2006

A longitudinal study of the personal and professional responses of recently assigned secondary Religious Education teachers to curriculum demands

Chris B. Hackett
University of Notre Dame Australia

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APPENDIX 1
Letter to Director of Catholic Education seeking permission to conduct research

30 March 1998

XX XXXXX XXXX
Director
Catholic Education Office of Western Australia

Dear XXXXX,

Currently, I am undertaking studies towards a doctorate at the University of Notre Dame Australia. My thesis focuses on the teaching practice and understandings of [recently assigned] RE teachers by providing a picture of how these teachers implement the draft RE Units. I wish to seek permission to conduct my research in Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Perth and the Dioceses of Bunbury and Geraldton.

The thesis research is a qualitative study drawing on survey, interview and observation techniques. The first part of this research consists of a survey. Its purpose is to obtain data from teachers who are in their second to sixth year of teaching experience in Religious Education. Recently, my supervisor, XXXXXXX and the Dean of the College of Education, XXXXXXX, both commented on the high standard that had been applied to the preparation of the survey. I have enclosed a copy of the survey for your perusal and comment. The survey is not an evaluation of the draft RE Units of Work.

From the survey a much smaller random sample of the total group will be selected and invited to participate in an interview and observation of their teaching in practice. As a consultant in this Office, I believe the rapport already established with schools and many teachers will assist in the gathering of valuable data.

The study is timely because little systematic research has been done in this area of RE curriculum implementation. The research explores how teachers access and use the resourcing provisions and teaching approach of the draft units of work.
The findings of this study could be a significant foundational database to RE curriculum writers in the preparation of future units and to religious educators responsible for the training and ongoing formation of RE teachers.

At a personal level, the study invites [recently assigned] secondary RE teachers to reflect upon their own RE teaching. This reflection can assist them to improve themselves both professionally and personally. Within schools, Principals and RE Coordinators may benefit from the findings which could provide insights into how they can support better their RE teachers, particularly those who are inexperienced or have little formal training.

Lastly, this study may be significant to a wider educational audience. As a study on the implementation and adoption of a curriculum innovation, the findings may be valuable to educators similarly involved in providing ‘practical, professional development plus good support documents that outline accessible resources’ (Interim Curriculum Council 1997, p.11). It may also be valuable to personnel responsible for training pre-service and in-service teachers in other curriculum areas.

I look forward to discussing this research proposal with you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Hackett
APPENDIX 2
Letter to Principals seeking permission to conduct research

Mr Chris Hackett
XXXXXXX
XXXXX
XXXX

April 28, 1998

XX
Principal
XXXXX Catholic College
PO Box
Suburb
WA Post Code

Dear XXXXXX

I am a doctoral student at the University of Notre Dame Australia undertaking research work into the teaching practice and understandings of [recently assigned] secondary RE teachers as they implement the draft secondary RE Units of Work.

I am seeking your permission to approach your school’s RE Coordinator and [recently assigned] RE teachers to participate in this study.

Initially, with the support of your Coordinator of RE, I wish to invite teachers who are in their second to sixth year of teaching experience in Religious Education to complete a survey.

I have enclosed a copy of this survey for your perusal. The survey is neither an assessment of a teacher’s competence in teaching RE nor an evaluation of the draft secondary RE Units of Work.

From the survey a much smaller random sample of participating [recently assigned] RE teachers will be selected and invited to participate in an interview and observation of their teaching in practice.

Involvement in this research is on a voluntary basis only. The study will maintain complete confidentiality about your school and responses from teachers.

The findings of this study could provide an important database for RE curriculum writers and for the training, support and ongoing formation of RE teachers. Principals and Coordinators of RE could benefit from the study as the findings could provide insights into how schools can support better their RE teachers.

Participation in the study could also provide opportunities for [recently assigned] secondary RE teachers to reflect critically upon their own RE teaching.
My supervisor is XXXXXX at the College of Education. She can be contacted by phone on XXXXXX. The Director of the CEOWA, XXXXXX, has approved my request to approach you in this matter.

If you or your Coordinator wishes to discuss my request further, I may be contacted by phone at work on XXXXXX or at home on XXXXXX. Alternatively, you can contact me by email on XXXXXX.

Thank you for reading this letter. I look forward to your assistance. Would you please complete the form below and place it into the return-addressed envelope enclosed. This form will need to reach me by **Friday, May 8**.

Yours sincerely

Chris Hackett

*Cut along here*

Please tick the appropriate box.

[ ] Yes, I approve your request to approach the school’s Coordinator of RE and [recently assigned] RE teachers about involvement in this research.

[ ] No, I do not wish the school to be involved in this research.

Signature:

Principal, X Catholic College
APPENDIX 3
Letter to RE Coordinators outlining procedure for completing surveys

Mr Chris Hackett
XXXXXXX,
XXXXXX
Home XXXXXXX
Work XXXXXXX
email: XXXXXXXXXXX

Date

Name XXXXXX
Coordinator of RE
School
Address
Suburb, Post Code

Dear XXXXXX,

Subsequent to our telephone conversation, I enclose the coded surveys for teachers to complete by **Wednesday, May 20**.

The purpose of this survey is to obtain data from teachers who are in their second to sixth year of teaching experience in Religious Education. *It is neither an assessment of their competence as RE teachers nor an evaluation of the draft RE Units of Work.*

The survey is an important part of my doctoral thesis on the understandings and teaching practice of [recently assigned] RE teachers. It is hoped that the findings from such research will assist religious educators responsible for providing the training and ongoing formation of present and future RE teachers.

The survey is divided into 5 sections:

- **Section 1:** Instructional resources
- **Section 2:** Teaching approach
- **Section 3:** Underlying principles
- **Section 4:** Professional experience
- **Section 5:** Demographic details.

A code reference is included to maintain the confidentiality of their responses. They are asked to supply only the day and month of their birth-dates. This birth-date code reference may be used to identify a much smaller random sample of the total group surveyed. This sample of teachers will be invited later to participate in an interview process. If a teacher in your school is selected for this, a request for an interview will be made through you. Their identity will remain anonymous until they choose to accept the request and contact me by mail, phone or email.
I estimate that the survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. When they have completed the survey please remind them to put into the envelope provided for them and hand on to you. Place these completed surveys into the large, return-addresses envelope and mail to me by **Wednesday, May 20.**

Again, thank you for your assistance and especially a ‘big’ thank you to your staff.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Hackett
APPENDIX 4
Introductory Letter about Survey to recently assigned RE teachers in Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Perth and the Dioceses of Bunbury and Geraldton, 1998

Mr Chris Hackett
XXXXXX, 
XXXXXX
Home XXXXXXX
Work XXXXXXX
email: XXXXXXXXXXX

Date
School
Address
Suburb, Post Code

Dear Participant,

The purpose of this survey is to obtain data from teachers who are in their second to sixth year of teaching experience in Religious Education. Specifically, the survey explores the understandings and practice of [recently assigned] RE teachers in implementing the draft RE Units of Work as part of their classroom teaching.

It is neither an assessment of your competence as RE teachers nor an evaluation of the draft RE Units of Work.

The survey is an important part of my doctoral thesis on the teaching practice of [recently assigned] RE teachers. It is hoped that the findings from such research will assist religious educators responsible for providing the training and ongoing formation of present and future RE teachers.

The survey is divided into 5 sections:
Section 1: Instructional resources
Section 2: Teaching approach
Section 3: Underlying principles
Section 4: Professional experience
Section 5: Demographic details.
A code reference is included to maintain the confidentiality of your responses. You are asked to supply only the day and month of your birth-date. This birth-date code reference may be used to identify a much smaller random sample of the total group surveyed. This sample will be invited later to participate in an interview process. If you are selected for this, a request for an interview will be made through your Coordinator of RE. Your identity will remain anonymous until you choose to accept the request and contact me by mail, phone or email.

I estimate that the survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. When you have completed the survey please place it into the stamped, self-addressed envelope and mail to me by Friday <to be decided>.

Thank you for agreeing to answer this survey.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Hackett
APPENDIX 5
A Survey on the Teaching Practice of recently assigned RE Teachers

Section 1  Instructional Resources

This Section has items that refer to the curriculum materials you use in your RE classes. Your responses will assist in describing how [recently assigned] RE teachers use their instructional resources.

Accessibility

For each statement, circle the category that best reflects your experience as a beginning RE teacher in using the Teacher’s Manuals and Student Books provided by the draft RE Units.
The numbers represent the following: 1 = strongly agree SA, 2 = agree A, 3 = uncertain U, 4 = disagree D and 5 = strongly disagree SD

As a beginning RE teacher, I tend to find…     SA  A  U  D  SD
1. RE Units are easy to follow. 1 2 3 4 5
2. RE Units are useful in my classroom teaching. 1 2 3 4 5
3. RE Units reduce lesson preparation time. 1 2 3 4 5
4. RE Units provide sufficient background material. 1 2 3 4 5

Frequency of Use

5. Rank consecutively from 1 most frequently used to 6 least frequently used these resources in response to this statement:

As a beginning RE teacher, I develop my lessons mostly around…

• Mastersheets [ ]
• Resources from the Coordinator of RE [ ]
• Resources I have created [ ]
• Student Books [ ]
• Texts cited in the RE Units [ ]
• Other please specify: _________________________________ [ ]
6. As a result of your experiences in teaching RE, what is the most important advice you would give [recently assigned] RE teachers about using the curriculum materials provided by the draft RE Units?

Section 2  Teaching Approach

This Section has items about the teaching approach you adopt in your RE classes. Your responses will assist in describing the teaching practice of [recently assigned] RE teachers.

Teaching process

For each statement, circle the category that best reflects your experience as a beginning RE teacher in using the teaching approach recommended by the draft RE Units.

The numbers represent the following: 1 = strongly agree SA , 2 = agree A , 3 = uncertain U , 4 = disagree D and 5 = strongly disagree SD

As a beginning RE teacher, I tend to find…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Presenting content as outcomes of learning useful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Following the sequence of objectives in the RE Units useful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Beginning with students’ experiences about a topic useful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. A process of sincere and patient dialogue with students useful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Linking students’ experiences with the Gospels difficult.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Including learning strategies suited to the faith stances of all students difficult.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Organising class liturgies difficult.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Journal work is easy to include as part of my teaching.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Formal assessments are easy to include as part of my teaching.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Rank consecutively from 1 most preferred to 6 least preferred these teaching methods in response to this statement:

As a beginning RE teacher, I prefer learning strategies that help…

- Describe and explain information about Catholic beliefs and practices. [ ]
- Reveal the deeper religious meanings behind Catholic beliefs and practices. [ ]
- Interpret significant human experiences in the light of the Gospels. [ ]
- Reinforce student understanding of Catholic beliefs and practices. [ ]
- Stimulate active participation and creativity within students. [ ]
- Other please specify: [ ]

17. As a result of your experiences in teaching RE, what is the most important advice you would give [recently assigned] RE teachers about applying the teaching approach of the draft RE Units as part of their classroom practice?

Section 3  Underlying Principles

This Section has items that refer to your understanding of the underlying principles in teaching RE. Your responses will assist in describing the understandings [recently assigned] RE teachers share about the underlying teaching principles in RE.

Religious dimension

For each statement, circle the category that best reflects your support as a beginning RE teacher for the religious dimension of your school.

The numbers represent the following: 1 = strongly agree  SA , 2 = agree  A , 3 = uncertain  U , 4 = disagree  D and 5 = strongly disagree  SD

As a beginning RE teacher, I want to assist in organising…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>School or class Masses.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation at school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>School retreats or RE seminar days.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Celebrations for key feast days or liturgical seasons at school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The inclusion of prayers at school assemblies or events.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Activities that raise awareness of the Church’s missionary work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching RE

For each statement, circle the category that best reflects your perceptions of teaching RE.
The numbers represent the following: 1 = strongly agree SA, 2 = agree A, 3 = uncertain U, 4 = disagree D and 5 = strongly disagree SD

As a beginning RE teacher, I tend to feel confident in…

24. Managing the demands made on my own faith stance.  1  2  3  4  5
25. Presenting Catholic beliefs and practices.  1  2  3  4  5
26. Relating students’ experiences to Catholic beliefs and practices.  1  2  3  4  5
27. Fostering an atmosphere of Christian love and respect.  1  2  3  4  5
28. Fostering positive relationships with my students.  1  2  3  4  5

29. Rank consecutively from 1 most important to 6 least important these aims of RE in response to this statement:

As a beginning RE teacher, I believe the aims of RE should encourage students to…

• Develop a closer relationship with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. [ ]
• Develop social justice and tolerance for others. [ ]
• Participate fully in formal prayers and liturgy. [ ]
• Relate the Gospel example of Jesus to their lives. [ ]
• Understand God’s intervention in human history. [ ]
• Other please specify: ________________________________ [ ]

30. Rank consecutively from 1 most emphasis to 6 least emphasis in teaching the content of RE in response to this statement:

As a beginning RE teacher, I believe the content of RE should emphasise…

• Actions for transforming society for the common good. [ ]
• Knowledge about Catholic beliefs and practices. [ ]
• Consequences of social issues and trends on human nature. [ ]
• How the Gospels relate to significant life experiences. [ ]
• What helps a person to reach full human potential. [ ]
• Other please specify: ________________________________ [ ]

31. As a result of your experiences in teaching RE, what is the most important aspect of the draft RE Units you would advise [recently assigned] RE teachers to regard as crucial for their students to learn?
Section 4  Professional experience

This Section has items that relate to your teaching experience in Religious Education. Your responses will assist in developing a picture of the professional background of [recently assigned] RE teachers.

Class contact time

32. How many classes of RE do you teach in each Year level?
   If no classes, then place a “0” within the brackets
   Year 8: [ ] classes
   Year 9: [ ] classes
   Year 10: [ ] classes
   Year 11: [ ] classes
   Year 12: [ ] classes

33. How many minutes of RE do your classes have, on average, over a 5-day teaching week?
   Fill in the bracket that applies to you to the nearest whole number
   [ ] minutes per week in lower secondary
   [ ] minutes per week in upper secondary

34. Which subject or learning area is your major teaching area?

35. Circle the number that best reflects your RE class contact time as a proportion of your teaching load.
   1. Less than 25% of my teaching load is in RE.
   2. Between 25% and 50% of my teaching load is in RE.
   3. Between 51% and 75% of my teaching load is in RE.
   4. More than 75% of my teaching load is in RE.

36. Circle the number that represents your years of teaching RE.
   1. I am in my second year of teaching RE.
   2. I am in my third year of teaching RE.
3. I am in my fourth year of teaching RE.
4. I am in my fifth year of teaching RE.
5. I am in my sixth year of teaching RE.

Professional background

37. State when you graduated, tertiary institutions attended and the degree or diploma titles conferred.

For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tertiary institution attended</th>
<th>Degree/Diploma Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>University of Western Australia</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>University of Notre Dame Australia</td>
<td>Graduate Diploma of Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tertiary institution attended</th>
<th>Degree/Diploma Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Studies in Religious Education

38. Have you completed a degree or diploma in Religious Education? Please circle the number

1. Yes 2. No

If yes, state graduating year, tertiary institution attended and degree or diploma title conferred.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tertiary institution attended</th>
<th>Degree/Diploma Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress towards Accreditation to Teach RE

To meet Accreditation to Teach RE requirements teachers need to complete a Study component of 3 tertiary units or its equivalent and an Inservice component.

39. Circle the number that represents your progress towards the Study component of Accreditation to Teach RE.

1. Not begun 2. In progress 3. Completed
40. Circle the number that represents your progress towards the **Inservice** component of Accreditation to Teach RE.
   1. Not begun   2. In progress   3. Completed

41. As a result of your experiences in teaching RE, what is the most important advice you would give [recently assigned] RE teachers about acquiring sufficient professional background to teach RE confidently in the classroom?

Section 5  Demographic details

*This Section has items that seek to obtain an overview of the demographic background of [recently assigned] RE teachers.*

**Personal background**

42. Please circle the number that represents whether you are a:
   1. Female lay teacher   4. Religious brother
   2. Male lay teacher   5. Religious sister
   3. Priest

43. Circle the number that represents your age range.
   1. 21–25 years   5. 41–45 years
   2. 26–30 years   6. 46–50 years
   3. 31–35 years   7. 51–55 years
   4. 36–40 years   8. > 56 years
**Birth-date code**

44. Please complete the code reference by writing the day and month of your birthday in the space provided. For example, 3rd November:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>MONTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Your code reference:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>MONTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XXX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Would you place the survey into the self-addressed envelope and post to me by Friday, <to be decided>.
APPENDIX 6
Initial Criteria for Selection of the Sample Group

Tables A6.1 to A6.3 outline how the sample subgroups of low, mean and high were selected. Likert scale items in the three categories of instructional resources, teaching approach and underlying approaches were allocated scores from one to five. The lower score of one represents responses of ‘Strongly Agree’ and the higher score of five represents responses of ‘Strongly Disagree’. Mean scores represent typical responses (the average of all scored responses) on an item. Each column of lower, mean and higher scores was totalled to represent the total scores of each subgroup in each category.

Table A6.1  Instructional Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert Scale Items in the Survey</th>
<th>Sample Subgroups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants’ total score on Likert scale items that have the lowest total score in this category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items 1-4 As a beginning RE teacher, I tend to find…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. RE Units are easy to follow.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. RE Units are useful in my classroom teaching.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. RE Units reduce lesson preparation time.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. RE Units provide sufficient background material.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Subgroup Scores | 4.0  | 8.5  | 20.0  |

Note: Scoring Range: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Uncertain, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree. Scores are given to the nearest first decimal place.
### Table A6.2  Teaching Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert Scale Items in the Survey</th>
<th>Sample Subgroups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Items 7-15**  
*As a beginning RE teacher, I tend to find...* | **Lower Scores**  
Participants’ total score on Likert scale items that have the lowest total score in this category. | **Mean Scores**  
Participants’ total score on Likert scale items that match the mean total score in this category. | **Higher Scores**  
Participants’ total score on Likert scale items that have the highest total score in this category. |
| 7. Presenting content as outcomes of learning useful. | 1.0 | 2.5 | 5.0 |
| 8. Following the sequence of objectives in the RE Units useful. | 1.0 | 2.3 | 5.0 |
| 9. Beginning with students’ experiences about a topic useful. | 1.0 | 1.6 | 5.0 |
| 10. A process of sincere and patient dialogue with students useful. | 1.0 | 1.8 | 5.0 |
| 11. Linking students’ experiences with the Gospels difficult.* | 1.0 | 2.3 | 5.0 |
| 12. Including learning strategies suited to the faith stances of all students difficult.* | 1.0 | 2.5 | 5.0 |
| 13. Organising class liturgies difficult.* | 1.0 | 2.1 | 5.0 |
| 14. Journal work is easy to include as part of my teaching. | 1.0 | 2.0 | 5.0 |
| 15. Formal assessments are easy to include as part of my teaching. | 1.0 | 2.0 | 5.0 |
| **Total Subgroup Score** | 9.0 | 19.2 | 45.0 |

**Note:**

Scoring Range: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Uncertain, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree.  
Scores are given to the nearest first decimal place.

* On Items 11, 12 and 13 the mean scores were calculated by subtracting the initial mean score from 5 because the items were written in the negative.
Table A6.3  Underlying Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert Scale Items in the Survey</th>
<th>Sample Subgroups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Items 18-23</strong></td>
<td>Lower Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a beginning RE teacher, I want to assist in organising...</td>
<td>Participants’ total score on Likert scale items that have the lowest total score in this category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. School or class Masses.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation at school.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. School retreats or RE seminar days.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Celebrations for key feast days or liturgical seasons at school.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. The inclusion of prayers at school assemblies or events.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Activities that raise awareness of the Church’s missionary work.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items 24-28</th>
<th>As a beginning RE teacher, I tend to feel confident in...</th>
<th>Lower Scores</th>
<th>Mean Scores</th>
<th>Higher Scores</th>
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<td>24. Managing the demands made on my own faith stance.</td>
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<td>25. Presenting Catholic beliefs and practices.</td>
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<td>26. Relating students’ experiences to Catholic beliefs and practices.</td>
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<td>2.0</td>
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<td>27. Fostering an atmosphere of Christian love and respect.</td>
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<td>28. Fostering positive relationships with my students.</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
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**Total Subgroup Score**

11.0 21.0 55.0

*Note: Scoring Range: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Uncertain, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree. Scores are given to the nearest first decimal place.*
APPENDIX 7
Letter to RE Coordinators about contacting participants for the First Round of Interviews

Mr Chris Hackett

Home XXXXXXXXXX
Work XXXXXXXXXX
email: XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear <REC First Name>

As mentioned in our last telephone conversation, I am proceeding to the next phase of my doctoral research through the University of Notre Dame Australia. I enclose a list of coded participants that I wish to interview as part of this next phase. When the interviews have been completed you will receive a summary of the findings of the survey.

The purpose of the interview is to explore in greater detail the views of [recently assigned] RE teachers about how they implement the draft RE program. In particular, I am interested in finding out why different groups of [recently assigned] teachers use certain curriculum materials and teaching approaches in their classroom.

At this stage I am concentrating on obtaining a range of interviews. The interview will take approximately 20 minutes and the interviewee’s responses will remain confidential. A transcript of the interview can be given to the interviewee for verification.

Would you pass on to these teachers their letter of invitation to participate and ask them to contact me by mail, phone or email by Monday 19 October.

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<thead>
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<th>Birth-date Code</th>
<th>Teacher Type</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>RE Years Taught</th>
<th>Main Subject Area</th>
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<td>Second year</td>
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<td>04/10</td>
<td>Male lay teacher</td>
<td>31-35 years</td>
<td>Fourth year</td>
<td>History</td>
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</table>

Note: Birth-date code consists of the day and month of the teacher’s birthday.

Again, thank you for your assistance and especially a ‘big’ thank you to your participating teachers.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Hackett
Dear «Birth-date_Code»

A few months ago you completed a survey as part of my doctoral research work through the University of Notre Dame Australia. The aim of the survey was to explore how [recently assigned] RE teachers implemented the draft RE program.

I truly appreciate the valuable contribution you made in the survey. Your responses reflected the thoughts and feelings of a number of other teachers. For this reason I need your assistance again in clarifying some aspects for me to understand better the responses received.

I wonder if you would consider participating in an interview. The purpose of the interview is to explore in greater detail why [recently assigned] RE teachers use certain curriculum materials and teaching approaches in their classroom.

Your responses will be respected because they are what you believe to be true. Your views will remain confidential—at no stage will your identity be known in the research findings. A transcript of this interview can be sent to you for your verification.

I appreciate that such participation could be challenging and I offer three options for you to consider:

**Option 1:**
*Face to Face Interview* – This interview will last about thirty minutes. I will meet with you at a time that is convenient.

**Option 2:**
*Telephone Interview* – This interview will last about thirty minutes by telephone.

**Option 3:**
*Extended Written Response* – I will send you the interview questions and invite you to reply with extended written responses within a week. There will be a follow up telephone call to clarify or discuss your responses.

If you decide to participate, would you complete the tear off slip below and place it into the stamped, return-addressed envelope by **Monday 19 October**.

Once again, thank you for your contribution. The data collected to date has been invaluable in describing the efforts and challenges of [recently assigned] RE teachers.
Yours sincerely

Chris Hackett

Return this slip in the stamped self-addressed envelope supplied by Monday 19 October

Tick the option you wish to participate in: Please provide the following information:

☐ Option 1 – Face to Face Interview

☐ Option 2 – Telephone Interview

☐ Option 3 – Written Response

Birth-date Code: ____________________

Name: ______________________________

School: ______________________________
APPENDIX 9
First Interviews Schedule

Introduction
The purpose of this interview is to explore in greater depth and detail your understanding of how the new RE program is implemented.

I appreciate the valuable contribution you made in the survey. The responses you made reflected the views of a number of other teachers. For this reason I need your assistance again in clarifying some dimensions for me to understand better the responses received.

Your responses will be respected because they are what you believe to be true for yourself. Your views will remain confidential—at no stage will your identity be known in the research findings. A transcript of this interview will be sent to you for your verification. The data obtained from this interview will be collated with other interviews.

This interview will last about thirty minutes. Do I have your permission to record your responses on this audio tape?

To help focus your responses, would you Refer to an RE Unit you taught last term.

Are there any questions before we begin?

Question 1:
Refer to an RE Unit you taught last term.

• Before you started, what considerations were uppermost in your mind about teaching this Unit to your students?

Question 2:
Many teachers indicated that they used the Mastersheets and the Student Book frequently in their lessons.

• Why do you think this is the case?
• How do you feel about using these materials?

**Question 3:**
A number of teachers commented that the curriculum materials in the Units should be matched or modified to the background or experiences of students.

• Why should this be the case?

• How do you respond to the view that such an approach avoids students learning about Catholic beliefs and practices?

**Question 4:**
A number of teachers found linking students’ experiences with the Gospels difficult.

• Why would that be the case?

• Should [recently assigned] RE teachers make more use of the Scriptures in their lessons? Explain.

**Question 5:**
A number of teachers indicated that organising liturgies was difficult.

• What difficulties are they referring to?

• Why do think many [recently assigned] RE teachers find organising class liturgies difficult?

**Question 6:**
Many teachers mentioned that developing social justice and tolerance for others was the most important aim of RE.

• How do you feel about this being the most important aim?

• What do you expect your students to have achieved by the end of a RE Unit? Why?
**Question 7:**
Can you describe for me the principles you follow or the vision you have in mind about the teaching of RE?

**Question 8:**
How did you come to follow these principles (or vision)? What influences were significant to you in developing your understanding of these principles (or this vision)?

**Question 9:**
Many teachers commented that having a sufficient professional background and strong faith witness was important to teaching RE. What would you like to see happen in the future to the formation of RE teachers?

**Closing**
Summary of key points made during the interview:

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed. I appreciate that teaching RE is a challenging task. I hope that the remainder of the year is worthwhile for you.

I will be transcribing your responses and when complete I will give you a copy for your perusal. If you have any concerns then please let me know.
APPENDIX 10
Letter and Questions for Participants who agreed to do a Written Response

Mr Chris Hackett
XXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX (Home)
XXXXXXXXXX (Work)
email: XXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear <Participant>

Thank you for agreeing to answer the interview questions.

The purpose of these questions is to explore in greater depth and detail the understanding of [recently assigned] RE teachers in implementing the new RE program.

Your views will remain confidential – at no stage will your identity be known in the research findings. The data obtained from these questions will be collated with other interviewees.

In making an extended written response please Refer to an RE Unit you taught last term. Take the time to reflect carefully about the question. I would appreciate paragraph (or longer) answers–do not let the space provided inhibit your comments!

Please feel free to contact me at home or work if you have any queries about answering these questions. Your written responses should be returned to me in the return-addressed envelope by **Friday October 30**.

Yours sincerely

Chris Hackett
Question 1:

Refer to an RE Unit you taught last term.

• Before you started, what considerations were uppermost in your mind about teaching this Unit to your students?

Question 2:

Many teachers in the survey indicated that they used the Mastersheets and the Student Book frequently in their lessons.

• Why do you think this is the case?

• How do you feel about using these materials?

Question 3:
A number of teachers commented that the curriculum materials in the Units should be matched or modified to the background or experiences of students.

- Why should this be the case?

- How do you respond to the view that such an approach avoids students learning about Catholic beliefs and practices?

**Question 4:**

A number of teachers in the survey found linking students’ experiences with the Gospels difficult.

- Why do you think that would be the case?

- Should [recently assigned] RE teachers make more use of the Scriptures in their lessons? Explain.
Question 5:

A number of teachers in the survey indicated that organising class liturgies was difficult.

- What difficulties are they referring to?
- Why do you think many beginning RE teachers find organising class liturgies difficult?

Question 6:

Many teachers mentioned that developing social justice and tolerance for others was the most important aim of RE.

- How do you feel about this being the most important aim?
- What do you expect your students to have achieved by the end of a RE Unit? Why?
Question 7:

Describe for me the educational and theological principles you follow or the vision you have in mind about the teaching of RE.

Question 8:

How did you come to follow these principles (or vision)? What professional and personal influences were significant to you in developing your understanding of these principles (or this vision)?
Question 9:

Many teachers commented that having a sufficient professional background and strong faith witness was important to teaching RE. What would you like to see happen in the future to the formation of beginning RE teachers?

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed. Please place your responses into the return-addressed envelope and send to me by Friday October 30.
Dear «M_1st_Name»

About six months ago you participated in an interview as part of my doctoral research work through the University of Notre Dame Australia. The aim of the interview was to explore in greater detail how beginning RE teachers implemented the draft RE program.

I truly appreciate the valuable contribution you made in the interview. Your responses reflected the thoughts and feelings of a number of other teachers. You will find a transcription of your interview attached to this letter.

From analysis of these transcriptions there are a few key issues still to be further investigated. I wonder if you would consider participating in a second interview. The purpose of this second interview is to present you with some of the findings and to seek your opinions about them.

This interview will be shorter than the first and your views will remain confidential. A transcript of this interview will also be sent to you for your verification.

I understand that at this time of the year, teaching can be very hectic. However, if you could spare twenty minutes I would be very grateful.

If you do not mind I will contact you in the next week to discuss the possibility of your involvement in this second interview.

Yours sincerely

Chris Hackett
APPENDIX 12
Second Interviews Schedule

Thank you very much for agreeing to do this second interview.

The questions in this interview are designed to explore how you feel about teaching RE since the last interview.

Do you have a copy of your transcript from the first interview with you?

Before you answer these questions please reflect upon your responses from the first interview.

The more complete an answer you can give, will be very much appreciated. Feel free to use examples where appropriate.

Q1: Where do you stand now in relation to your RE teaching? Are things still:

• the same as the last interview? • worse?

• different? • better?

Q2: To what extent do you feel teaching RE is similar to the other subjects you teach? Use an example to explain your response.

Q3: To what extent do you feel teaching RE is different to the other subjects you teach? Use an example to explain your response.

Q4: What is the best and most special about teaching RE for you?

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer these questions.
APPENDIX 13
Second Interviews Written Responses

Thank you very much for agreeing to write answers to the second interview questions.

These questions are designed to explore how you feel about teaching RE since the last interview.

You will need to have a copy of the transcript of your written responses to the first interview questions with you.

Before you answer these questions please review your responses from the first interview.

The more complete an answer you can give, will be very much appreciated. Feel free to use examples where appropriate.

Q1: Where do you stand now in relation to your RE teaching? Are things still:

- the same as the last interview?  
- worse?
- different?  
- better?

You can select one or more of the bullet points to support your response.
Q2: To what extent do you feel teaching RE is similar to the other subjects you teach? Use an example to explain your response.

Q3: To what extent do you feel teaching RE is different to the other subjects you teach? Use an example to explain your response.

Q4: What is the best and most special about teaching RE for you?

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer these questions.

Please place your completed sheet in the return-addressed envelope and post to me by Monday, May 17.
Appendix 14  
Follow Up Letter to Second Round Interviewees 

Mr Chris Hackett 
XXXXXXXXXX 
XXXXXXXXX 
XXXXXXXXX (Home) 
XXXXXXXXX (Work) 
email: XXXXXXXXXXXX

December 7, 1999

Dear «M_1st_Name»

Please find attached a transcription of the interview I conducted with you about six months ago. You may recall this second interview was a follow up and sought to clarify some important issues about teaching RE, its similarities and differences to other subjects and its significance to the RE teacher.

Just a reminder that only the birthdate code and demographic coding will be included in the research. No names of the person interviewed or their school will be mentioned.

The process of transcribing has taken longer than I expected but I am very appreciated of what you had to say and for the opportunity of interviewing you. If you have a query or concern about your transcript then feel free to contact me about it.

At the time of the interview I mentioned that I would give some indication of where the study is going. Over the next six months I will be analysing the data gathered from the survey and the first and second interviews in greater depth. In the meantime, some of the things emerging are:

- Most of the RE teachers surveyed are English teachers.
- Most of the RE teachers surveyed are female.
- Most of the RE teachers surveyed have Accreditation B.
- Most of the RE teachers surveyed believe in a strong faith witness.
- Most of the RE teachers surveyed believe that a positive rapport with students is important.
- RE Teachers interviewed consider familiarity with content is important.
- RE Teachers interviewed want flexibility in using strategies and resources.
- RE Teachers interviewed want further ongoing formation.
- RE Teachers interviewed consider that their own learning area is helpful to teaching RE.
- RE Teachers interviewed believe that their RE teaching is improving.

By no means are these things definitive and there is still a lot more analysis work to do. Nonetheless, I think the contributions you and others have made have been very beneficial to my research. Again, thank you.

Yours sincerely

Chris Hackett
## Appendix 15

Sample Group of Participants and Changes to their Circumstances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym of Participants</th>
<th>Participated in First Round of Interviews</th>
<th>Participated in Second Round of Interviews</th>
<th>Teaching RE at the Same School*</th>
<th>Moved to a Different School*</th>
<th>Teaching RE at a Different School*</th>
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**Key:**

* = Possible changes in circumstances between first and second round of interviews

✔ = Yes ❌ = No

Did not participate in Second Round of Interviews
## Appendix 16
### Distribution of Quotations from Participants

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<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note:*  

= Did not participate in Second Round of Interviews