



Talking About the Non- Religious in RE

Being Mindful of Only using Negation

- Unhelpful terms: 'lack of religion' or 'rejecting religion'
- Makes 'religious' seem like the natural default
- Gives the impression being non-religious can only be understood in terms of what it is not

Not Just Using as a Critique of the Religious

- Not just using non-religious worldviews as critiques of religious ones
- Exploring the inherent meaning and value of non-religious worldviews in their own right
- Not assuming non-religious people are 'against religion'
- Recognise that worldviews do not have validity purely because they can be squeezed into a religious framework (usually a Protestant Christian framework as used in the World Religions Paradigm of teaching RE)

Not Just Using as a Critique of the Religious

- Acknowledge that a large majority of people living in the UK today describe themselves as non-religious. This is very relevant for RE studies.
- Understanding that the term 'non-religious' is itself problematic and may not be used by individuals themselves. Some might call themselves 'unaffiliated' or choose to use terms associated with religion e.g. Secular Jew, Cultural Christian

Recognising Nuance

- Not assuming the input of non-religious people in RE is a plot to undermine the subject- non-religious people want good RE too!
- Opposition of non-religious organisations towards religious ones on specific issues, for example: collective worship and faith admissions criteria, does not also indicate opposition to RE

Recognising Nuance

- The divide between religious and non-religious is messy and not as clear as people think
- Recognising that not all non-religious people are 'Humanists'
- Understanding that self-identification and acceptable alternative terms for 'non-religious' are constantly being discussed

Managing Assumptions

- Don't assume non-religious people can't understand RE or that non-religious people cannot teach RE- religious people teach the religions of other people all the time!
- Don't cultivate any assumptions in pupils that being non-religious is a bad thing or that non-religious people have no ethics or morals.

Managing Assumptions

- Don't assume non-religious people have no rituals, practices or ceremony, texts or well-thought through belief systems; there is plenty to study.
- Non-religious worldviews may embrace atheism, existentialism, utilitarianism, environmentalism and embrace 'spiritual beliefs'

What Next?

- Take a look at your RE Curriculum Map- how are you covering non-religious worldviews?
- Are any of the previously mentioned points of relevance to your setting?
- Do you need to engage in monitoring and evaluation to look deeper into this issue?

What Next?

- Would staff benefit from further subject knowledge?
- <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/teaching-about-humanism/what-is-and-isnt-a-worldview/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zkyn2sg/articles/zfs2kmn>
- <https://www.reonline.org.uk/research/research-of-the-month/but-are-you-religious-yourself/>
- <https://www.reonline.org.uk/resources/voices-from-humanist-worldview-traditions/>

What Next?

- Would staff benefit from CPD on approaching non-religious worldviews?
- October 2020 CPD on Teaching Non-Religious Worldviews:
<https://schools.warwickshire.gov.uk/education-resources/standing-advisory-council-religious-education-sacre/5> add link to recording here
- <https://vimeo.com/511112038>
- NATRE Non-religious subject knowledge webinars here:
<https://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/SubjectKnowledgeWebinars22-23/>

With Thanks

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