



# Using Research in Religious Education to Develop Reflective Practice

## Contents

### Section 1

Definitions of educational research and reflective practice

### Section 2

The scope of educational research in RE and related areas

### Section 3

Resources available to support reflective practice in RE ITE

### Section 4

Research and the wider professional values of RE teachers

### Summary

### Bibliography

Includes web-links and suggested resources

**A pack to support tutors new to RE initial teacher training**

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## About this pack

The focus of this pack is on educational research covering RE and related areas. The topic is explored from the perspective of tutors and mentors new to initial teacher education (ITE) in the primary and secondary sectors.<sup>1</sup>

## The aims of the pack are:

1. to introduce definitions of educational research
2. to outline a range of research in RE available to inform practice in ITE;
3. to highlight improved access to research materials and resources;
4. to encourage tutors and students, through the QTS standards, to use research as a teaching tool.

<sup>1</sup> The Style of the pack is 'conversational' - a podcast without pictures?

## Section I Definitions of educational research and reflective practice

Research is about asking questions, finding answers, reflecting on the answers and (sometimes) sharing the findings of your enquiries. Educational research (or research into education) is concerned primarily with asking questions about all aspects of teaching and learning, about curriculum and professional development, about schools and their daily lives, about education policy, - about teachers, pupils and students (or learners). For teachers (and their colleagues in other professional settings) 'reflective practice' is intended by national government agencies (e.g. the TDA) to convey an intent to evaluate personal practice and to 'improve' or 'modify..... practice where necessary' (DfES, 2006). For educational researchers in ITE, or elsewhere, their intentions might be different; reflective (or reflexive) practice is a contested and over-used term.

On reading that paragraph, several questions might have arisen for you as a reader; is this right, true, accurate? Do others say the same? Are the fields of enquiry (research and reflective practice) being defined accurately? What has it to do with me as a new tutor to ITE? These would be valid and not unusual responses, partly because the relevance of educational research has come into sharp focus during the last ten years, and also because (fortunately) people involved in careers in education within schools and in HE, rarely accept anything at face value. For example, in our readings of academic texts or of student assignments at undergraduate and postgraduate level, we expect to see close referencing to evidence that supports the claims of the writer. In schools, mentor partners rarely receive curriculum or ITE partnership guidance without (at least) asking questions about its provenance and use.

The validity of some of the definitions and claims in this pack can be checked through key sources. Three of these sources related to RE will inform much of the material that follows (Grimmitt 2000, Jackson 2004 and Stern 2006). They form a useful core to any ITE bibliography supporting research in RE.

In his book (2004), 'Rethinking Religious Education', Robert Jackson summarises the recent problems of educational research in this way:

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a debate in Britain about the quality and relevance of educational research.....The key underlying question in the debate was whether or not educational research offers information and ideas directly relevant to the improvement of practice in schools in order to raise the quality of learning and teaching. (Jackson, 2004, page 143)

In other words, Jackson summarises the highly politicised (and widely publicised) debates between Hargreaves, Tooley and Darby (1998) and Hillage (1998) as being driven by concerns about the value and intentions of educational research. A form of truth was being offered i.e. that to be good (valuable) educational research, it had to be based on workplace practice, pedagogical issues and the standards agenda (see also Hoult, 2005, chapter 11). This can be applied across the professions that often come into contact with educational research, not just to teaching and research in schools.

The Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) quoted in Stern (2006, page 2) and also citable from its website <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/> has indicated that 'research is original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding...' and that the actions of routine analysis and testing, or the development of teaching materials, are excluded from their definition for the purposes of the research and assessment exercise (RAE). Of course, this is not the only definition of research, and judgements passed to ascertain the future funding levels of higher education, are not the only purpose of research, but they are powerful motivators and influential drivers. Useful texts used on many research methods courses are listed in the bibliography (for example Brown and Dowling 1998, Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000, Elliott 1991, Lee 1993, Stake 1995, Woods 1996, Yin 1994).

Educational research as referred to in the sources used so far has been defined much more broadly than 'research in initial teacher education'. When we move on to consider educational research focused on ITE, two key website resources linked to the Teacher Development Agency, provide interesting background material. They also highlight recent government agency moves to encompass and control 'research-based' or 'reflective' (not necessarily to be used interchangeably) practice within their own plans and financial resources.

The Teacher Training Resource Bank gives us another clue to the definition and purposes of educational research, and to some of its perceived weaknesses; the website <http://www.ttrb.ac.uk/> says ('About us' page) that it aims to:

- make the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) professional knowledge base more easily accessible
- reference effective practices in all subject areas and across phases
- increase the quality and range of ITE resources available
- raise the status of ITE research and knowledge

- promote and effect change by supporting tested knowledge transfer and adoption strategies
- provide a personalised support service for teacher educators and those training to teach.

These aims imply several things, principally that educational research focusing on ITE has been in some way deficient, and that ITE research and practice are closely linked. They also indicate difficulties in the dissemination of educational research, and the speed at which website material is expected to be accessed. I will return to the changing nature of educational research through on-line activity in section 4 of this pack. The other site worth consulting is the TDA's <http://www.tda.gov.uk/teachers/> where case studies alert teachers to the benefits of continuing professional development (CPD) based on research and further professional qualifications (see also Hoult 2005, Hanlon 2000, Rudge 2006a, and White 2000).

The establishment of educational research as being closely linked with the initial and continuing education of teachers has been seen by many commentators as a legacy of Lawrence Stenhouse (1975, 1978, 1985, 1988), expanded by colleagues such as Jean Rudduck (1995), and John Elliott (1991, 2001). However, this legacy was not intended to fit neatly into the 2006 model of educational research apparently designed to 'improve practice' against set curricula and standards. Stenhouse clearly identified research with democratic processes, with curriculum development, and with the liberation of the teacher from systems that (prophetically) he deemed as potentially damaging to the teachers' professional standing and self-worth.

In summary, educational research is an activity in which critical evaluation is a central concept. It can be empirical (practical or experiential) or non-empirical (theoretical or hypothetical), and use qualitative or quantitative methods – or both, and more. To be valuable (against any criteria - financial or educational) it has to ask questions of developments that are too often accepted as 'normal' - for example the normative developments that Grimitt (2000, Chapter 1) refers to in relation to RE curriculum development and pedagogies. While this is not the place to discuss the history of educational research, different methodologies and research practices, the bibliography can point you towards key sources when you are considering the uses of research in initial teacher education.

The next section deals with the scope of research related to RE in initial teacher education.

### **TASK 1 Discussion points for tutors new to initial teacher education or for teaching teams in ITE**

What are your previous experiences of contact with educational research – in your own schooling and/or in your professional posts? How confident are you in introducing key concepts and terms in educational research to your ITE students? Try Schwandt's (2001) 'Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry' as a source of definitions.

An idea to try with students: create a weblog or a wiki<sup>2</sup> definition space on the ITE intranet, or create a wall display area in a teaching room with the theme: educational research is.....and is not.....with student ideas and key quotes.

For example - Question: is school inspection a research process? Answer: no, although it is a form of evaluation (though not, some would argue, educational evaluation) and involves data gathering, the specific commissioning, government intent and the design of the process prevent it from being labelled 'research'. Moreover, the open critical analysis and discussion that are needed to make it educational research are missing both from the process, and from the reporting. However, an article analysing inspection reports (e.g. Watson 2001) is educational research. True, or false? Or both?

<sup>2</sup> A wiki is a place online where a group of people can create and edit text – useful for creating joint definitions for example. A weblog (blog) – is like a diary or journal with text and file – really good for sharing ideas and reflections on ITE practice (see Gillespie 2006, and Gillespie et al 2007).

## Section 2 The scope of educational research in RE and related areas

Both Robert Jackson (2004, pages 144-146,) and Julian Stern (2006, pages 3-5) deal with the question 'What is RE?' when describing research in the subject and its closely-related areas, and they both note the difficulties of definition. 'RE' as a subject only exists in schools and in teacher education settings; it is not part of (for example) undergraduate choices in Universities unless it is within an education studies programme, and the on/off relationships between Religious Education, Religious Studies and Theology (Cush, 1999) present any researcher with an immediate challenge. This challenge is one of scope.

At this point, before we get lost in the possibilities, three key questions arise for me: how can using research in RE in initial teacher education help to develop this reflective practice amongst teachers? What do they need to know? Where should the focus be within this wealth of material? There is published research focused directly on the initial (and continuing) teacher education process in RE (Bell 1999, Copley 1997, Mead 1996 and 1998, Hanlon 2000, Revell 2005, Rudge 2000, Rudge and Smith 2005, Sikes and Everington 2001, Stern 2000, 2001a, 2001b, Watson 1998 and 2003a) and they tell us much about what it means to train in, and to teach, this subject. Some also tell us how many teachers make the transition from reflective practitioner to active researcher. Tracking the development of authors' publications (e.g. Ipgrave, Mead, or Watson) can give us clues to this transition. However, this section of the pack is concerned more with the substance of RE – its aims, pedagogies and history, much of which appears in recommended reading lists for students.

Starting a bibliographical trail for ITE students on research in 'RE' can lead to: RE as described by agreed syllabuses, examination courses agreed and validated by exam Boards, RE/RS in HE, the 'faith schools' debate, citizenship, 'smsc' development, faith development, attitudes to religion(s), and collective worship. Jackson comments (page 145) on how this was neatly illustrated in Francis and Kay's (1996) book 'Research in RE'. Julian Stern's definition of RE for the purposes of his book (2006), (reporting on the proceedings and outcomes of a series of research seminars funded by the Westhill Trustees) is a fairly standard one: a non-confessional curriculum subject described in locally agreed syllabuses. Stern goes on to illustrate just how abnormal that view of 'RE' is beyond the confines of school settings in England and Wales. However:

RE by its very nature is inclusive. It includes pupils and their communities, it includes cultures and belief systems from around the world and from all of human history, it includes the non-religious and the anti-religious, as well as those passionate about their

religion...As this involves search in RE, it can be called 'RE:search'. Pupils can be researchers, teachers can be researchers and all can be in conversation with people who have 'research' in their job titles....

(Stern, 2006, page 4) <sup>3</sup>

Those with research 'in their job titles' have often been instrumental in establishing the scope of research in RE, and of putting RE on the educational research map, usually in partnership with teachers in classrooms. Michael Grimmitt has focused on the teaching of RE (pedagogies) for much of his career, and his publications (1973-2000) are influential in ITE settings. His book on pedagogies in RE (2000) is research based, and it refers to 'case studies'. It is a collection of contributed and edited essays on different curriculum development projects in the RE field. They cover over thirty years of the subject's history, introduce other curriculum innovators and researchers (Alan Brown, David Hay, John Rudge, John Hull, Trevor Cooling, Andrew Wright, and Clive and Jane Erricker), all of whom have had other influential roles in the history of the subject. The bibliographies for each chapter provide another source of inspirations for teachers, tutors and students in ITE.

Robert Jackson also contributed a chapter to the Grimmitt collection, in which he focuses on The Warwick Religious Education Project and its ethnographic studies of religion(s). He also introduces Julia Iprgrave's work on dialogic RE (see also Iprgrave 2001). I am singling this chapter out, partly because of what it tells us about research and its relationship with RE (funding issues, relationships with faith communities, research methods) and also what it describes about the nature of the subject. A key passage could be a useful text for discussion with students in ITE:

There needs to be an approach to teaching that encourages reflection and constructive criticism. Clearly, the more the teacher is aware of the religious and ideological backgrounds of students, the more sensitive and focused the teaching can be..... (Jackson, in Grimmitt 2000, page 135)

In Jackson's later text (2004) in the chapter dealing exclusively with the relevance of research to religious education (chapter 9), he returns to the scope of research in the subject, to the difference between empirical and non-empirical research as they relate to pupil and teacher education (pages 148-142), and to the benefits of inter-disciplinary discussions (page 152); research outside the usual scope of RE can be just as interesting to teachers as that which emerges from within it (Lansdown et al 1997, Sharp 2006). He also explores who should 'do' research in RE, emphasising the

<sup>3</sup> RE:search – coincidentally, was the name of the KHREC on-line Newsletter last produced in 2003. -- we might have to re-issue it and link it to RE-Net....

need for greater collaboration between Higher Education, funding agencies interested in RE, and schools (see also, Blaylock 2001). He has this to say about the principle – or as he sees it, a potential ‘credal statement’ – about ‘the teacher as researcher’:

Many excellent teachers do not want to be – and do not have the time to be – researchers. Teachers should have as part of their repertoire the capacity to read reports of research critically and some teachers have become competent researchers. (Jackson, 2004, page 153)

All three key texts used for this induction pack deal with the perceived deficiencies of research in RE, hinted at as problems for all educational research (see section 2). These include the usually accidental marginalisation of RE in wider educational research settings and forums (e.g. the British Educational Research Association and the Economic and Social Research Council); the lack of published and widely disseminated research and researchers to carry it out; competition between HE providers and research assessment exercise pressures; small research groups and ‘disciples’ of projects making inter-institutional activity unlikely (Grimmitt 2000, pages 21-22); and the stability of resources needed to encourage effective research (also noted in HEFCE 2006).

The authors of the three texts also record positive trends and future possibilities, like the growth of new interest in funded projects in religion and education, and greater collaboration between funders, teachers and HE providers. Each text also mentions the range of research that brings the subject ‘RE’ in touch with those interdisciplinary areas that Jackson commends – human rights education, citizenship education, science and religion debates, issues of inclusivity, and moral and values education (Grimmitt 2000, chapter 2, Jackson 2004, page 149, Stern 2000, page 1). Research in RE, empirical and non-empirical, draws on fields such as theology, psychology, philosophy, anthropology and sociology and it often overlooked by scholars beyond those interested in the subject itself. Those within it need to celebrate its successes, and to progress the dialogue with the other disciplines and with those who fund research.

Julian Stern (2006, Chapter 8) is probably the most positive of the three, seeing a future for research in RE if it is based on ‘sincerity’:

Sincerity in RE research has an impact on RE classrooms when those classrooms involve pupils and teachers working together as researchers, as in ethnographic, interpretive, constructivist and various other RE traditions. Classrooms aiming for ‘more than not lying’ will be learning communities, bound together in a rich dialogue of truths and human development. RE, a

subject itself rich in dialogue, truths and human development can lead the way to research-rich schooling. (page 110)

Stern draws the idea of sincerity in RE research from readings of authors such as Macmurray and Moustakas. My reading of Stern prompted memories of research in RE that might be counted as 'insincere', 'sincere but misguided' or 'lacking integrity' – or even, not-research. As this ITE induction pack is only intended to raise key issues, I am not about to label any particular research in this way without space for the kind of critical analysis and considered commentary that research and publication demands. However, there are possibilities of the misuse of educational research (in RE and elsewhere) and there are academic and professional dangers inherent in any critical reflection and analysis. Some of the tasks in this pack might encourage you to think about how we alert students to good/bad research, and to good/bad practice.

To summarise; the traditions of educational research, some of them linked to initial and continuing education, are well-established. Some of them are worlds away from what might appear to be pragmatic target-based and performance-linked reasons for engaging in educational research. During the last fifty years, educational researchers and writers have presented a rich collage, in words, videos, photographs and other media, of life in and around schools. Some of it is focused on the subject we are interested in – RE. Sometimes the research and the creation of this collage has been undertaken by teachers (or educators in other workplace settings), often action research, and sometimes by educational researchers 'doing it to' (as in some forms of evaluation) or 'with' (collaboratively or not) the teacher. Becoming part of this process and its traditions is, for some teachers, one of the highlights of their professional lives and it often emerges from an interest stimulated in ITE.

The next section is about some of the resources that are available to promote research and reflective practice in RE.

### **TASK 2 Activities for tutors to try with students in ITE**

Choose one of the key chapters from texts mentioned; read and design key questions to discuss with students to elicit responses related to the SKU and research/reflective practice elements of the ITE (and CPD) standards (see Rudge 2006a, DfES 2006). Start a group 'research in RE' bibliography e.g. on the training institution's intranet.

### Section 3 Resources available to support reflective practice in RE ITE

All three key texts mentioned in this pack point us towards projects, people, and publications offering opportunities to understand more about research in RE, and to help students to develop their reflective practice.

Projects can include Masters or doctoral programmes (taught, studied at distance or through research) that culminate in a dissertation or thesis, usually stored in University libraries. They can be funded projects or Fellowships often ending in a written report, as well as a public seminar. The results of these projects are sometimes difficult to access, but there are RE specific websites in addition to RE-Net that can help:

- Culham College Institute on <http://www.culham.ac.uk/> (with the Register of Research Theses in RE)
- Keswick Hall RE Centre website through <http://www.uea.ac.uk/edu/>
- Farmington Institute on <http://www.farmington.ac.uk/>
- RE-Online on <http://www.reonline.org.uk/>

Other sites (some are listed in the Bibliography) might not be RE specific, but they can be a source of inspiration to both teachers and tutors engaged in ITE: <http://escalate.ac.uk/>, <http://www.ttrb.ac.uk/>, <http://www.multiverse.ac.uk/>

People are the key to the development of research and the development of students. There are sometimes designated posts within Higher Education with an RE research-brief; however, recent anecdotal evidence suggests that they are a dwindling resource. Teachers with an interest in research sometimes 'sign up with' their local HE provider, or their former ITE base, but others choose to become associated with a particular institution because of the presence of a particular person, project or course. Michael Grimmitt (2000) notes a key problem with the tendencies of projects to create internal pressures that have sometimes impeded their impact on a wider scale:<sup>4</sup>

One reason is a tendency for projects to be insular, isolationist and intent on maintaining their independ-

<sup>4</sup> The topics that I identified in my own research were mainly to do with policy to practice issues – the curriculum and professional development of RE and its teachers. The identification of these issues (starting in 1995-96, Rudge 1995) affected the research focus of the, the Keswick Hall RE Centre at UEA whose staff and associates became particularly interested in research into the formation of policy and its translation into practice. The Making RE Work project is one example of this interest, and it was influential in the formation of the QCA non-statutory national framework for RE (QCA 2003). BJRE was in the process of becoming electronically available (on-line) through its new publishing house (Carfax) in 2004; Christian Education retains the copyright and editorial influence. On-line analysis has only recently been possible .

ence and distinctiveness from other research projects.....projects have resorted to extending their influence by developing their own networks of supporters and practitioners – *disciples* would not be too strong a word in some instances – through mounting in-service training courses, conferences and workshops, and, in the case of University researchers, attracting research students to undertake further work..... (Grimmitt 2000, page 21)

There are other people with an interest in RE research and the continuing professional development of teachers who offer financial resources to help – see for example, [http://www.culham.ac.uk/CS\\_stud/acct.html](http://www.culham.ac.uk/CS_stud/acct.html).

Publications focused on research in RE come in many forms – webpages (listed throughout this pack); research reports (for example, AREIAC 2002, Bell 1999, Gates 1993, Gay 2000, Napier 2004, QCA 2003b, Rudge 2001, Zamorski 2000); books (for example, Bastide 1999, Broadbent and Brown 2002, Gates 1996, Wright and Brandom 2000); and - this is what I will focus on next – key journals. There are others, but as a start to any bibliographical trail on research in RE, these two are essential – REsource and BJRE.

It should be noted that as a ‘fast reactor’, often using invited or lightly refereed articles, Resource: the Journal of the Professional Council for RE presents a national picture of RE in action. In the articles, letters and reviews in Resource, the editors reflect what the Council judges to be important to teachers in the classroom. As submission-to-text procedures are faster than the British Journal of Religious Education, (an internationally refereed academic journal), topical reports are often seen in Resource in the same year (or even in the same school term) as the event.

In summary, the resources that are available to new tutors, both for strengthening their own confidence and for helping students to develop reflective practice, are ‘out there’ and ‘in here’, in other words, in every person that takes teaching seriously. The problem for most people is making the time to find and express them. For teachers, finding the right resources to back their further professional development beyond ITE is complex, and relies on the help of those who can spot the opportunities.

The next section covers some ideas about how research and reflective practice contribute to students’ ITE, and to the professional development of new tutors.

### **TASK 3 Tutor preparation**

Visit and critically analyse key websites; identify potentially useful materials; design student assessment tasks in which research is a key element. Revisit (or visit) key historical texts that tell us something about the development of RE over the last 20 years. For example, compare John Burn and Colin Hart (1988) with the review of their publication by Duncan Raynor (1988); Burn and Hart made particular claims about what RE should be about, and what it was for; what is the nature of this publication? What kind of source is it? Is it based on research? Good research? Was it historically influential? For what reasons? (See also Thompson 2004 and the review by Gates, 2005.)

## Section 4 Research and the wider professional values of RE teachers

Why should a new tutor be interested in research? Well, at this stage in the pack (pod-cast without pictures) I hope the reasons are self-evident. However, it's worth reviewing a few key issues. While it is true that not all teachers want to be researchers, new tutors to HE often find new and unexpected roles - researcher, and preferably, published author. This places intense professional pressures on people who have just transferred from schools to HE (or who are fulfilling two roles at once), and they often ask – how do I cope with all this? And - why should I?

I have not forgotten that colleagues are working in a range of ITE contexts and settings, and so are their students; some of these pressures and considerations might not apply to you. However, as Lat Blaylock wrote:

So should this make a difference to the classroom teacher of RE? I think so. Well-focused research may show us what works best, demonstrate the value of what we do, or provide new impetus for RE. And it may challenge dying orthodoxies and alert us to surprising consequences. Speculative pure research may throw up new and inspiring lines of thought for religious educators, because you can't discover new oceans unless you lose sight of the shore. (Blaylock 2001, page 20)

If we need more evidence that reflective practice and the research that underpins it is essential in ITE, look no further than the report of the OFSTED conference (2005) highlighted on the RE-Net site. The full conference 'was addressed by Barbara Wintersgill HMI, who set out the key national weaknesses in RE and their implications for the quality of school-based training. It was suggested that any RE department in partnership with an ITT provider should strive to be outstanding'. Delegates were encouraged to read Ofsted's most recent reports on RE: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). Outstanding practice demands a theoretical and research-based pedagogy.

The standards (TTA 2003, TDA 2006 and DFES 2006) are also convincing sources in relation to the need for a commitment amongst teachers to renewable levels of interest and energy when it comes to staying ahead in terms of 'outstanding' practice – and I am not going to quote all of them, but to ask colleagues to look at them as I did with an eye for the 'reflective practice' clues. For example, (DFES 2006) the new draft standards make it clear that those students recommended for the award of QTS they should have 'a commitment to collaboration...with colleagues'. They should also reflect on and 'improve their practice, and take responsibility for identifying and meeting their profes-

sional development needs'. Those awarded QTS should 'have a constructively critical approach to innovation', and they should also understand 'how children develop and that the progress and well-being of learners are affected by a range of developmental, social, religious, ethic and cultural linguistic differences'.

Tutors and teaching teams might also like to ensure that there are assessment opportunities (assignments) in which students can demonstrate their working knowledge of research in RE. Many ITE institutions do this already. Preferably, this should include opportunities for some empirical research, not just a chance to show that they have read key texts. This is often the best way to encourage teachers to use research as a teaching tool; the student identifies an issue, defines it, makes an hypothesis, experiments and gathers data, and then formulates a conclusion identifying (for example) implications for teaching and learning. Topics might include: effective questioning in RE; affective planning; pupils' reactions to RE; how boys/girls learn in RE. The Farmington Institute website is a rich source of previous classroom- focused research by teachers, and ideas for further research.

I referred in a footnote at the beginning of this pack to a different presentational style almost demanded by websites. Writing for websites is different to writing for books and journals, and experimentation is important – something that tutors new to ITE in RE might like to try. Many ITE courses offer support to students through educational resource packages like 'Blackboard', and authorship for these is a good springboard writing for external sites and journals (see also Bowie, 2005). This pack has hardly been cutting edge in terms of presentation, (it could do with a few visual and moving images, and I hope the web-links will provide those) but the substance of the pack – research, RE and ITE, is on the edge. It is at the borders of initial teacher education when new staff and students are joining the profession, and are teaching in schools, that initiatives are created and research-based pedagogies forged.

Research in RE – according to the texts I have absorbed for this induction pack - is also on the edge of a new era. This includes necessary changes in relation to the way we use the electronic 'information highways', and the increasing use of web-based materials (in terms of data analysis and publications) in research. For some tutors and their students, this sometimes feels like 'information overload', and, anyway, some things will be slow to change. For educational research focused on ITE, the art of analysing (or reflecting) on human encounters in classrooms, and the process of teaching and learning they describe, are the stuff that research dreams are made of; 'docere est discere'<sup>5</sup>. To teach is to learn; to

<sup>5</sup> This Latin motto was the 'strapline' (before they were invented) of Westhill College, Birmingham.

engage in educational research is to learn, and to teach, about learning.

#### **TASK 4 Why bother with research? Reflective writing opportunities for tutors (and/or students)**

Read Elaine McCreery's paper on RE-Net – reflections on transition from teacher to tutor – perhaps you will feel inspired to write your own personal version of your journey to the role of new ITE tutor.

Return to a key RE publication (e.g. DfE Circular 1/94) to identify research opportunities still relevant (and under-researched) today.

Start a 'weblog' with students – identify moments in the teaching year where research in RE was a help/hindrance to reflective practice.

#### **Summary**

Using research to develop reflective practice depends on the tutor's confidence and convictions, and on the student's motivation. It also depends on external agencies and conditions to promote stability, depth and relevance. Using relevant research in ITE contexts demands high levels of energy and commitment from both tutors and students in identifying useful research, initiating new research – and, above all, maintaining a love of reading in order to think about teaching and learning.

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