

**ETHICS EDUCATION IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR ORIENTATIONS FOUND IN ENGLAND'S NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**  
**L'ÉDUCATION ÉTHIQUE ET RELIGIEUSE EN ANGLETERRE : ANALYSE DES ORIENTATIONS MAJEURES DU NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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Article abstract

This paper presents an innovative analytical model of Ethics Education, and uses it to analyze the major learning components found in England's National framework for religious education (NFRE). The model includes seven components: three simple ones – Education for Society (ES), Personal Identity (PI), Education for Otherness (EO) – and four interwoven ones (PI/EO, PI/ES, EO/ES and PI/EO/ES). Our results from the analysis of the NFRE show a strong concentration of PI and EO components in its learning goals, and validates the model of Ethics Education developed in French-speaking context.



# ETHICS EDUCATION IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR ORIENTATIONS FOUND IN ENGLAND'S NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper presents an innovative analytical model of Ethics Education, and uses it to analyze the major learning components found in England's National framework for religious education (NFRE). The model is based on research on Ethics Education in French-speaking countries but can be used to characterize Ethics Education within any specific educational program. It includes seven components: three simple ones – Education for Society (ES), Personal Identity (PI), Education for Otherness (EO) – and four interwoven ones (PI/EO, PI/ES, EO/ES and PI/EO/ES). Our results from the analysis of the NFRE show a strong concentration of PI and EO components in its learning goals, and validates the model of Ethics Education developed in French-speaking context.

## L'ÉDUCATION ÉTHIQUE ET RELIGIEUSE EN ANGLETERRE: ANALYSE DES ORIENTATIONS MAJEURES DU NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**RÉSUMÉ.** À partir d'un modèle d'analyse novateur de l'éducation éthique, cet article présente les résultats d'une analyse des orientations majeures du National framework for religious education (NFRE) de l'Angleterre. Le modèle d'analyse a été développé dans le cadre d'une recherche sur les portraits de l'éducation éthique dans des programmes d'études de pays de la francophonie du nord. Les résultats de la recherche ici présentés montrent que ledit modèle peut aussi permettre une lecture fine de l'éducation éthique dans un cas contraste par la langue, notamment l'Angleterre. Ce modèle inclut sept composantes: trois composantes simples – Éducation à la société (ES), Formation personnelle (FP), Éducation à l'autre (EA) – et quatre composantes maillées (FP/EA, FP/ES, EA/ES et FP/EA/ES). Nos résultats montrent aussi qu'en matière d'éducation éthique, le NFRE met l'accent sur la formation personnelle et l'éducation à l'autre.

**O**ur initial inquiry with regard to the multitude of declarations and orientations of educational policies that affirm the importance of learning live together through education and training (the keystone of education for the XXIst century according to UNESCO, 2003), led us to the observation

that the pseudo-concept of living together could not be put into operation. In fact, if this expression traverses the various currents of education, intercultural or multicultural, antiracist and critical, inclusive and toward a democratic and global citizenship (Potvin and Larochelle-Audet, 2016; Potvin et al., 2015), our survey of the literature demonstrates that there is little research on what may be understood by the use of the expression “live together”. This absence of an active definition is problematic and paradoxical when we know that the expression is used abundantly in the francophone literature, notably in the international scientific literature, by the major international bodies and in numerous official documents in education in the Francophonie regions (Bouchard, Daniel, and Desruisseaux, 2017; Daniel, Bouchard, and Desruisseaux, 2013). We have also observed that even these same programs no longer define this expression. We therefore opted to focus more broadly on the ethical aims of teaching programs in which an education toward living together is expected. We thus analyzed the major orientations of those same programs and of the official orientation documents that accompany them.

Further, in the course of analysing the official education programmes of the North Francophonie<sup>2</sup> where an education to *vivre-ensemble* is expected<sup>3</sup>, we developed an analytical model which identifies seven components of “Ethics Education”<sup>4</sup>. The model derived from research using Grounded Theory<sup>5</sup> (Savoie-Zajc, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and focussed on official education programmes and their accompanying texts in France, Wallonia (Belgium) and Quebec (Canada). Allows for a sharper analysis of Ethics Education in a programme and serves to identify prevailing emphases within it (Bouchard, Daniel, & Desruisseaux 2017; Bouchard, Desruisseaux, & Daniel 2013; Bouchard & Desruisseaux 2013; Daniel, Bouchard, & Desruisseaux 2013).

Analyses of programmes from countries additional to those initially studied are described in Human Rights Education of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (2009) and Human and Civic Education of Burundi (Bureau d'études et de programmes de l'enseignement secondaire (2011); they confirm that the model has stabilised into seven ethical components<sup>6</sup>.

For verification of components of the analytical model, a study of contexts outside of the Francophonie (one from the North and one from the South) are used for validation by use of contrasting cases. A study of contrasting cases in another language is required since this variable could lead to different results (Pires, 1997). English is chosen because English is our second language and it can also be used in a contrasting case from a southern context.

More specifically, England caught our attention because of the distinctive nature of its tradition of Religious Education (RE) and its potential contribution to what we are calling Ethics Education. In the majority of its schools, RE must not be denominationally specific, but rather agreed on

locally between denominational and educational interests. For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the denominational interests were understood as diversely Christian, but since the 1988 Education Reform Act, they have been legally required to include the other "religions traditions" of the UK as well. All state funded schools, including denominationally linked ones (still mainly Church of England or Roman Catholic) are encouraged to be positive about understanding of diversities of religious allegiance.

Without any challenge to legal statutes regarding denominational prerogatives in schools of a religious character or to the principle of local agreement in RE in all the others, the 2004 National Framework for RE (NFRE) provides guidelines for all local syllabus makers and those responsible for specific denominational ones. Commissioned by the government Education Department, it was developed by the publicly funded Qualifications Curriculum Authority. Initial drafting was done by an academic and professional team. It was then subject to scrutiny locally and nationally by all interested parties and amended as appropriate before being formally endorsed by faith community leaders.

Any subsequent syllabus makers were encouraged to take the NFRE into account; most have done so. It emphasises *vivre-ensemble* education, notably by targeting teachings about diversity in society, the role and importance of beliefs and values in the contemporary world, and comprehension of the roles and responsibilities of citizens in a modern democracy (NFRE). Accordingly, it is signally appropriate to use it as the basis for a northern English-speaking comparative case study, within which to test the transferability and efficacy our Ethics Education model.

Two research questions were given special attention: What Ethics Education emerges from the NFRE when is analysed with the analytical model developed by Bouchard et al.? Moreover, is the model valid in this context, which is contrasting in language but similar to cases used to develop the model??

In the next section, we will present our analytical model for Ethics Education. Details regarding the research methodology will follow. Then, after a brief description of the RE context in England, we will present and discuss the results from the analysis of the NFRE. Finally, elements of our findings will be highlighted to emphasise what this study of RE in England allows us to learn about the NFRE's major orientations, and about the analytical model per se.

## **ANALYTICAL MODEL FOR ETHICS EDUCATION**

Etymologically ethics (as well as morals) refers to mores and behaviours. The Greek word *êthos*, which means "mores, customs, conducts, habits", becomes in its Latin form *mos*, mores or morals. Today, ethics also evokes the work of

stating, reflecting, and deliberating about codes (rules, values, good behavior) that circumscribes human action (Bourgeault, 2004). When using the term “Ethics” we consider both of these meanings. Thus, Ethics Education can include:

Reflection on diverse and contradictory forms of good and evil, the meaning of human life, the difficulty of making choices, the need to justify decisions, and the aspiration of defining impartial and universal principles [...] debates regarding the origin of ethics, the comprehension of its content as well as various ways of living a moral life [...] reflection on human action that involves comprehension of situations, orientation of deliberations, selection of conducts and evaluation modes that can only be enlightened and enriched with resources such as analyses, tools, typical cases and arguments which, for more than two millennia, have been developed within moral philosophy or its associated religious and literary traditions. (Canto-Sperber, 1996, p. VI)

What Ethics Education do we find in formal education programmes and their support documents, where we might expect to find it? To answer this question, we use the Analytical Model for Ethics Education (see Figure 1) that initially emerged from the North Francophonie research.

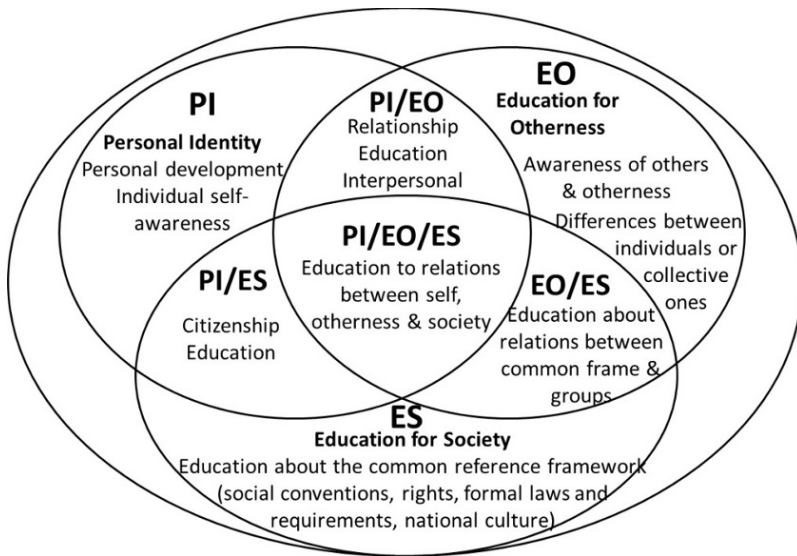


FIGURE 1. Analytical model for Ethics Education

This model's seven components are as follows.

There are the three simple ones: Personal Identity (PI), Education for Otherness (EO), and Education for Society (ES).

1. The Personal Identity (PI) ethical component focuses on self-awareness. This Ethics Education concerns a freeing of the sense of individual being, emphasising construction, knowledge and care of self. It is education in terms of a person's identity and moral ideal: for example, the development of a person's critical thinking and values, existential questioning, search for a good life, and inner dialogue. This component can encompass terms such as autonomy, self-esteem and liberty, which along with others are likely to be found in formal curricula.
2. The Education for Otherness (EO) ethical component focuses on "alterity", on the acquisition of knowledge or construction of knowledge about others/otherness (different from the self), on the identity of groups and persons, on the life/lives they lead for themselves. Here, we pay close attention to others in their distinctiveness. This component is an education concerning diversity, differences, the group's identity, the community, cultures, ethnicities, different ways of living a moral life, experiences, and the freedom of others.
3. The Education for Society (ES) ethical component focuses on knowledge of our social structures, of what is considered common to a society as a whole, e.g. common values, the common good, civic-mindedness, legal and social standards, rights and charters, and public institutions.

And, there are four interwoven components: PI/EO, PI/ES, EO/ES, PI/EO/ES.

1. The Personal Identity / Education for Otherness (PI/EO) ethical component focuses on being ethical in relation to others, in interpersonal relationship with another person or others. This component implies an education regarding what contributes to our interdependence, e.g. concern for others, caring about them, showing empathy, having esteem for others.
2. The Personal Identity / Education for Society (PI/ES) ethical component focuses primarily on the person as a citizen, member of society, on the citizen in relation to our social structure, e.g. public participation, democratic deliberation, civic responsibility<sup>8</sup>.
3. The Education for Otherness / Education for Society (EO/ES) ethical component focuses on relationships between specific persons or groups and the society that connects us, e.g. relationships within a civil society and between groups and related laws or rights.
4. The ethical component that interweaves the three ethical components of PI/EO/ES is situated in an interrelation between self, others and society as a whole. In this component, the well-being and life-prospects of persons, communities and society are intrinsically linked.

This analytical model does not aim to defend any particular perspective or version of ethics or Ethics Education and its function is not to evaluate how well a programme corresponds to a predetermined framework or a specific ethical education. Its function is rather to “build explanatory hypotheses regarding a given reality, in order to understand and explain this reality” (Roegiers, 1997, p. 61). The analytical model is not intended to “clarify” how things should occur but to “determine how they occur” (Roegiers, 1997, p. 65). Hence, this analytical model of Ethics Education does not reflect a particular philosophy of education (Bertrand, 2014<sup>9</sup>); instead, without partiality, it allows for the emergence of an education profile that inclines toward the cognitive, rational and formal, or one that tends toward the relational and emotional, or toward civic education. Our goal is to analyse what emerges from each particular programme and not to evaluate the degree of correspondence with any philosophical or legal expectation.

Finally, it should be noted that if this model is stabilized, the contrasting case study (particularly in the English-speaking context and Southern Francophonie) will also make it possible to check whether components are sufficiently inclusive and representative of all major orientations in educational programs.

## METHODOLOGY

According to methodological approaches are qualitative/interpretative (Savoie-Zjac, 2007). More specifically, a multiple case approach (Pires, 1997) is used since, among other aspects, it allows for a considerable variety of studied cases to be included, regardless of their statistical frequency. The goal is to apply what Pires calls an external diversification principle<sup>10</sup> until an empirical saturation point is reached. In other words, until the team has to consider that new programmes do not add “sufficiently new or different” information (Pires, 1997, p. 67). For our part, whether the diversification is internal or external, we use the term saturation since this is the intent, namely: saturation of the model’s components and saturation of the global picture of Ethics Education in Francophonie (North and South). As was previously mentioned, NFRE in England is the first case of external diversification we studied, outside of Francophonie.

### *Sampling*

*Selected document: England’s NFRE.* Within each regions studied, our have analysed the curriculum’s explicit, and so, official programmes (Roegiers, 1997). Selection criteria are as follows, official programmes that: 1) an education oriented towards *vivre-ensemble* is specifically expected, either through an indication in the programme itself or in the official guidelines; 2)

come from a country in Francophonie and are written in French (or English in contrasting cases); 3) they are in effect at the time of the research; and 4) accessible to professors/collaborators who work with these programmes. These criteria serve to ensure sampling is relevant to the research, clearly-defined, and openly accessible (Savoie-Zajc, 2007).

Whilst it is true that in England, from the beginning of state education in 1870, RE has been compulsory for all pupils<sup>11</sup> and in all primary and secondary schools, the nature of this practice has actually been quite varied. Legally, there are different syllabus specifications, arising from responsibilities given to local education authorities and to religious denominations. Practically, there are enormous variations between schools, and even within them, in the quantity and quality of RE provided. The production of the NFRE in 2004 was designed to ameliorate that condition with respect to nationwide consistencies and continuities. Although non-statutory, it provides an academic, professional and faith community consensus regarding educational outcomes from the subject – such as might be expected from an education to *vivre-ensemble*. This is made clear in the Foreword by the then Government Secretary of State for Education and the Chief Executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. They state that the NFRE is:

“[...] a commitment to valuing ourselves, our families and other relationships, the wider groups to which we belong, the environment in which we live and the diversity in our society. Pupils need to understand, therefore, the role and significance of religion in the modern world and the important beliefs and values that shape it. [...] It will bring together the ways in which all pupils are helped to develop a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens in a modern democracy. It will play an important role alongside other aspects of the curriculum and school life, in helping pupils to engage with challenging spiritual, moral and social questions that arise in their lives and in society.” (NFRE, p. 3)

In fact, as indicated by Gates “[t]he vision of religious education that is set out in the NFRE has never been more vital in the life of this country or indeed the world. It wants to unmask prejudice for what it is, replacing it with discernment” (Gates, 2005, p. 101). Jackson follows along the same lines when he says that “the NFRE explains how religious education can contribute to intercultural understanding and citizenship education” (Jackson, 2013, p. 7).

***Content chosen within the document.*** For analysis purposes, we include only explicit major orientations (prescribed or recommended) in a document, i.e.: aims, purposes, goals, objectives, skills, and attitudes. Working on these several orientations is both apposite and revealing: they are circumscribed and can extend over more than a school year. General orientations can even span entire educational paths in a specific subject-matter. These orientations also represent long-term goals for young people’s lives and for life in society.



What is more, to properly understand these major orientations, they are not isolated from their context but situated within the programmes and their settings. This continual linking of educational action (such as a programme or an official guidance document) to its context constitutes one of the fundamentals of an analytical model (Roegiers, 1997).

**Analyses.** Once the sampling is established and verified, analyses follow. A first analysis uses the general orientations as a benchmark. Each general orientation is studied to determine if it corresponds to one of the components of the analytical model. It is subsequently classified under the said component or left out, as appropriate. If some of these orientations were not classified because of lack of correspondence, they are re-examined after all the analyses of all the programmes are completed to determine if new components are needed or if nuance should be added to one or other of the existing components. In presenting the results of our analysis of the NFRE, this first level is titled “General orientations” (NFRE, 2004). A second analysis uses as a benchmark those orientations that are more specific to a stage. We then repeat the process described in the first analysis. In presenting the results of our overall analysis, this second level is titled “Learning goals by stage.” The results of these analyses then serve to provide a picture of Ethics Education: does the picture show an Ethics Education strongly focussed on a specific component of the model? Does it extend across several components? And if so, is there a particular emphasis on one of the three poles? For example, do the components that include Personal Identity (PI, PI/ES, PI/EO, PI/EO/ES) stand out? Or is there an emphasis on one of the interweaving components (relational ones) or on a simple component (e.g. knowledge of)?

## RESULTS OF NFRE ANALYSIS

### *General Orientations*

The NFRE (Department for Education and Skills, 2004) situates the contribution of RE within the school curriculum. Thus, it promotes “the values of truth, justice, respect for all and care of the environment” (p. 8); furthermore, it “recognises the changing nature of society” (p. 8) and religious practices, as well as their influence in communities (local, national, and global). It supports both aims in the curriculum: to learn and achieve, and to promote learning in many areas (spiritual, moral, social, cultural, etc.) across the curriculum. In its general orientations, it also promotes attitudes of self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness and appreciation and wonder. Here are the results of our analysis of these general orientations.

**Aim 1: To learn and achieve.** Through knowledge, skills and understanding, Aim 1 strives “to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve” (p. 8). Knowledge, skills and understanding are described as learning about religion

and learning from religion. Learning “about” and “from” religion<sup>12</sup>, two attainment targets relatively common in religious education in England (Bates, 2016), are core attainment targets in the NFRE.

As shown in Figure 2, the first attainment target is situated in the Education for Otherness (EO) component because “[i]n the national framework, learning about religion covers pupils’ knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other as well as the study of the nature and characteristics of religion” (NFRE, 2004, p. 11). As to the second attainment target, it is situated in the Personal Identity (PI) component of the model since it is concerned with developing pupils’ reflection on and response to their own and others’ experiences in the light of their learning about religion. It develops pupils’ skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion. Pupils learn to develop and communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, and values and commitments. (NFRE, 2004, p. 8)

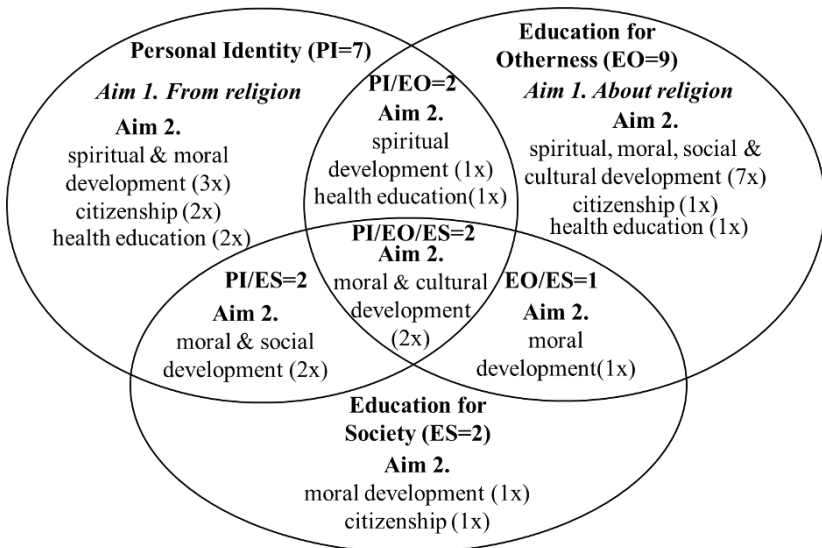


FIGURE 2. NFRE and aims of the curriculum

x = number of occurrences

*Aim 2: To promote learning in different areas.* Aim 2 strives “to promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life” (NFRE, 2004, p. 8). In this respect, the NFRE establishes close links between the school curriculum and the contribution of RE, i.e., promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including citizenship, and personal, social and health education<sup>13</sup>.

In Figure 2, we note that this aim extends to the seven components of the model. We will illustrate this with a few examples. In the PI component, we have the occurrence “developing their own views and ideas on religious and spiritual issues” (NFRE, 2004, p. 14). In the EA component: “learning about and reflecting on important concepts, experiences and beliefs that are at the heart of religious and other traditions and practices” (p. 14). In the ES component: “exploring the rights<sup>14</sup>, responsibilities and duties of citizens locally, nationally and globally” (p. 15). In the interwoven PI/EO component: “developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people” (p. 15). In the interwoven PI/ES component: “considering the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience” (p. 14). In the interwoven EO/ES component: exploring “how society is influenced by beliefs, teachings, sacred texts and guidance from religious leaders” (p. 14). And finally, in the interwoven PI/EO/ES component: “promoting racial and interfaith harmony and respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination, contributing positively to community cohesion and promoting awareness of how interfaith cooperation can support the pursuit of the common good” (p. 15).

In addition, we also note a strong concentration of occurrences (x) in the simple components: PI (7 occurrences) and EO (9 occurrences). Thus, both aims emphasise the same components of the model.

*Attitudes in religious education.* To reach its targets, the NFRE promotes four attitudes to be developed in pupils (Figure 3).

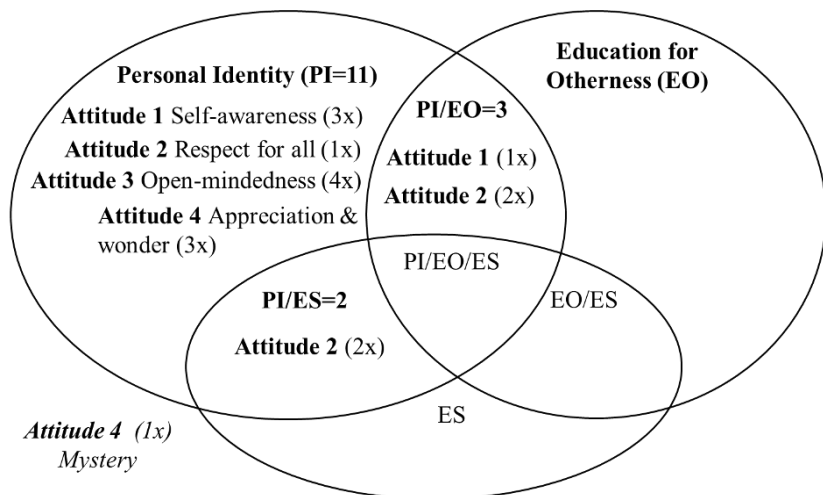


FIGURE 3. NFRE and attitudes in religious education

The first attitude is “self-awareness” and is mainly situated in the simple PI component (three occurrences<sup>15</sup>) but also in the interwoven PI/EO component (one occurrence<sup>16</sup>). The second attitude, “respect for all”, extends across the interwoven component PI/EO (two occurrences<sup>17</sup>) and PI/ES (two occurrences<sup>18</sup>) as well as PI (one occurrence<sup>19</sup>). The third attitude, “open-mindedness,” is situated in the simple PI component of the model (four occurrences<sup>20</sup>). The fourth attitude, “appreciation and wonder”, is also situated in the simple PI component (three occurrences<sup>21</sup>). With regard to this last attitude, the occurrence “recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery” (p. 13) cannot be classified within our model of Ethics Education. In sum, with regard to attitudes, we note a very strong presence of occurrences in the PI component (11 occurrences) and, to a lesser degree, in the PI/EO (3 occurrences) and PI/ES (2 occurrences) components.

Globally, the NFRE’s general orientations are concentrated in the upper part of the model; components that include ES are less present than others. But what about the distribution of these orientations in the learning goals specific to each key stage? Do we find an emphasis on the simple PI and EO components? Do they unfold in the seven components, as in Aim 2? Or do we get a different picture? Let us examine results obtained from analysing learning goals in each stage.

### ***Learning Goals by Stage***

The NFRE suggests “learning goals” for the Foundation Stage, and “knowledge, skills and understanding” for each of the Key Stages. In what follows we will use the expression “learning goal” to refer to all these learnings. When it comes to key stages, learnings are grouped according to Aim 1: “learning about religion” and “learning from religion.”

***Foundation stage goals (ages 3-5).*** At this stage, religious education’s global orientation shows, on one hand, learning about religion as Education for Otherness (EO):

Children may begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They listen to and talk about stories. They may be introduced to religious words and use their senses in exploring religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression. (NFRE, 2004, p. 21)

And on the other hand, learning from religion as Personal Identity (PI) development: “They reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live” (p. 21). Moreover, a detailed analysis of learning goals at this stage provides a slightly broader picture.

The NFRE identifies four early learning goals where religious education can make a significant contribution: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; knowledge and understanding of the world; and, creative development (p. 21). Results of the analysis of the 14 examples<sup>22</sup> of RE-related experiences and opportunities under each of these four goals show the presence of the three components of the upper part of the model (Figure 4). Four occurrences are situated in the simple Personal Identity (PI) component, for example: using some stories from religious traditions as a stimulus to reflect on their own feelings and experiences (p. 22). Five occurrences are situated in the relationships' (PI/EO) component, for example: using role-play as a stimulus, children talk about some of the ways that people show love and concern for others and why this is important; children think about issues of right and wrong and how humans help one another (p. 22). Finally, six occurrences are situated in the simple Education for Otherness (EO) component, for example: through artefacts, stories and music, children learn about important religious celebrations (p. 22).

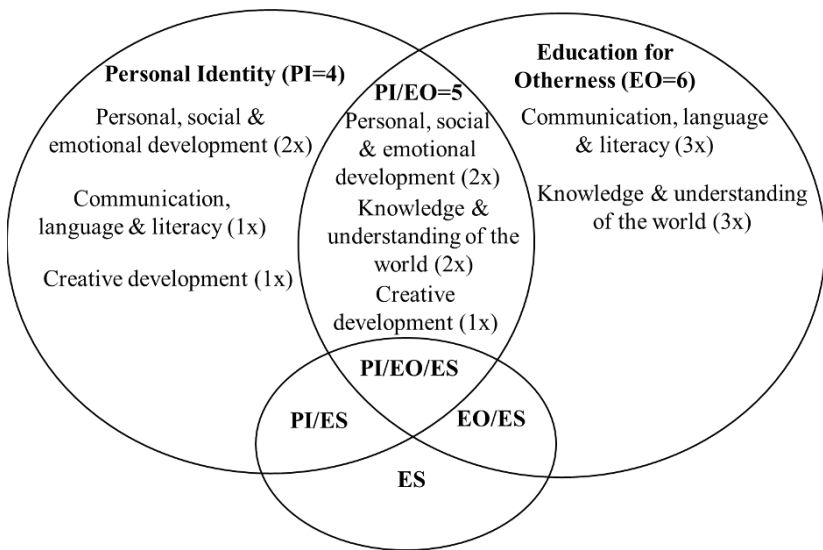


FIGURE 4. *NFRE. Foundation Stage goals*

Following our analysis of these occurrences, religious education serves in this case to develop not only personal identity and openness to religious cultures but also respect for others in interpersonal relationships. In other words, the portrait of Ethics Education extends to interpersonal relationships (PI/EO) and is not limited to learning from religion (PI) and to learning about religion (EO). Finally, no occurrence is situated in the components that include

Education for Society (ES, PI/ES, EO/ES and PI/EO/ES). This concentration in the upper part of the model is coherent with the two aims presented in the NFRE's general orientations.

**Key Stage 1 goals (ages 5-7).** In the global orientation, at this key stage, we mostly note the presence of learning about religion as Education for Otherness (EO):

“They learn about different beliefs about God and the world around them. They encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials. They learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use specialist vocabulary. They begin to understand the importance and value of religion and belief, especially for other children and their families.” (NFRE, 2004, p. 24)

In this key stage, pupils explore Christianity and at least one other principal religion, namely, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism.

We also observe the development of Personal Identity (PI) and interpersonal relationships (PI/EO) in that “[p]upils ask relevant questions and develop a sense of wonder about the world, using their imaginations. They talk about what is important to them and others, valuing themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging” (p. 24).

As to the picture that emerges in the detailed analysis of the learning goals (Figure 5), it is coherent with the global orientation of RE at this key stage. And, just as in the Foundation Stage, it is concentrated in the upper part of the model and there are no occurrences in the components that include Education for Society (ES, PI/ES, EO/ES, PI/EO/ES).

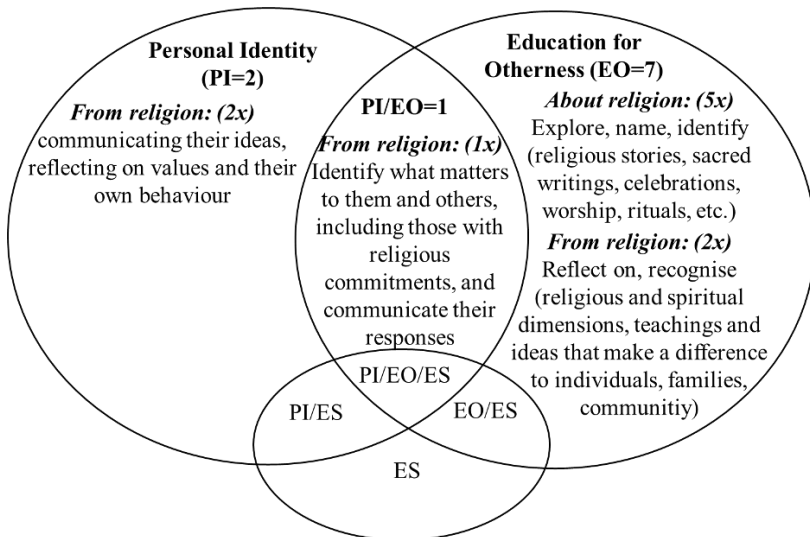


FIGURE 5. NFRE Key Stage 1 goals

**Key Stage 2 goals (ages 8-11).** In Key Stage 2, we note a greater presence of learning about religion as Education for Otherness (EO).

Throughout key stage 2, pupils learn about Christianity and at least two of the other principal religions, recognising the impact of religion and belief locally, nationally and globally. They make connections between differing aspects of religion and consider the different forms of religious expression. They consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion. They learn about sacred texts and other sources and consider their meanings. They begin to recognise diversity in religion, learning about similarities and differences both within and between religions and beliefs and the importance of dialogue between them. They extend the range and use of specialist vocabulary. They recognise the challenges involved in distinguishing between ideas of right and wrong, and valuing what is good and true (NFRE, 2004, p. 26).

We also observe the development of pupils' personal reflection (PI) as they take into consideration the points of view, beliefs and values learned from religious teachings (EO); the students "communicate their ideas, recognising other people's viewpoints. They consider their own beliefs and values and those of others in the light of their learning in religious education" (p. 26). However, this orientation does not correspond to the interwoven PI/EO component. Instead, it relates to the development of Personal Identity (PI) which integrates EO learnings. Although deserving additional analysis, this is perhaps an example that typically illustrates an objective of learning from religion (in Grimmitt's meaning, 2000). So as not to lose sight of this specificity, for the moment we will codify these types of occurrences as  $PI_{EO}$  (in this case, EO represents a learning integration indicator for this component in the development of PI).

As seen in Figure 6, the same picture emerges from a detailed analysis of learning goals. As in the pictures that emerged from the previous stages, occurrences are concentrated in the upper part of the model. However, the portrait is less relational and more reflective than in the two previous stages.

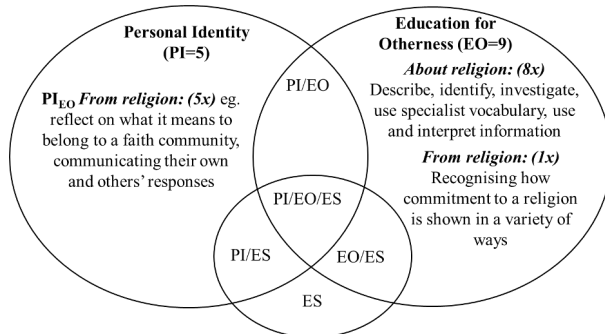


FIGURE 6. NFRE Key Stage 2 goals

**Key stage 3 goals (ages 12-13).** In the global orientation of RE at this stage (where pupils extend their understanding of Christianity and at least two of the other principal religions in a local, national and global context), we note that learning about religion is dominant in terms of Education for Otherness (EO). These pupils deepen their understanding of important beliefs, concepts and issues of truth and authority in religion. The students:

“ [...] enquire into and explain some personal, philosophical, theological and cultural reasons for similarities and differences in religious beliefs and values, both within and between religions. [...] interpret religious texts and other sources, recognising both the power and limitations of language and other forms of communication in expressing ideas and beliefs. [...] considering both the importance of interfaith dialogue and the tensions that exist within and between religions and beliefs ” (NFRE , 2004, p. 28).

We also note the presence of a  $PI_{EO}$  occurrence: pupils “develop their evaluative skills, showing reasoned and balanced viewpoints when considering their own and others’ responses to religious, philosophical and spiritual issues” (Ibid.). Two new components may also be present at this key stage: EO/ES, in which “[t]hey reflect on the impact of religion and belief in the world”, and  $PI/EO/ES$ , in that “[t]hey apply their understanding of religious and philosophical beliefs, teachings and practices to a range of ultimate questions and ethical issues, with a focus on self-awareness, relationships, rights and responsibilities” (p. 28). Results of the detailed analysis of learning goals (Figure 7) show a picture that is consistent with the global orientations of this key stage.

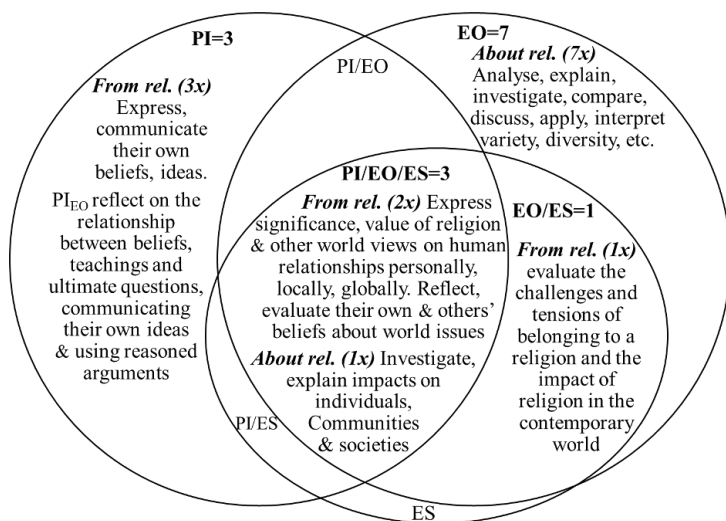


FIGURE 7. NFRE Key Stage 3 goals



*Goals ages 14-19.* The global orientation at this stage emphasises learnings that include Education for Otherness (EO, EO/ES, PI/EO/ES). First this occurs on a more complex and reflective EO as compared to the other stages, especially regarding ethical, philosophical and religious concepts, problems of internal diversity within and between religions, and the importance of dialogue among them<sup>23</sup>. Then, it is the case with EO/ES about the “roles of religion in the world” ( p. 30) and PI/EO/ES about “the impact of religions on individuals, communities and societies, locally, nationally and globally” (p. 30).

Moreover, a detailed analysis of goals (Figure 8) clarifies the role of students’ personal identity when they reflect on religions, beliefs, values, etc. This reflection takes place in the light of their “own sense of identity, experience and commitments” and their learnings about religion. Thus, these general orientations could be seen as gravitating around the pupil’s personal identity (PI). After teachings that were strongly focused on knowledge and comprehension of religions (EO) in the previous key stages, at “ages 14-19” students develop and express their thoughts, their points of view, in a rigorous, informed, well-argued, coherent, responsible manner about beliefs, ethics, values, and, religious, philosophical, moral, spiritual questions and issues. In short, there is a strong presence of the PI component integrating EO, namely PI<sub>EO</sub>.

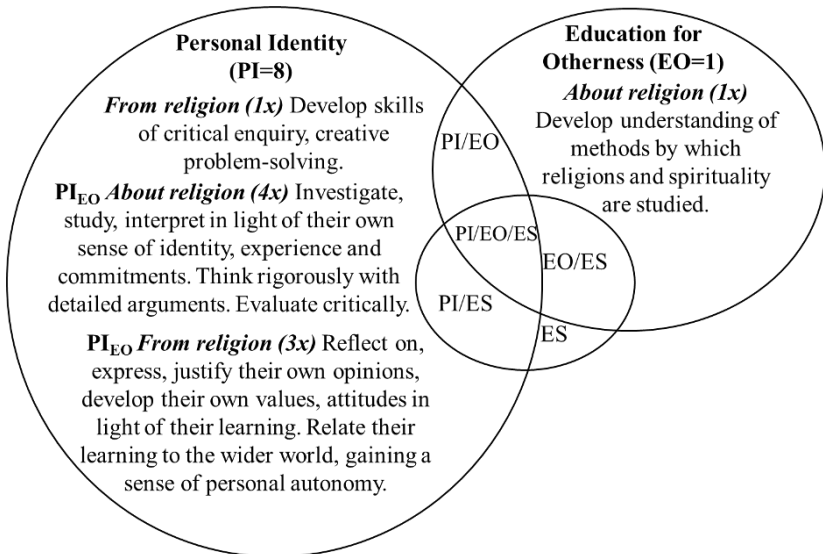


FIGURE 8. NFRE Goals ages 14-19

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

To sum up, and for discussion purposes, let us go back to our research questions: What picture of Ethics Education emerges from this analysis of the NFRE? Does this analysis of a case in a language other than French serve to validate the model? Here is what our results reveal about it.

### *A Portrait of Ethics Education in the NFRE*

*Learning goals are highly concentrated in the simple components PI and EO.* Considering these results, overall, the NFRE learning goals appear to be highly concentrated in the simple components of Personal Identity (PI =18 goals) and Education for Otherness (EO =24 goals). Mainly, these goals focus on components that do not include Education for Society (ES, PI/ES, ES/EO and PI/EO/ES). These results are consonant with those of the Aim 1 analysis (learning about and from religion) of the NFRE's general orientations (Figure 2). They are also consonant with the marked tendency of Aim 2 with simple PI and EO components.

On another note, Aim 2, although it unfolded in the seven components of the model, was not as distributed as expected. Admittedly, in each key stage we note the development of “their own views and ideas on religious and spiritual issues” (PI) and “learning about and reflecting on important concepts, experiences and beliefs that are at the heart of religious and other traditions and practices” (EO). We also find, though to a lesser degree, the development of good interpersonal relations while respecting differences (PI/EO in Key Stages 1 and 2), and the issue of the influence of religion on society (EO/ES in Key Stage 3). But, learning that is specific to the simple Education for Society (ES) component – where pupils learn to recognise “the importance of rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens” and to the interwoven PI\ES component – where they would develop “a sense of conscience” about these – is absent from the learning goals.

In fact, results show that “learning about and from religion” is at the heart of this framework document and, as such, is consistent with the English RE tradition as represented by the work of Loukes and the “Life theming” Agreed Syllabuses in the 1960s and that of Grimmit (see Gates 2016) and others after him<sup>24</sup>.

*Global comparison with Quebec.* In a global comparison with results obtained from an analysis of competencies based on the programme most similar to the NFRE, namely Quebec's (Canada) Éthique et culture religieuse<sup>25</sup> (Bouchard et al., 2017), a major difference appears to be in the concentration of the simple EO component in religious culture learning. In Quebec, religious culture learning is strictly limited to “learning about religion” and does not open the way to “learning from religion.” This is partly explained by Quebec's choice

being not to “accompany students on a spiritual quest” (Government of Quebec, 2008, preamble).

In the Ethics and Religious Culture programme (Quebec), only specific competencies in ethics and dialogue cover the PI, PI/ES and PI/EO/ES components of the model. For example, in Ethics and Religious Culture, the simple PI component develops inner deliberation, PI/ES develops deliberation with others, and PI/EO/ES fosters reflection on the diversity of references and options and their effect on self, others and society, but it does not develop PI/EO namely the ethics of interpersonal relations. In religious culture, the EO/ES component is also solicited through evaluating diversity of beliefs and behaviours about life in society. In this programme, education to *vivre-ensemble* appears, on one hand, as the practice of deliberation in dialogue, and on the other hand, as the acquisition of knowledge about religious cultures. *Vivre-ensemble* is learnt by specifically soliciting the cognitive and rational dimension of pupils as members of society; but pupils’ critical reflection about their own reference models as well as a comprehensive approach to others and knowledge of social structures remains weak or absent.

With the NFRE’s learning goals, distribution for religious cultures is much broader. In the simple PI component, pupils’ reflection integrates learning about religions. In PI/EO, they dialogue about love and concern for others and develop a sense of belonging. In the PI/EO/ES component, they reflect about the effects of their own beliefs and those of others on individuals, communities and societies. As to EO/ES, just as in Quebec’s religious culture, pupils learn to reflect on the relationships between beliefs and life in common. It is a form of social ethics where interaction between beliefs and the public sphere rests on, as Jobin (2004) says, the common concern to reflect on the normativity of *vivre-ensemble* and invites to transcend modern opposition to religion (Bouchard, Daniel, and Desruisseaux, 2017).

Therefore, the NFRE’s *vivre-ensemble* education appears as education for normative pluralism (Leroux, 2016) enhanced by a favorably viewed otherness that occurs not only through knowledge of differences but also through relationships with others and what they bring to pupils (Bouchard et al., 2017). Unlike religious culture in Quebec, the NFRE’s learning goals are not limited to the comprehension of a phenomenon (in a strictly cognitive sense). Lastly, our results show that the NFRE’s learning goals’ hermeneutical objective is principally to acknowledge others, more than a civic pursuit of the common good (even though the latter is not excluded from the initial general orientations).

Should learning goals specific to the simple ES and the interwoven PI/ES components be added to the NFRE? For instance, an updating or revision of the 2004 Framework might easily include teaching about the Equality Act

2010<sup>26</sup> in the UK (ES), followed by an exchange of ideas, of well-argued opinions, in short by a critical dialogue (PI/ES) with classmates on the subject. There might also be reference to the notion of “fundamental British values”<sup>27</sup>(ES), followed by classroom critical dialogue (PI/ES). In fact, some amendments have already been suggested and a version which takes account of changes in the overall National Curriculum (introduced by a different political government) already published<sup>28</sup>, but not formally endorsed by the faith communities. It is probably more realistic to ask that the RE Commission, due to report in 2018, give attention to the findings of this comparative analysis in its deliberations<sup>29</sup>.

### ***Validation of the Analysis Model's Components***

Even if the analysis results of this English language case serve to validate the model's seven components, two new elements are worthy of attention.

First, a new detail came to light in the simple PI component. In no document analysed to date in the Francophonie have we identified a PI that integrates and appropriates learnings from EO – which we symbolized  $PI_{EO}$ . This seems particularly relevant to us because personal identity formation is not exclusively found in the sphere of self (Pech, 2016), it requires awareness of others (EO) which is subsequently integrated with one's own identity (Seymour, 2008).

Second, in the general orientations, we found an element that did not correspond to any of the model's components, namely: “recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery” (NFRE, p. 13). This can be explained by the fact that the model's components do not include such a metaphysical or theological element. This theological dimension is outside of a model focusing on ethics. We will keep this occurrence outside of the present components but inside the area of Ethics Education. We will keep this new element for a future analysis of other programs and countries, in order to see if it is a specific learning in England or if it can be seen elsewhere

### **CONCLUSION**

We conclude that the study of this contrast case validates the model's seven components. However, analyses of other contrast cases remain to be verified. We also conclude that even though the NFRE is more ambitious in its general orientations than in its learning goals, the learning objectives are much more distributed than those found in Quebec' religious culture teaching, because the pupil's personal identity and relationship to others are more integrated and taken into consideration.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the NFRE's function is to guide the development of local syllabi since it is up to “each LEA, through its ASC, to

determine the extent to which the National framework informs syllabus development. Similarly, the local, regional and national authorities within faith communities should consider what account they wish to take of the National framework” (NFRE, 2004, p. 10). Thus, for a picture of Religious Education in England’s official documents, the syllabi need to be analysed, whether issuing from local education authorities or faith communities. What of the learning goals within these syllabuses? What portraits of Ethics Education emerge from them? Are they close to or distant from the NFRE’s? An initial analysis of the Cumbria, Hampshire and Warrington syllabi leads us to think that although portraits are diversified, Aim 1 (learning about and from religion) remains fundamental. A more extensive and “in depth” analysis may well follow...

More globally, we think that our model could serve other purposes besides analyzing official programs and policies. It could, for example, be used to illuminate choices with regard to the orientation and design of programs. It may also be useful in analyzing the conceptions of trainers, educators and learners with regard to ethical education. In addition, it seems to us to offer an analytical framework that enables us to identify points of meeting and of rupture between different portraits of ethical education, one that results from a formal program and another from an operational program. This latter aspect seems to us particularly important, as emphasized by Demeuse and Strauven:

[T]he control exerted by school inspection rarely prevents teachers or trainers from taking some liberties in this implementation. Various factors explain this reaction, some intervening deliberately, others not: personal conviction of the users of the respective utility of the prescribed apprenticeships or of their relevance, extra-curricular interests displayed by the apprentices (and at times by the teachers or trainers), estimated adequacy of the content for their learning capacity, resistance of users to the innovation due to the pedagogical comfort that maintaining previous practices gives them, fear of failure, lack of the necessary means or difficulty of access, etc.<sup>30</sup> (Demeuse and Strauven, 2006, p. 14-15)

In summary, here are some avenues for research to be explored using the analytical model which, we hope, will inspire others to extend this study.

NOTES

1. I would like to sincerely thank Professor Brian Gates for his valuable support for this research on NFRE in England and for his re-reading of this paper. We also thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for the financial support to this research.
2. Quebec (Canada), France, Wallonia (Belgium), French-speaking Switzerland, Burkina Faso and Burundi.
3. In the Francophonie, an education to vivre-ensemble (with others or in society) is expected from programmes such as Civic and Moral Education (France), Philosophy and Citizenship (Belgium), Ethics and Religious Culture (Quebec, Canada), Ethics and Religious Cultures (French-speaking Cantons, Switzerland), Civic and Moral Education (Burkina Faso), Human and Civic Education (Burundi). It should be noted that “vivre-ensemble” is never actually defined in the guidance documents and programmes we have studied to date.
4. In French “éducation éthique”. See Bouchard and al. (2017).
5. We proceeded with an undifferentiated analysis of the major orientations drawn from the literature, our goal was to draw from this an analytical model of this fundamental dimension of the educational act, its ethical dimension. The choice of major orientations (intended, finalized, goals, objectives, etc.) is justified by the fact that these orientations reveal a program’s ethical intentions. Once every units of sense had been extracted from the literature, we labeled all of the elements by a multiple back-and-forth comparison between our individual and our collective analyses, which enabled us to progressively develop an analytical model of the ethical components, the goal being to develop a model of the ensemble that we call “educational ethics”. Following this, we proceeded to validate the aforesaid model, and we continue to do so based on programs other than those initially used to develop the model.
6. These will shortly be checked again in relation to any more recent North and South Francophone developments. Further conceptual refinement and theorization will then follow.
7. France, Wallonia (Belgium) and Quebec (Canada).
8. It is in this specific sense that we use the expression “citizenship education” here even if we find several definitions of this expression in scientific literature about this education.
9. In other words, a philosophy that is academic (cultural, functional, rational), psychological (cognitive, socio-cognitive, behavioural), social (socially critical, social and community based, eco-social), or humanistic (of personal fulfilment, interpersonal growth).
10. It should be pointed out that Pires uses the term saturation exclusively for internal diversification, and the term exhaustiveness for external diversification.
11. Although a “conscience clause” gives parental right of withdrawal on religious grounds. Given that RE is widely acknowledged to be “educational” rather than “denominationally instructional” in intent, this is not commonly used.
12. “Grimmitt and Read first used the concept of learning about and learning from religion in the late 1970s within a human development model of religious education which stressed the instrumental value that the study of content should have to the wider personal development of the learner” (Baumfield, 2009, p. 1). Baumfield, V. (2009) Editorial, *British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 31, No. 1, January 2009, 1-2. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200802560294>
13. There is also the promotion of key skills and other aspects of the curriculum, but these are of another kind. In other words, we limited ourselves to elements that addressed the different dimensions of human being.
14. The “UK Human Rights Act” was enacted in 2000.
15. Confident about their own beliefs and identity; a realistic and positive sense of their own ideas; recognition of their own uniqueness.

16. Increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people.
17. Listening and a willingness to learn from others, even when others' views are different from their own; being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others.
18. Being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good; appreciating that some beliefs are not inclusive and considering the issues that this raises for individuals and society.
19. Being prepared to recognize and acknowledge their own bias.
20. Being willing to learn and gain new understanding; engaging in argument or disagreeing reasonably and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others) about religious, moral and spiritual questions; being willing to go beyond surface impressions; distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith.
21. Developing their imagination and curiosity; appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live; developing their capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose.
22. In Figure 4, the total is 15 because one of the examples has a double function: listening to memorable experiences and making-up stories.
23. "Throughout this phase, students analyse and interpret a wide range of religious, philosophical and ethical concepts in increasing depth. They investigate issues of diversity within and between religions and the ways in which religion and spirituality are expressed in philosophy, ethics, science and the arts. [...] They understand the importance of dialogue between and among different religions and beliefs." (p. 30)
24. For an overview of this tradition, see Gates, B. (2007) *Transforming Religious Education: Beliefs and Values under Scrutiny*. For Grimmitt's place in it: Bates, D. Key exponents in developing the curriculum theory and practice of RE, in Gates (2016), pp. 244-248.
25. This programme is mandatory in all private and public elementary and secondary schools. The three competencies of ethics, religious education and dialogue are respectively referred to as: "Reflects on ethical questions", "Demonstrates an understanding of the phenomenon of religion", and "Engages in dialogue". See the elementary teaching programme : [http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site\\_web/documents/dpse/formation\\_jeunes/ecr\\_elementary.pdf](http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/dpse/formation_jeunes/ecr_elementary.pdf) and the secondary teaching programme: [http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site\\_web/documents/dpse/formation\\_jeunes/ecr\\_secondary.pdf](http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/dpse/formation_jeunes/ecr_secondary.pdf)
26. As recommended by the Department for Education (2014). See: *The Equality Act 2010 and schools*. Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities, May 2014. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/315587/Equality\\_Act\\_Advice\\_Final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf)
27. Also recommended by the Department for Education (2014). See: *Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools*. Departmental advice for maintained schools, November 2014. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/380595/SMSC\\_Guidance\\_Maintained\\_Schools.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf)
28. Retrieved from [http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/media/file/RE\\_Review\\_Summary.pdf](http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/media/file/RE_Review_Summary.pdf)
29. Retrieved from <http://religionseducationcouncil.org.uk/commission-on-re>
30. We translate.

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