positive pluralism’ (Cush 1999). Using this approach it is possible for pupils to learn from the views and practices of others without necessarily losing their own religious and cultural roots. With positive pluralism Cush utilises the concept of ‘limited relativism’ from Leicester (1989) ‘accepting that whereas some things are relative to time, location and culture, there is the possibility of overarching shared values such as social justice, human rights, concern for the future and fighting racism which are however continuously negotiated and refined’ (Cush 1999, 11). This is compatible with the discussion on common basic values and religious diversity articulated by Gundara 2000 and Batelaan 2003 above.

Cush acknowledges a debt to Jackson’s interpretive approach to studying religious diversity as a means to intercultural education (Jackson 1997, 2004). Jackson points out how an interpretive approach acknowledges complexity and diversity within religious traditions and the personal element in religions, while acknowledging varying and competing truth claims. His model for studying religions flexibly requires a hermeneutical approach in which the learner moves between individual personal examples of religious life and representations of the wider religious tradition. Bridges are also built between the concepts and experiences of learners and those of adherents to religions. Central to the interpretive approach is the need for teachers to have expertise with a knowledge and understanding of debates about religion, culture and ethnicity. Teachers are required to set an example of tolerance and integrity as well as professionalism. Here the recent work of Nesbitt, which draws on insights from ethnography, is useful (see Chapter 2 above). A religious literacy that is informed by ethnographic insights takes us beyond both multiculturalism and antiracism. According to Nesbitt:

teachers who have tried their hand at being ethnographers can become more aware of their personal ‘lenses’, of their hunches and prejudice and they can become more sensitive to others’ differences of priority and perceptions. Reading the ethnography of others can also challenge any taken for granted assumptions (2005).

In the type of religious education advocated by these writers, not only are pupils developing themselves through an interpretive, pluralist, dialogic framework, but so too are teachers.

Intercultural Education and Religious Education Pedagogy
According to Gardner (2001, 29), whatever term is used to describe the curriculum (multicultural, anti-racist, intercultural, pluralist, inclusive), what really matters is the form and content of that curriculum and its associated pedagogy. To this end the problem is, as Wimberley (2003, 205) states, less about defining the goal than identifying effective strategies in the classroom, the school and in national education policies. An inclusive pedagogy which can be described in terms of teaching practices and structures, that acknowledge student differences and is responsive to that diversity is required. Pupils need to be able to explore their own identities in relation to cultural source material, including information about religion. As van Driel (2004) points out, for children to develop self esteem and to affirm their identities, intercultural education as a method of learning relies heavily on ‘learning to learn’ and should be highly student-focused. It is the processes that take place between and within groups that are central. How do students relate, how do they make decisions, how do they resolve conflicts? The idea is for pupils (and teachers) to become aware of the legitimacy of different
views, to develop respect for other people’s opinions and truths as well as to encourage critical thinking and open-mindedness. Dialogue must be facilitated, difference experienced and attitudes shifted. There is a need for the empowerment of all pupils Taylor (1997, 60).

A variety of pedagogical approaches useful to intercultural learning are outlined by Hapgood and Fennes (1993). These include learning that is dialogic, experiential-practical, theme orientated and person centred (not just for you and me but dealing with a specific theme or issue). The Council of Europe (2003) lists those key competences needed to reach the aim of intercultural education. For example, they include: argue in defence of one’s viewpoint; listen to, understand and interpret other people’s arguments; recognise and accept difference; make choices, consider alternatives; develop a critical approach to information. Many of these skills closely resemble methods used in interpretive and dialogical approaches to religious education. The approaches to intercultural learning given by Hapgood and Fennes (pp67-73) are very similar to Jackson on the interpretive approach (1997, 2004), to Cush’s work (1999) on positive pluralism, to O’Grady’s development of the interpretive approach (see Chapter 3 above) and to Ipgrave’s dialogical approach (Ipgrave 2001, 2003). Examples from classroom practice by these teacher-researchers bring religious education and intercultural education together in creative ways and illustrate how the primary and secondary religious education classroom can be a place for inter-religious and intercultural dialogue and interaction.

In these models of religious education pupils do not simply learn about world religions but are given opportunities to consider different responses to major religious and moral issues in a reflective way. Interpretive approaches place students at the centre of the learning process, so that they may use the knowledge that they gain about different religious traditions to reflect upon and develop their own sense of identity in a way that acknowledges social plurality.

Conclusion

It has been shown that a consideration of religious diversity cannot be left out of discussions on cultural diversity and intercultural understanding. Indeed, this position has now been adopted by many writers. Likewise, religious education cannot and should not be excluded from contributing to intercultural education within the school setting. Multicultural education, intercultural education and citizenship education are all overlapping areas of the curriculum. Religious education can contribute to intercultural education. Through its consideration of issues of culture and the formation of culture in the lives of pupils religious education links with multicultural education and intercultural education. Intercultural education requires an inclusive pedagogy, that is, a set of teaching and learning practices that acknowledge pupil differences and are responsive to that diversity. Emphasis needs to be placed on the skills of criticism, dialogue, communication and interpretation. In order to address this particular approaches of religious education are needed. Here dialogical and interpretive models have much to offer intercultural education in terms of both subject content and pedagogy. The pedagogy of these models includes the religious diversity of pupils themselves and uses methods which allow pupils to dialogue with each other, with religious and cultural material, with the teacher and with others outside their own classroom and locality. It is in the work of teacher-researchers such as O’Grady (2005) and Ipgrave (2001, 2003) that such models can be found in practice.

References


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