

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF NEW STUDY DESIGN

- **NB Read the introductory statements to each Unit not just the key skills and knowledge as they any part of the SD text for Units 3 And 4 may be questioned on the examination**
- **Use of primary and secondary sources for information is necessary as a tool for depth of analysis – but only quote them if they're saying something of value – no need to label them as primary or secondary sources**

No one seemed to have any problems with AOS 3.1.

For AOS 3.2

- **In different traditions - not all aspects are fully represented in expressing all beliefs that could be studied. In some traditions some aspects may be more dominant in expressing beliefs. Use other denominations of your religious tradition to fill out your study of the expression of beliefs through certain aspects.**
- **Check 'Frequently Asked Questions' on the R&S and VCAA websites for definition of Spaces, Places, Times and Artifacts – It is ONE aspect with four components. All 4 need to be studied as to how the beliefs are expressed**

3:2

Is it ok to do belief about: God the Father and the second belief about God the Son???

The dot point that asks about the **connections between these expressions for each belief**.

Can you please expand on this for me? Is it really asking to elaborate on the 2nd dot point but be specific to those beliefs from the tradition.

Yes, you would be teasing out through tradition specific examples what you have claimed is the function of each aspect and how it interconnects with the other aspects.

3:2

I have a question regarding the two beliefs to be studied in depth for each religion in Unit 3, Outcome 3.2.

Are there any guidelines as to how "belief" is understood in regard to this outcome?

We are considering developing the two beliefs below for Protestant Christianity.

Yes, the first line in the introduction to Area of Study 2 'Expressing meaning' indicates the understanding of beliefs and the beliefs that could be used are based on what has been developed in AOS 3.1.

Within the tradition of Protestant Christianity, I think you need to be clear about the Christianity you are studying. Is it Mainline Protestant Christianity or Evangelical Protestant Christianity?

If you want both then your students will need to show they know the differences when they are explaining particular expressions of the belief. Some expressions will be acceptable to most Protestants. If you intend to study Protestant Christianity generally, then when making the connections you need to offer a wider perspective than what might be the experience of the students or of a particular version of Protestant Christianity.

You should choose the two beliefs (preferably from two different categories of belief- gives students more things to say and use different quotations) carefully so that they are discernably Protestant versions of more widely held Christian beliefs or distinctly Protestant. So Salvation is a good one.

3:2

I am struggling a bit with Unit 3 AOS 2 Expressing Meaning. The criteria to discuss the belief using all 9 aspects is proving somewhat limiting. I think a better approach would be to require use of say 4 aspects or similar. When I think about what I want my students to learn, it is really understanding Christian history, the bible and Christian living in an increasingly secular society. I feel opening up the topic would better allow for this. I know it is too late to change now but maybe something that could be adopted in the future?

Yes, way too late, nor would it be adequate for the SD purposes. What we have in the SD will remain for some years.

The requirement to work with the expression of belief through all the other aspects is to enrich students' understanding of how religion works.

It should enable students to have more to say about what each aspect actually does in its particular expression of specific beliefs.

And the various aspects communicate, convey, emphasise, elaborate, enact, enhance, consolidate the meaning and the understanding of beliefs.

This is what you are teasing out.

For example: What is it that the artifact of the cross does for the belief 'Christ is salvation'?

Here you would also note that it works at a symbolic level too and the meaning of its symbolism could vary according to the individual. That is part of the power of symbols.

There will be overlap between aspects. For example, some artifacts become highly symbolic at certain times and become part of rituals and are significant for a particular place.

Also it is helpful to choose two beliefs from two different categories of belief (see AOS 3.1) so that students have more diverse points to make.

So you need to choose beliefs from your study in 3.1 or connected to those beliefs, that will enable you to find their expression within the whole range of aspects and that includes the four components in the aspect 'spaces, places, times and artifacts'.

Your aim is fine and through studying this subject via objective critique of religion in general and of a particular tradition, your students should be well prepared to live Christianity within a diverse society.

Of course a belief may not be strongly expressed through each of the other aspects, this varies because of the emphasis given by different religious traditions to particular aspects.

3:2

It states that students need to explore at least two beliefs studied in Area of Study 1, as they are expressed in the other aspects of the selected religious tradition.

I was wondering whether the study of the Trinity & Resurrection will be acceptable in this case? Would they then need to make sure when they address each of the 9 Aspects that they relate the understanding of each of those aspects to the explanation of how the Trinity & Resurrection falls into each (i.e. symbols in them both, text, spaces/places/time/artifacts in them both).

Yes, each belief has to be shown in its expression through all the other aspects.

And note that you should treat all four components of 'spaces, places, times and artifacts'.

There will be overlap between aspects. For example, some artifacts become highly symbolic at certain times and become part of rituals and are significant for a particular place.

You may be wiser to choose each belief from a different category of belief. Both T and R relate to ultimate reality belief category. Unless you refer to Resurrection in the belief category of death and afterlife or even the belief category of relationship between ultimate reality and humanity.

Although you are always referring back to beliefs about ultimate reality, choosing one belief from another belief category would give more scope in discussing the expression through the various aspects.

Have a look at the main beliefs you have developed in 3.1 in the categories of 'nature and purpose of human life' or 'the meaning of suffering'. Both of these categories give scope for tapping into student interests and concerns. Given the category of 'the meaning of suffering' is new to SD maybe go for that. There is richness in the expressions of this belief through all the other aspects.

For AOS 3.3

- **ALL Key Knowledge & Key skills dot points must be able to be applied - the criteria of before, during and after**
- **We do not have to cover a whole life but ONE experience in the life of the person who is the case study.**

3.3

I've had a look at the sample paper you have kindly prepared for Units 3 and 4 teachers and have a question which I hope you can clarify.

Section A Question 5 (page 4) draws the distinction between adherence to religious belief and faith in religious beliefs. What, essentially, is the difference between the two? Articles on the internet, primarily those focusing on Christian belief, hold that the difference is minimal. If this is indeed the case, how should I best approach teaching my students the distinction to which reference is made in the question?

This is my only question of concern, I have found the sample paper very useful.

I think there might be blinkered thinking represented in such articles.

Adherence is complying with the requirements of a religious tradition.

But it may not be accompanied by any or much actual belief or faith in those requirements. So some people in religious traditions both historically and contemporarily go through the motions of being a member of the tradition because it is expected by family, employer, village, culture, law, or for personal status or advantage. But this engagement may not represent faith/belief/trust in the teachings, stories, ideas or the veracity of the rituals and practices. Their adherence isn't enough to support them in times of stress or disappointment or challenge. Their adherence really hasn't touched their life, their sense of identity and their understanding of meaning and purpose.

Of course adherence and faith can go together. Faith/trust in the truth of the beliefs and practices of one's religious tradition can contribute to maintaining adherence or even strengthening it.

Classic examples in Christianity of the difference between adherence and faith are contained in the "Canterbury Tales" by Geoffrey Chaucer.

3.3

Is doing Martin Luther for 3.3 the best choice, since despite his convictions, and because of his convictions, he was excommunicated and the study design says the life experience 'of members'. I can't find it now but I'm pretty sure I read somewhere that the person shouldn't be a conversion story or someone who changes faith/denomination. If so, I think our school should do Desmond Doss and I'm putting together an outline why and how it could be taught to fulfil the curriculum.

Luther like St Paul does not convert in the full sense of moving to something other.

He rethinks his original understandings of his tradition and arrives at different understandings.

These he perceives as the 'true' understanding of the scripture and the subsequent role of the church and its leaders. Getting back to the basics.

So if I were doing Luther for 3.3 I would focus on his beliefs and how they changed as a consequence of his negative and disillusioning experiences in Rome.

This would all be while he was still a Catholic.

I wouldn't do anything on his later life as an excommunicated Catholic.

3.3

We will be commencing AOS 3 soon and I would really like to use Mother Teresa as our individual study. Do you think Mother Teresa hearing God speaking to her and then her change in focus constitutes a significant life experience?

My immediate response is that it does not seem to strongly fit the new emphasis in the KK and KS of Area of Study 3.

Of particular importance is the third dot point of the KK and KS.

To make it work you would need to have her statements articulating the various elements of that key point.

3.3

Which unit and outcome does question 5 section A of Sample paper relate to?

This question focuses on Unit 3 Area of Study 3 Significant life experience, religious beliefs and faith.

Note on page 20 of the SD the third dot point in Key Knowledge and Key Skills.

Students need to be able to discuss generally and from their case study the difference that may exist in the interaction between religious beliefs and significant life experience because:

A person may just belong to a religious tradition because it is part of one's national, ethnic or family culture, but they know or understand little about the beliefs and really don't believe them (that is they don't have much faith).

A person may belong to a religious tradition because it is part of one's national, ethnic or family culture and have great acceptance in faith of the beliefs and practices of the tradition, even though they may have little understanding of the beliefs. And there are other combinations of belonging, understanding, adherence and faith that can be considered.

The quotation is a prompt for discussion, and should engage students in disagreeing and agreeing with its contentions. Certainly the quotation is not meant to be accepted as the main or only way of being part of a religious tradition and discussing the interception of religious belief with significant life experience.

For AOS 4.1

- **'Analyse and compare stances taken over the four challenges selected – Did the religion take the same stance in each challenge? Resistant? Open? Accommodating? Ignored?**
- **Analyse and compare challenges: their sources, stances and responses**
- **These details of the case study challenges should be able to be spoken of in terms of the general understanding of the nature of challenges engaging religion in general.**
- **Responses = the actions taken to support their stance (stance = their attitude, policy position)**
- **Mainly use the general official stance taken by a religious tradition. Though be aware of other stances that may be taken by powerful or in some way significant individuals or groups within the tradition.**
Students write 1 to 2 page summary for each of the four challenges
- **Study design asks for just knowledge of the period/years/date, place and the relevant aspects of religion that were challenged (did they remain consistent or were changed?) then the stances (major or official stance and minority stance/s) and responses (or major response or significant minority's resistance or breakaway)**
- **Although not specifically asking for the effectiveness of the response or its impact (as in old study design) some comment of the success or otherwise of the stances and their supporting responses would probably be part of what students would include in their dealing with the key Skill of "analyse and compare stances and responses to challenges...."**

For AOS 4.2

- **This is a more detailed challenge allowing for denominations or dissensions – don't make the topic too big. It is the analytical detail that is important.**
- **Only one or two key knowledge points will be questioned in an exam question [not like a full essay] – see sample exam paper page 12, Section B question 5**

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

This is a straight forward question. Is the Catechism of the Catholic Church considered a primary or secondary resource? We have different opinions here on staff and I am asking for some clarification please.

The important explanation to use is in the FAQs document at

http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/religion/Religion_and_Society_FAQs.docx

How are primary and secondary sources differentiated in the study of religious traditions?

Primary sources are usually texts spoken, written, or represented in the Arts, by a person who participated in events, observed events, or is reflecting on the events contemporaneously or after a period of time. Secondary sources usually draw on, elaborate or explain primary sources. The distinction between primary and secondary sources will vary between religious traditions and their particular practices at specific times regarding sacred texts.

Basically I would regard the Catholic Catechism as a secondary **resource** that collates, refines and interprets overall teachings and previous interpretations. It uses primary sources and secondary sources to do this.

It does not fit neatly the definition of primary sources in FAQs or below.

Often it is referred to as a Primary Resource.

Yet if thought of in a particular time and circumstance of its creation then it could be seen as a primary source for the teachings of the universal church at that time and until it is revised and replaced.

But it doesn't really matter.

You don't have to argue a case for it as a primary or secondary source or indeed name it in such a way when referencing it.

The way the students would use it, would be as a major resource of cumulative catholic teaching and official current interpretation.

The intention behind the Key Skill point about use of primary and secondary sources was to encourage a wider range of references, such as those produced at the time of an event by those involved in the event rather than just references written much later as commentary. This was in the hope students would see differences of interpretation and evaluation and meaning, thus enabling them to analyse.

Below are some explanations that might be useful in this discussion.

Primary sources are the raw materials of history — original **documents** and objects which were created at the time under study. They are different from secondary **sources**, accounts or interpretations of events created by someone without firsthand experience.

What is a catechism?

A catechism is a text which contains the fundamental Christian truths formulated in a way that facilitates their understanding. There are two categories of catechism: major and minor. A major catechism is a resource or a point of reference for the development of minor catechisms. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is an example of a major catechism. The *Baltimore Catechism* is an example of a minor catechism.

What is a "universal catechism?"

A "universal catechism" is a major catechism which is intended to be a resource or point of reference for the development of national or local catechisms and catechetical materials throughout the world. Such a catechism can be termed "universal" in that its primary audience is the universal Church.

Is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* a "universal Catechism?"

Yes. Insofar as it is intended to be a resource or point of reference for the development of minor catechisms throughout the universal Church, it is a "universal catechism."

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was titled the *Catechism of the Universal Church* in an earlier draft, but it was never officially titled the "universal Catechism." The *Catechism* is in need of what its Prologue terms "the indispensable mediation" of particular culture, age, spiritual life and social and ecclesial conditions. The *Catechism* is "universal," then, because it is intended for use by the universal Church.

EXAM QUESTIONS

As there is no longer an essay. Extended response questions focused on any Area of Study would be contained to one or perhaps two KK and KS points.

Your best guide at present for the style of question would be the Section B questions in the past exams over the last six years, and the Sample Exam Paper. They are on the VCAA website.

RE: SAMPLE RAS EXAMINATION PAPER (April 2017)

see VCAA web site [Sample written examination \(pdf - 899.93kb\)](#)

- The sample exam has deliberately flagged the new criteria in its sample questions – but apart from essays, the style of previous exam questions is still possible & mostly relevant
- Cartoons/images are still relevant [may or may not be on the exam]
- Questions will allow for more than one religion to be used in exam paper answers [but students should clearly flag which tradition they are referring to in an answer] - if students need to stay with only one or to the same tradition, the exam question will state this.

- Section A
 - Short answer questions may now use examples but students need to explain the term, concept, or theory first
 - Page 5 question 6 of Sample paper is relying on students' general understanding of the course
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- Section B
 - NO essay on the exam paper
 - The new exam will have similar style questions to old section B exam therefore no introductory paragraph or conclusion or padding out needed as only one page given to answer.
 - At least two questions of 10 marks each will be in section B, but also other shorter questions – will usually focus on one or two of the KK or KS dot points
 - Stimulus material or prompt quotations still may be used but NOT as for an essay answer but rather for a targeted point.
 - Page 6 Section B Question 1c of Sample paper MUST connect to parts a and b.