

## FACTORS THAT ASSIST CURRICULUM CHANGE

### Abstract

The management of curriculum change in religious education is of interest to all who are concerned with a continuing pursuit of excellence in this curriculum area. Utilising a grounded theory approach the research described in this paper has led to some findings concerning the management of curriculum change in religious education in the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia. It reports on the perspective of some religious education coordinators, who were responsible for managing a major change in the religious education curriculum in Catholic secondary schools. Emanating from a broader on-going study the report focuses on factors that the religious education coordinators perceived assisted curriculum change. The findings of this report allude to some areas for further exploration, which are of particular interest to curriculum change in religious education and raise a series of on-going research questions.

### Introduction

As a key curriculum area in Catholic schools, religious education is as much subject to change as any other. This paper explores some factors that assist curriculum change from the point of view of religious education coordinators. In this article, the term religious education coordinator refers to the Head of Department or Faculty Head of Religious Education in the Catholic secondary school. In the Archdiocese of Melbourne this person has a significant responsibility for the development and delivery of religious education curriculum within the school. This particular curriculum area in Catholic schools has an overall intention that is biased towards faith expression and formation. Such schools have been referred to as faith-based schools because they adopt a faith-nurturing approach to religious education (Grimmitt, 2000, Jackson 2004). The study generated much information about factors that both assist and impede change. The scope of this paper requires that both areas cannot be covered, so it has therefore been decided to focus only on some key factors that assisted change.

The content of this paper will be presented in four sections. The first section provides a brief outline of the study in which the curriculum change described in this paper can be understood. The second section briefly explores the research design used to collect data regarding the perceptions of the religious education coordinators. Section three describes five factors perceived to have assisted the management of curriculum change. The concluding section considers some of the implications of the alleged factors assisting curriculum change in religious education. It also suggests some possible

areas for further investigation, which are beyond the scope of this paper.

### The Study

The initial findings outlined in this paper are part of a more extensive on-going study concerned with understanding how religious education coordinators manage curriculum change. In the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, whose schools provided the insights for the research, major curriculum change in religious education has occurred through the introduction of a Church sponsored textbook series, *To Know Worship and Love* (2001). The implementation of this particular text-based curriculum can be understood in the context of a 'top down' initiative instigated by the former Archbishop of Melbourne, George Pell (Pell, 2001, p. 5). Archbishop Pell's intention was to develop a textbook series for primary and secondary schools with a "distinctive emphasis on the cognitive dimension of learning, that is, on knowing the content of Catholic teaching on faith and morals" (Pell, 2001, p. 5). The Archbishop of Melbourne introduced an educational approach to religious education that was embedded within a catechetical framework. This framework was consistent with that of previous religious education programmes adopted in Melbourne Catholic schools. Engebretson (2002) has written on the educational context of the textbooks and has indicated their position within the catechetical framework, which has underpinned approaches to religious education fostered in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

The educational approach emanating from the *To Know Worship and Love* series was influenced by previous and existing approaches to learning and

teaching in religious education. Grimmitt (2000) has suggested that new pedagogical approaches are a direct response to preceding pedagogies. Some contemporary educational approaches influencing religious education in non-denominational and non-confessional schools (Grimmitt, 2000, pp. 24-25) have impacted on the pedagogical approach adopted in the textbooks developed for secondary schools in the Melbourne archdiocese (Engebretson, 2002). The particular educational approach consistent with the *To Know Worship and Love* textbook series have featured some aspects of the contemporary pedagogies emanating from approaches to religious education in the United Kingdom (Grimmitt, 2000, p. 24).

This 'top down' curriculum initiative directed by Archbishop Pell (2001) proposed that while the emphasis should be on the scholarly acquisition of knowledge content in religious education in Catholic schools, such an acquisition should be seen as a channel to the formation of faith in students (Rossiter, 1981; see also Buchanan, 2003). In summary, Catholic schools in the archdiocese were mandated to implement an educational text-based curriculum as a means of responding to the Catholic mission to hand on a living faith (Pell, 2001, p. 5). This curriculum initiative has involved the incorporation of an educational approach to religious education that is faith-based, which is integral to programs in religious education in Catholic schools.

In Catholic secondary schools the religious education coordinator as curriculum leader had the responsibility for implementing this particular text-based curriculum innovation. When the textbook series was introduced into the schools, recognised authorities in the archdiocese such as the Archbishop, the Episcopal Vicariate for Religious Education, and the Catholic Education Office had not developed curriculum outlines within which the books would be used. This was perhaps due to the fact that the development of curriculum outlines in religious education had traditionally been organised at the school level (school-based curriculum). Given the tradition of school-based curriculum development in religious education in the Melbourne archdiocese, it would seem appropriate that the authorities concerned with religious education would concentrate on the production of the textbook series and forgo the development of curriculum outlines. It also appeared that no discussion regarding the fundamental change in the orientation of religious education emanating from the text-based curriculum approach reached the curriculum leaders in Catholic secondary schools in the archdiocese. However, top down directives encouraged the prompt implementation of the "text-based curriculum" (Pell, 2001, p. 5). The

absence of curriculum statements and a clear understanding about the approach to religious education that the textbook series was oriented towards provided significant challenges for the religious education coordinators in schools who were responsible for managing the curriculum change. Within such a climate the fundamental responsibility of each religious education coordinator charged with managing the curriculum change, was to ensure that the school-based religious education curriculum incorporated the textbook series as the main resource underpinning the teaching and learning programs in religious education.

The data emerging from unstructured interviews with the religious education coordinators is of particular interest because it raised issues about the management of curriculum change from the point of view of those directly responsible for the change in schools. The experiences of the religious education coordinators are drawn on to address the purpose of this paper - that is, to identify those factors which have assisted this change in religious education curriculum.

### **Research Design**

The research was located within the constructivist paradigm (Crotty, 1998). A grounded theory approach was adopted to draw on the experiences and perceptions of religious education coordinators. Unstructured interviews provided a starting point for understanding how religious education coordinators managed the curriculum change. The duration of each interview was approximately one hour.

The research methodology followed the principles of data collection and analysis promoted by Glaser (1998) where the emphasis is on the categories and theory emerging from the data. The data were collected and analysed consistent with Glaser's (1978) understanding of theoretical sensitivity where the theory emerges from the categories arising out of the data.

Grounded theory is commonly used to generate theory where little is known about the phenomenon (Goulding, 2002, p. 42). Since there is very little documentation about religious education coordinators as managers of curriculum change, grounded theory was used to establish hypotheses relating to the phenomenon of religious education coordinators as managers of curriculum change.

The role of the religious education coordinator within the school is unique. Crotty (2005) suggested that the role of religious education coordination emerged after the Second Vatican Council with the intention of ensuring that a staff

member could understand the changes instigated by the Second Vatican Council (p. 54) and relate these changes to the rest of the school community. The role has developed significantly since then and there exists a range of opinions regarding whether the role should be regarded as primarily an educational one, or a role within the Church. According to Crotty (2005) the role of religious education coordinator has been perceived as a position both within the school and within the Catholic Church. The bi-dimensional role of the religious education coordinator is a factor that distinguishes the role from other curriculum leadership roles in the Catholic school context. This dualism may account for the absence of literature concerning religious education coordinators as managers of curriculum change. Educational researchers may see it as an area of research for religious and theological disciplines whereas religious and theological researchers may see it as an area of relevance to educational researchers. The bi-dimensional role of the religious education coordinator has two lines of accountability (education and church), which impact on and distinguish how this curriculum change was managed. Utilising the principles of grounded theory, insights were gained concerning the factors that religious education coordinators perceived assisted curriculum change in this distinctive curriculum area.

Grounded theory enabled the researcher to compare, analyse and systematically conceptualise data through theoretical sampling. This process permitted categories to emerge as the main issues of the participants were discovered. The systematic gathering of data and the interplay between the collection of data and analysis allowed theory to evolve:

...one gets data in an area of substantive interest, and then tries to analyse what is going on and how to conceptualise it while suspending one's own knowledge for the time being. The researcher starts finding out what is going on, conceptualises it and generates hypotheses as relations between concepts (Glaser, 1998, p. 95).

The process may not necessarily be straightforward, and the researcher may experience a lack of clarity in the course of allowing the theories to emerge. The researcher must be conscious not to force the data but should allow the categories and properties to emerge from the data (Glaser, 1998, pp. 98–101).

In the context of the broad study, it was the intention of the researcher to know and understand how religious education coordinators have

implemented the curriculum change described at the beginning of this paper. By engaging in grounded theory methodology, the researcher adopted the role of co-learner with the aim of suspending preconceptions as a means to be open to discovery and the emergence of theory. This paper focuses on aspects assisting change, which have emerged from the preliminary findings.

A total of eight religious education coordinators were interviewed. Five religious education coordinators from various Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne were initially interviewed. The religious education coordinators from these schools represented the total number of applicants who had applied for, and received, funding from the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne, to implement the textbooks in their respective schools. A further three religious education coordinators were randomly selected from the seventy-two Catholic secondary schools in the Melbourne archdiocese. The decision to interview beyond the initial five religious education coordinators was based on whether or not the experiences of religious education coordinators who had not applied for funding might be similar or different. This triangulation with the five religious education coordinators who had received funding did not reveal any new categories but provided data that indicated that the categories that emerged from the initial interviews were saturated. Glaser (1978, 1998) has emphasised that the researcher should stay in the field until the categories are saturated and this is understood to occur when no new data emerges. This qualitative research approach did not rely on any particular sample size but on remaining in the field until all the relevant categories were saturated.

A grounded theory approach provided an opportunity to understand the factors that assisted curriculum change from the perspective of those directly involved in managing the change. In the following section five areas described by the religious education coordinators involved in the study are identified as factors that assisted the curriculum change.

## FACTORS THAT ASSIST CHANGE

### 1. Time to link theory and practice

The religious education coordinators involved in this study suggested that time to link theory and practice assisted the management of this curriculum change as it provided opportunities for teachers of religious education to understand the reasons for the change, to share their responses to the change, to identify and express any difficulties they had with the change. The following comment was a

common view expressed by the religious education coordinators involved in this study.

Reflection time provided opportunities for adequate communication between members of staff. Staff members were able to discuss issues concerning the reasons for the change and share their responses. It provided an opportunity for them to express their concerns and difficulties and find a way forward. This process was particularly important because concerns about the changes not only raised educational questions but also questions relating to the personal or religious faith concerns of many teachers teaching R.E. (Participant J).

Time to link theory and practice was not only valuable for the teaching staff involved in the change but also for the religious education coordinators leading the change. This time enabled teachers to share pedagogical experiences relating to how the curriculum innovation was being translated in the classroom context. Opportunities to celebrate success and express concerns about ways to improve the learning and teaching approaches provided an opportunity for teachers to learn from each other. Johnson (2000, 2001) has reported on the value of reflective practice. He suggested that it enabled teachers' to focus on their needs relevant to their real work situation. This study suggests that reflective practice also provided an opportunity for teachers to consider their own pastoral and ministry needs within the Catholic faith tradition, as well as focus on other needs relevant to their work situation.

Another significant insight revealed by the religious education coordinators involved in this study was that discussion linking theory and practice was not only beneficial for teachers but also for religious education coordinators as curriculum leaders. The religious education coordinators as curriculum leaders were able to gain significant insights into the real classroom needs of teachers and offer leadership that responded to those needs. While discussion linking theory and practice enabled classroom teachers to focus on their needs, curriculum leaders who were privy to such discussions were provided with valuable insights concerning the real issues relevant to the work situation of the classroom teacher.

#### *Professional development opportunities for underqualified and inexperienced teachers*

The religious education coordinators commented on importance of helping the high proportion of teachers in the faculty who lacked adequate qualifications in religious education (this issue will

be explored further in a later section of this paper). The data from all the religious education coordinators involved in this study indicated that they perceived it as their responsibility to provide opportunities to professionally develop the teachers. Time to link theory and practise provided insights which assisted the religious education coordinators when organising relevant professional development opportunities for the classroom teacher (this factor will also be explored in more detail at a later stage in this paper). The following comment by a religious education coordinator was indicative of the sentiments shared by others:

By allowing opportunities for staff to share their experiences in the religious education classroom and reflect on the level of success or failure of that lesson helped me [religious education coordinator] to identify the needs of individual teachers as well as the collective needs of faculty members. I would attempt to address these issues by providing staff members with relevant literature, organising professional learning and peer support opportunities, and guest speakers (Participant A).

#### *The potential for supporting faith*

In the Catholic school context in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, the approach to religious education is based on a faith-nurturing model (Grimmitt, 2000). The curriculum innovation studied in this research has an emphasis on knowledge as a channel to faith formation (Rossiter, 1981; see also, Buchanan, 2003, p. 29; Elliot & Rossiter, 1982; Engebretson, Fleming & Rymarz, 2002; Hart, 2002, p. 6; Pell, 2001, p. 5). The data emerging from the interviews with religious education coordinators suggested that time to discuss and link theory with practice in religious education had the potential to provide opportunities for classroom teachers to reflect on their own faith-forming journey. A comment by a religious education coordinator provides an example of the faith-forming potential of emanating from the discussion time.

Yesterday I met with the Year 10 teachers and we evaluated what we had taught about Mark's Gospel. Before teaching the unit, their understanding of scripture was predominantly literal, rather fundamental. I decided to provide them with an understanding of the historical background and the structure of the text. I thought this would be a good starting point for their classroom teaching. As they reflected on the content I was leading them through they began to comment on passages from

Mark's Gospel and what the messages actually mean to them. It was a very personal experience where their own understanding of Jesus was being enriched by their reflections (Participant L).

The religious education coordinators interviewed were sensitive to the impact implementing the Church-sponsored textbooks were having on some member of their teaching faculty at a personal and faith level. To some extent this insight accounted for why religious education coordinators perceived it as their responsibility to not only provide but lead opportunities for professional development in terms of the faith tradition and relevant issues concerning content and pedagogy.

#### *Resources*

The religious education coordinators involved in the study saw part of their role in the management of curriculum as one, which provides appropriate learning and teaching resources. When time was allocated for classroom teachers to discuss the interplay between theory and practice the religious education coordinators were able to gain insights which assisted them in providing resources relevant to the teachers.

On-going reflection time helped me to understand the needs of the teachers. I gained insights about the types of resources they needed. As articles, books and videos came my way I would pass the relevant ones one and suggest how they could be used (Participant A)

#### *Summary*

The experiences of the religious education coordinators suggest that time to discuss the interplay between curriculum theory and practice assisted the management of curriculum change in four broad areas. It provided an opportunity for members of the faculty to meet and express their concerns and understandings relating to the curriculum change. In so doing the learning and teaching needs associated with the curriculum innovation were articulated. Consequently it enabled religious education coordinators to respond to the needs of the classroom teacher by providing professional learning opportunities and appropriate curriculum resources for the teachers to use. The insight into the pastoral/ministry concerns of the teachers also influenced the actions of the religious education coordinators particularly in the area of taking responsibility for the professional development/learning opportunities they provided for members of their faculty.

## **2. Professional development / learning opportunities for teachers of religious education.**

A second factor that assisted the change was the provision made by the religious education coordinators to offer school based opportunities for professional learning (Johnson 2000, 2001) and development on the new textbooks. This however was problematic in that it took away curriculum management time in an already under-resourced role, but the religious education coordinators attested to its value.

The transition to a knowledge centred text-based curriculum in religious education exposed gaps in the religious knowledge and competencies of the teachers of religious education. The data collected from the interviews with religious education coordinators indicated that providing professional learning and development opportunities for teachers of religious education assisted the management and implementation of curriculum change. Coordinators from other curriculum areas might attest to the value of providing professional learning and development opportunities for staff members. However what was distinctive about this study is that the religious education coordinators suggested that it was imperative that they facilitate and lead the professional learning/development opportunities for members of the religious education faculty at their particular school.

Most indicated that members of their faculties were made up of teachers who were vulnerable when teaching religious education and generally inadequately qualified or not sufficiently connected to the Catholic faith tradition. Thomas (2000) has commented on the implications of unqualified teachers of religious education in terms of impeding the teaching and learning approaches in religious education. What is interesting about this study is that the religious education coordinators were focussed on supporting vulnerable teachers of religious education by facilitating and leading professional learning/development opportunities.

Many of the staff here who teach religious education are excellent teachers in other curriculum areas. It is expected by the school that they teach a class of religious education and most of them have no background or qualifications in religious education. They feel threatened when experts from outside the school lead professional development seminars in religious education. They just sit there and they are reluctant to interact or ask questions. At first I thought it was because they did not care about the subject. Then I

realised that they felt vulnerable, so I began to organise and lead the professional development seminars. The staff felt more relaxed because they know me. They asked questions, shared ideas and began to try things in the classroom (Participant I).

Fleming (2002) indicated that religious education coordinators in the Archdiocese of Melbourne were comparatively highly qualified in the areas of both education and religious education. This background and the experience of the bi-dimensional nature of the role may account for why religious education coordinators did not shy away from the taking on the responsibility to facilitate professional development opportunities for members of their faculty.

So part of my task is to provide on site professional development or survival for the religious education teachers. So in teaching them how to prepare lessons in religious education and lesson content they feel personally and professionally supported. They feel more confident to take risks and to talk about what they are experiencing in the classroom (Participant L).

The religious education coordinators suggested that the professional development experiences they provided helped staff members to gain competencies in teaching and learning and develop knowledge about the content of the text-based religious education curriculum. Growth in teacher confidence and a willingness to try new teaching and learning approaches in the classroom, as well as a willingness to share their success and failures with other members of the faculty, were identified as positive aspects of professional learning experiences. According to the religious education coordinators the professional learning experiences they offered members of the teaching staff helped them to grow personally and professionally. As their confidence escalated they became more willing to participate in professional development organised in a wider educational context. The general literature on curriculum change (Fullan, 1993; Johnson, 2000, 2001; Hargreaves, 1998; Marsh, 1997; Smith & Lovat, 2003) would attest to this. However what emerges as distinctive to this study is that the impetus for the religious education coordinators to provide professional learning and development opportunities for members of staff emanate from pastoral/ministry concerns which impact on the delivery of educational curriculum goals. The catechetical framework in which this particular curriculum change was managed brought to the fore re-occurring debates concerning whether

the teacher of religious education within a faith-based school, be a practising member of the religious tradition to which the school subscribes (Jackson, 2005). Data emanating from the interviews with religious education coordinators suggested that this vulnerability attributed to the lack of confidence in teaching religious education and the preference for being led by the religious education coordinator, through professional learning experiences assisted the management of this curriculum change.

### 3. Teamwork

The religious education coordinators perceived that teamwork among members of the faculty was a factor that assisted the management of curriculum change. It provided opportunities for members of the faculty to audit the content of existing curriculums against the content of the textbooks and their own understandings about the Catholic faith tradition. The development of effective professional relationships and expertise amongst staff members was enhanced by the experience of teamwork. Teamwork built competencies in teaching and curriculum planning amongst teachers.

The teachers are building confidence, and competence in planning the curriculum in religious education through sharing their ideas and concerns at the team meetings (Participant A).

This accords with Johnson's (2000) notion of professional action-learning teams (PLTs). Such teams respond to actual workplace needs and thus have a reason to come together. They engage in professional conversation and collaborative practices. Members of the team share collective responsibility for producing effective learning for all students as well as each other (Healy, 2003). In many situations religious education coordinators encouraged teamwork opportunities according to year levels rather than a whole faculty context. Year level teams provided opportunities for year levels to explore creative ways of developing and implementing the curriculum as well as discuss issues about the faith tradition emanating from the content of the textbook at their particular year level.

We work quite well in teams. I [religious education coordinator] make sure that each Year level has a team leader who is creative and pushes the others along to be more creative (Participant C).

Some religious education coordinators were able to negotiate as part of the teaching load a timetabled meeting for teams to meet. Teams in other schools

arranged meeting after school. According to Thomas (2000) the vulnerability many teachers of religious education experience can be attributed to two broad issues. Those being, a lack of personal familiarity with the religious tradition to which the faith-based school belongs and limited or no qualifications in religious education. The religious education coordinators regarded teamwork as an opportunity to develop positive working relationships with other faculty members by trying to address the faith and professional concerns of the staff.

It sounds strange but to develop a positive relationship between the members happens when they feel that their contribution is valued and important. So it is the development of relationships within teams that helps to create effective teams.

In the process of managing curriculum change the religious education coordinators involved in this study suggested that it was their responsibility to provide opportunities for teachers to work in teams. Teamwork helped to encourage members of the faculty to accept ownership of the implementation of the text-based curriculum.

The most important thing for me was to make sure that everything was done in terms of relationships between team members in order to allow effective dialogue amongst colleagues. I did not want a situation where I was telling people what to do. I wanted teachers to come up with some ideas and solutions as well by working together to plan and implement the curriculum (Participant B).

Teamwork assisted the management of curriculum change in the following ways. It allowed for effective curriculum planning auditing and development to occur. Teamwork fostered the development of positive professional relationships amongst colleagues. It also built up professional confidence amongst members of the faculty particularly the vulnerable members as it provided a forum for questions about faith and pedagogy to be explored.

#### **4. Support from school leadership/administration**

Religious education coordinators identified the support of the leadership/administration team as a factor that also assisted the management of the curriculum change. Support was identified in terms of a genuine interest about the change from members of the leadership team. In addition a eagerness to be informed about the process of managing the change was interpreted as a measure of support.

I think the support from the leadership team was very positive. In addressing the issue of change and thinking about the processes that needed to be put in place to bring about the change, I think the support of the leadership team helped significantly (Participant A).

Religious education coordinators indicated that the support of the leadership team was a two-way concern. Several religious education coordinators suggested the importance of keeping the leadership/administration team informed about the change as equally important as seeking support from the leadership/administration team.

I felt that the leadership team were willing to support my initiatives to manage the change but I also felt it was important for me to keep them informed about the text-based curriculum and its implications, especially for our school. I was always encouraged by the leadership team. You know, they would say 'well done, congratulations, if you need anything let me know.' But that's about it. It never went any further (Participant J).

The data suggested that leadership/administration teams were willing to offer support by providing religious education coordinators with additional classroom time release in order to manage the implementation of the curriculum change. However the bi-dimensional nature and demands of the role of the religious education coordinator did not enable additional time release to translate as a workable option. The demands of the role of religious education coordinator meant that time release for managing the curriculum change would prove costly in terms of completing all the other aspects of the role for which the religious education coordinator is accountable.

If I wanted extra time then there certainly was support for that. I would just have to ask the principal and I would get it. But I did not ask because there is so much else to do in the role and it seemed easier to do the curriculum tasks during my holidays, than to ask for time release (Participant B).

It seems that support was certainly apparent in terms of a genuine interest in the curriculum change by the leadership team and religious education coordinators believed this to be a factor that assisted the management of that change. However an inability to understand the complexity of the demands of the role of the religious

education coordinator and in particular the bi-dimensional nature of the role (Crotty, 2005) meant that the support offered by some leadership/administration teams was compromised when put into practical terms.

### 5. Advertising for qualified teachers of religious education

The text-based curriculum emphasised a knowledge centred approach to teaching religious education as a channel to faith formation (Rossiter, 1981). Concerns emerged from the data regarding the ability of teachers to teach religious education without any background knowledge or qualifications in religious education. Some religious education coordinators were able to encourage the principal of the school to advertise for the appointment of qualified teachers of religious education.

The Principal has definitely made it a priority to attract qualified teachers of religious education and the employment of such teachers has really helped to develop and implement the text-based curriculum (Participant L).

Some religious education coordinators also suggested that the transition to a text-based curriculum exposed gaps in the religious knowledge of many teachers. Several teachers have been encouraged by this revelation to seek tertiary qualifications in religious education and their learning has assisted the management of this knowledge centred curriculum change.

The text-based curriculum has made people realise that they do not know enough about what they are teaching. This curriculum initiative has made teachers want to know more about what they are teaching. It has made some of the teachers want to take on some studies in religious education, not all of them, but several of them. They bring what they are learning from their courses into the school and our curriculum development has really benefited (Participant G).

The transition to a text-based curriculum has provided the impetus for appointing qualified teachers of religious education in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. It has also encouraged some teachers of religious education to take on tertiary studies in this field. The religious education coordinators involved in this study suggest that the inclusion of such teachers within their faculties has assisted the management of implementing a text-based curriculum. Within a Catholic Church sponsored school qualifications in

religious education have emerged as a necessary credential for teachers of religious education.

### Conclusion

This paper has reported on five factors that religious education coordinators believed assisted the management of a particular curriculum change in religious education. The factors that assisted the management of this particular curriculum change were significantly underpinned by pastoral/ministry concerns. These concerns are not factors commonly revealed in the existing body of literature regarding curriculum management and change (Fullan, 1993; Johnson, 2000, 2001; Hargreaves, 1998; Marsh, 1997; Smith & Lovat, 2003). While some of the factors identified are relevant to the broad area of curriculum change, other insights concerning curriculum change area of particular interest to religious education in Church sponsored schools.

On-going research questions emanate from the data regarding factors assisting change brought to the fore in this study. The catechetical nature of religious education in Melbourne and the background experience of religious education teachers in Catholic schools open up areas of particular interest relating to the management of curriculum change in religious education. One area concerns the extent to which these five factors assisting the curriculum change can support the catechetical intention of the *To Know Worship and Love* curriculum innovation.

Another issue involves the critical role of leadership in Catholic schools. Each of the five factors raised in this paper are underpinned by the significant role the leadership of a Catholic secondary school plays in supporting those involved in implementing the change. Further investigation regarding the demands placed on school leadership in terms of assisting the effective management of curriculum change in religious education, could be explored. The findings outlined in this paper suggest that school leadership could consider issues such as: How might school leadership provide structures for teachers to engage in shared time to discuss the linking of theory and practice as well as provide opportunities for effective teamwork to take occur? What priority should school leadership place on attracting qualified teachers of religious education? What priority should be given to providing pathways for personal and professional development and learning opportunities for on-going teachers of religious education?

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