

Session Outline

Session leader: Abi Maguire
Co-presenter / accompanying teacher: N/A
<p>Session title: Teaching Controversial Issues in the Secondary RE Classroom <i>This session is open and applicable to all, but may be especially helpful for KS4/5 colleagues</i></p>
<p>Key questions addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a controversial issue? • What is the role of controversial issues in RE? • What are some of the challenges that RE teachers face when tackling controversial issues? • How can we effectively teach controversial issues in the classroom? • Where is research being done in this area, and where does more research need to be done?
<p>Main content and activities of session:</p> <p>This session provides the opportunity to explore some of the unique issues that surround teaching controversial or sensitive issues in the classroom. It is designed to be interactive and participatory in an environment that facilitates the exchange of knowledge and ideas between researchers and practitioners. The session takes the form of a carousel, where participants move systematically around a series of activities. Each activity will explore a different aspect of the session title.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will begin with a presentation of the background to the session, look at how controversy is defined and give a brief synopsis of the presenter’s ongoing research. Together, we will explore the necessity of more and continued research in this area. We will then move into the carousel activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ‘Should I share my opinion?’ and other challenges. <i>An activity centred on some of the issues affecting teachers when approaching controversial issues</i> 2. Case Studies: What should be done in these situations? <i>An opportunity to focus on how students can be better supported to confidently tackle controversial issues</i> 3. Is controversy a good thing? <i>An exploration of the role and nature of controversy in RE and how it can help or hinder our practice.</i> 4. Where does more work need to be done? <i>By looking at existing research and drawing on our own experience, we will be able to suggest areas for further research or development.</i> • A plenary will pull strands together from the carousel activity, signpost attendees as to where they might be able to access ongoing work and encourage post-conference involvement and engagement.
<p>Links to resources, publications, etc :</p> <p>These will provided throughout the session, but those who attend the session may wish to read the following in advance of attending:</p> <p>Oulton <i>et al.</i> (2004). Controversial issues – teachers’ attitudes and practices in the context of citizenship education. <i>Oxford Review of Education</i>, 30(4), 489-507.doi: 10.1080/0305498042000303973</p> <p>Suffolk SACRE (2017). <i>PREVENT: Teaching controversial issues toolkit</i>. Available at https://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/learning-teaching/religious-education/sacre/prevent</p> <p>Council of Europe (2015). <i>Living with controversy: Teaching controversial issues through education for democratic citizenship and human rights (EDC/HRE). Training pack for teachers</i>. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/16806948b6</p>