

Tapu

Religious Studies Teachers Association
of Aotearoa New Zealand



Newsletter (5) October 2013

God is that
to which
your heart
clings and
entrusts
itself.

Martin Luther
King

Dear colleagues

I begin this newsletter with two apologies.

First, I have been away from the office for an extended period of time, and I have therefore been unable to prepare a newsletter during that period. I am now back and catching up.

Second, last week I discovered that we held two separate newsletter address lists, the first of which had not been added into the major list. Therefore, a number of you missed out on information, though perhaps you will have received the most important information from other sources. I can only apologise to those of you who have been wondering why nothing has been coming through. The lists have now been merged.

Religious Studies Standards

You will remember that the public consultation period ended on 9 August.

Here is a summary of the follow up material now on TKI:

"Detailed feedback is on <http://ncea.tki.org.nz/Religious-studies-review>. Draft standards may be downloaded for planning purposes from <http://ncea.tki.org.nz/Religious-studies-review/Religious-studies-standards-matrix-and-CoAs>. The standards are currently being evaluated by NZQA, who may possibly make further changes. Until December 2014 the current standards may still be used. Contact geoff.gibbs@minedu.govt.nz if you need further information.

A big thank you goes out to everyone who provided thoughtful comments and suggestions: 62 online submissions were received from: 54 schools, 2 'independent', 3 tertiary institutions or universities, 3 'other'. Responses were pretty positive.

- Internal or external assessment: the majority were in favour of the status quo.
- Liturgy, ritual and prayer: several respondents suggested that there be a new standard for liturgy/ritual/prayer, however the reasons for this tended to be theological rather than Religious Studies oriented. (Religious Studies has to "work" for those with a specific religious affiliation and those with none.) RS 1.2, 2.2, and 3.2 all allow liturgy/ritual/prayer to be a focus of assessment activities.
- Exemplars: the request for exemplars has been forwarded to NZQA.
- Progression across Sacred Text standards (1.1, 2.1, 3.1): comments were taken on board and the problem of mismatch of difficulty to level has been sorted out. 2.1 now relates to themes and 3.1 to meanings.

PTO

- Clarification and simplification of the language used in the explanatory notes: the language of the standards has been simplified and the number of bullet points for each grade has been reduced.
- Supporting evidence: in the level 1 and 2 standards explicit reference to the need for supporting evidence has been removed. This is not because such evidence is not needed, but rather, it was not considered useful to require it as an 'additional' evidence requirement."

I again express my own gratitude for all the time and energy you put into replies. The detailed feedback on the TKI website will show that your comments were recorded and analysed, including those who were a minority voice on a particular issue. I have to say that I was quite impressed with the process used. I hope that when the final revised standards are released at the end of the year you will be comfortable with them.

And of course we extend our gratitude to the members of the working group, who gave their time and expertise so willingly (and whose schools enabled them to do so): Anne Dyer, McAuley High School, Carmel Sheridan, Hamilton Girls' High School, Fawziyyah Rafiq, Zayed College for Girls, Gary Mawson, Christian Renewal School, Julene Duerksen Kapao, Longburn Adventist College, Ken Mihaere, Hato Paora College, Br Kevin Wanden, Marist Brothers Trust Board. And our gratitude to Liz Willmott at the Ministry of Education, who oversaw the whole project, and to others leading the project.

The latest news is that the standards have been confirmed as meeting the NZQA quality assurance criteria and will be recommended for approval and listed on the Directory of Assessment Standards in December! MOE staff are delighted, because they were working on an exceedingly tight timeline and were not sure if they would meet all the deadlines.

The Ministry is giving some further thought to whether or not they should develop assessment resources to support the Religious Studies standards, I imagine that will take some while to be decided. I shall keep in touch with them.

Changes of personnel

We welcome to our mailing list **Rev Caleb Hardie**, who has recently taken on a new role as Director of the Presbyterian Church Schools Office. Caleb also has a close association with St Kentigern's College, Auckland.

At the National Centre for Religious Studies (NCRS) **Dr Chris Duthie Jung** has just this week taken up the position of Director of NCRS, with responsibility for Secondary level Religious Education. Chris has been a lecturer at The Catholic Institute (TCI) and is still completing lecturing duties for TCI. He brings a significant range of skills to the position. He will take up

work gradually for NCRS and also as Director for Partnerships at TCI. He will be sharing with me the work for the Religious Studies Teachers Association, of course.

Finally...

New Members of the Association welcome:

I have recently received an updated list of schools which have entered students for Religious Studies Achievement Standards. I shall email them, to see if their teachers want to join the Association.

Formal structures: You will realise that we are still a completely loose association, with no formal structures. That will now be something we will look at in 2014. Your ideas and comments are always welcome.

And until next time: Unless something significant happens this is likely to be the last email for 2013.

I hope that the end of the year goes well for you all, and that despite how frantic it may be it will also feel somewhat peaceful, and that you will be able to carry that peace into the holidays.

A happy Christmas to you all, and may the new year be full of joy.

Susan

The real voyage of
discovery consists not in
seeking new landscapes but
in having new eyes.

Marcel Proust

