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Pedagogical agility in moments of conflict: how a bricolage approach enables the critical promotion of mutual respect and tolerance in the religious education classroom

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on mutual respect and tolerance, two of five fundamental British values (FBV) which all teachers in England must promote. Existing research has highlighted the political and securitising nature of FBV, but less attention has been paid to the pedagogical approaches teachers use to promote them. Using data generated through a document analysis of key stage three schemes of work (for pupils aged 11–14) in Religious Education (RE) and semi-structured interviews with teachers in three secondary schools, this study draws on the concept of a pedagogical bricolage to explore how RE teachers promote mutual respect and tolerance. It shows how RE teachers need to be pedagogically agile, shifting between approaches to forge creative engagement with diverse worldviews and moments of conflict. It is argued that this requires strong pedagogical literacy but that when done well, a bricolage approach can afford a more critical promotion of mutual respect and tolerance.

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Introduction

This paper focuses on mutual respect and tolerance, which comprise two fundamental British values (FBV). A requirement to 'not undermine' FBV 'including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (Department for Education, 2011, p. 14) has been embedded in the Department for Education's (DfE) Teachers' Standards since 2011. In 2014, additional non-statutory guidance detailed a need to 'actively promote' the values (Department for Education [DfE], 2014, p. 5), a requirement enforced under the 2015 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act. FBV's origins in the counter-terrorism Prevent strategy (HM Government, 2011) are significant, with Jerome et al. (2019) observing that Prevent gradually 'extended its reach' (p. 822) through incorporating FBV in education policies and, as Richardson (2014) further notes, through their inclusion in the framework used by the schools inspectorate OFSTED. This has resulted in concerns that the inherently

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political nature of the requirement to promote FBV positions teachers as state surveillance operatives (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2017). Critiques of the wider consequences of the requirement to promote FBV include the identification of FBV as targeting Muslim pupils and contributing to increased Islamophobia (Busher et al., 2017; Jerome et al., 2019; Thomas, 2020), the possibility of a chilling effect on conversations by closing down spaces for exploring divisive issues in classrooms (Eaude, 2018; Faure-Walker, 2019; Thomas, 2020) and critiques of identifying a set of values as 'British', not least when some of the so-called British values directly contradict the actions of Britain's colonial past (Germaine Buckley, 2020).

Several analyses have focused on how the requirement to promote FBV has been enacted by schools and teachers. They find critical promotion to be rare. For instance, Vincent's (2018) case study research of nine schools identifies widespread visual representation of Britain on display boards, without opportunities to problematise the values, a discovery reiterated by Moncrieffe's and Moncrieffe (2019) analysis of 27 displays from primary schools. Also common is the re-location of FBV as school values, and the re-packaging of existing practices such as school councils with the intention of proving FBV are being promoted (Vincent, 2019). Critical approaches like evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of values are sometimes seen but are not systematically embedded. Instead, Vincent (2019) notes how, worryingly, some teachers focus on teaching tolerance and respect 'to those they see to be most in need of it' (p. 27): working-class British pupils with prejudices towards Islam. Likewise, Bamber et al. (2018) found instances where teachers were indifferent towards FBV and those where they 'indulg[ed] the intolerable' (p. 443) by failing to challenge prejudiced views or silencing discussion. Also notable is the absence of opportunities for pupils to critically discuss FBV within a lesson like RE or Citizenship, where debates about the values could take place (Starkey, 2018; Vincent, 2018). Starkey suggests this arises from a coercive governmental approach, where tolerance signifies a reduction of political debate. Winter et al.'s (2022) research with pupils and teachers further supports this, observing that FBV are consistently presented as universal, moral values which serves to encourage compliance, with limited questioning of the political and racialised underpinnings of the requirement to promote FBV.

In contrast, Farrell's (2023) research identifies how many RE teachers avoid being 'passive dupes' (p. 213) of the FBV policy. Instead, some forge more critical responses: removing the label 'British', using RE lessons to explore moral issues linked to FBV and critically engaging with what it means to promote the rule of law, when some content in RE may involve questioning the law. A separate analysis of some of the same data by Farrell and Lander (2019), focused on eight Muslim RE teachers, highlights how the disciplinary backgrounds of Theology, Philosophy and Religious Studies provide a 'pluralistic and critical underpinning' (p. 478) which enables a critical repositioning and reappropriation of FBV. Along similar lines, McDonnell's (2021, 2023) research with RE, PSHE and Citizenship teachers highlights how they adopt pluralistic and multicultural approaches, drawing on RE pedagogies and religious identities to reappropriate FBV. McDonnell (2023) describes how one teacher invited a visitor to class to share their ideas on Britishness, with the aim of challenging pupils' ideas, which she suggests draws on Jackson's (2004) interpretive pedagogical approach of using insider accounts. McDonnell (2023) also asks whether Wright's (2003) critical RE might enable

a broader criticality linked to fostering mutual understanding and curiosity. Farrell (2016) echoes these suggestions, proposing that pedagogical models from RE, like the interpretive approach, and C. Erricker's (2010) conceptual enquiry approach, are strong mechanisms for helping pupils engage with complex topics. These studies thus highlight the potential of RE pedagogies for enabling the critical engagement with FBV which other research finds to be lacking but needed. Drawing on Freathy et al.'s (2017) bricolage approach, this study set out to examine how RE teachers might eschew a simplistic promotion of mutual respect and tolerance in favour of more critical approaches.

Literature review

Disagreement in tolerance and mutual respect

Disagreement is inherent within tolerance, a concept Forst (2003) identifies as entailing three components: objection, rejection and acceptance. The objection component, suggested to be the defining characteristic of tolerance (Leiter, 2010), requires that dislike, disapproval or disgust is held for something (Mendus, 1989). On encountering something that is disagreed with, there is a spectrum of acceptance, with negotiated coexistence at the one end, to a more fulsome acceptance, which finds merit within someone else's position at the other (Forst, 2003). Mutual respect is slightly different, denoting an orientation towards another person, in which they may be shown respect on recognition of their personhood, or alternatively because of positive appraisal of their characteristics (Darwall, 1977). Mutual respect might thus be shown for a person despite there being disagreement with their beliefs.

Fulfilling the DfE's (2014) requirement to promote 'mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (p. 11) is hence likely to involve pupils encountering disagreements. In RE, the content typically includes opportunities for pupils to explore diverse beliefs and worldviews, including stances they may disagree with and, as Wright (2007) observes, truth claims which themselves may be directly competing. Promoting mutual respect and tolerance in RE thus requires careful pedagogical planning to ensure teaching challenges prejudices and avoids the tokenistic promotion and tendency towards requiring that pupils generically respect everyone and everything, which Lundie and Conroy (2015) find to be a risk in RE. With this in mind, I now examine the potential of a pedagogical bricolage.

Pedagogy in RE

To explore how RE pedagogies might be combined to enable a more critical promotion of mutual respect and tolerance, this paper utilises the concept of RE teachers as pedagogical bricoleurs from Freathy et al. (2017). Here, Freathy et al. refer to Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) understanding of a bricolage as 'a complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation' (p. 3). Freathy et al. (2017) argue that it is unsuitable to teach RE in a way that reduces the world to one unified ontological understanding. They favour enabling pupils to become aware of the varied, contested and often irreconcilable beliefs and meanings across diverse contexts by using a range of epistemological lenses to teach RE. Grounding the concept of a pedagogical bricolage in dialogic and critical theoretical

perspectives, and using an enquiry-based approach, Freathy et al. (2017) propose that RE teachers should draw on 'a repertoire of strategies and practices' (p. 435) rather than classroom practice following any singular pedagogical approach. Freathy et al. find support for their proposal in Moulin's (2009) work in which he constructs a new pedagogy for RE, arguing teachers should use a wide range of pedagogical insights. Informed by the work of Grimmitt (2000), Holt (2015) and Stern (2018) likewise argue that the constructivist foundation of RE pedagogies enables RE teachers to combine different pedagogies.

The issue of whether and how pedagogies might be combined in a bricolage approach is also intimately connected to the question of what comprises the aim of RE. Whilst Freathy et al. (2017) argue multi-faith RE in English schools without religious affiliation requires a bricolage approach, others have argued for different subject aims and related pedagogies. This debate has been renewed through the proposed re-naming of RE as Religion and Worldviews (Commission on RE, 2018). This has re-ignited discussion about the appropriateness of a growing emphasis on exploring pupils' personal worldviews in RE, alongside critical examinations of what comprises a worldview (Barnes, 2022, 2023; Salter, 2021) and the pedagogical implications of teaching them (Wright & Wright, 2024). These issues link to whether RE should be more confessional in nature, or focus more on values education. These debates are not new, with dialogue between Gearon (2018) and Jackson (2015) highlighting tensions about the potential marginalisation of theological perspectives within RE and the risk of the subject becoming overly focused on secular and political aims. In response, Lewin (2017) proposes a shift away from the emphasis on propositional understandings of religion, which he argues dominate Gearon and Jackson's perspectives, towards greater focus on the practices and aesthetic dimensions of religious identity. However, where these papers seek to identify a single pedagogical approach that coheres with the respective preferred aim of RE, Freathy et al. (2017) argue for avoidance of a singular understanding of religion and worldviews and the related rejection of a singular accompanying pedagogical approach.

Here, I focus on three RE pedagogies which, as set out above, have been identified by McDonnell (2021, 2023) and Farrell (2016, 2023) as having potential in relation to the promotion of FBV, and which have contrasting epistemological and ontological emphases, representing different ideas about what religion is and how it can be known (Biesta & Hannam, 2016). I examine how each pedagogy might approach the promotion of mutual respect and tolerance and provide a means of engaging with moments of disagreement in the RE classroom.

Critical religious education

Rooted in critical realism, Critical Religious Education (CRE) suggests RE should 'enable pupils to wrestle with ultimate truth' (Wright, 2007, p. 7). It is underpinned by three principles: ontological realism, epistemic relativism and judgemental rationality. Using a CRE approach, teachers aim to enable pupils to make informed judgements about the ultimate nature of reality, as well as exploring the implications this raises for how pupils want to live their lives (Easton et al., 2019). Teachers should avoid imposing worldviews on students, but also reject pupils expressing unjustified personal preferences. Instead, teachers aim to cultivate a deep understanding of different worldviews through

transparent engagement with the exclusivist nature of many religious beliefs, avoiding respect being promoted as simplistic agreement. Proponents of CRE argue that the pursuit of truth with others who have different perspectives can act as a means of bonding because it reveals our shared concerns about the nature of reality. This can also result in a more authentic tolerance, which takes seriously the differences between people's perspectives (Easton et al., 2019). An avoidance of brushing over core differences in the name of promoting tolerance and respect is likewise proposed by Lundie and Conroy (2015), who argue for an approach of entoleration, where RE 'functions as a space for encounter' (p. 281). This, in line with CRE, requires pupils to directly encounter potentially conflicting viewpoints in the classroom, which helps avoid the promotion of respect becoming the rehearsal of set responses and 'pre-defined dispositions' (p. 285).

Conceptual enquiry approach

Conceptual enquiry is a narrative approach to RE where the 'small narratives of learners' are placed at the centre of learning (C. Erricker & J. Erricker, 2000, p. 194). In this approach, knowledge is understood as 'a process of construction that is then voiced in a community of learners' (C.Erricker, 2000, p. 136), an epistemological stance Wright (2001) critiques as implying that a search for knowledge should be abandoned, evidencing the potential tensions which may arise when seeking to combine pedagogical approaches. Erricker's approach has been subsequently developed into a five-stage process: communicate, apply, enquire, contextualise and evaluate (C. Erricker, 2010).

The five-stage approach begins with identifying a suitable concept. Next, pupils articulate their views about the concept, debating perspectives and applying their ideas to different contexts. Pupils then enquire for themselves about different religious perspectives of the concept, including exploring denominational and divergent attitudes. Lastly, pupils evaluate to what extent the concept is significant to different believers, as well as considering its significance in the wider world. This completes the approach, potentially leading into the communicate phase for a second time.

Although C. Erricker does not specifically address mutual respect or tolerance as key concepts, a conceptual enquiry approach is suggested to be beneficial in terms of living with differences and developing young people's spirituality (C. Erricker, 2006). Erricker argues for exploring ideological differences between religions with pupils rather than just examining cultural diversity. Like Wright (2007), he rejects flattening differences between religions under the pretence they offer different 'expression[s] of similar values' (C. Erricker, 2006, p. 114). The approach is also noted for including 'the messiness of human experience' (Hannam, 2022, p. 82) to avoid reducing religion to beliefs and practices. Examining diverse enactments simultaneously supports pupils to construct their own worldviews.

Interpretive RE, dialogue and discussion

A third pedagogical option, rooted in social anthropology and ethnography, is Jackson's (1997) interpretive approach. Jackson suggests that rather than bracketing out one's own position, it is preferable to be alert to the relationship between one's own and other

people's perspectives. Our own experiences can act as a 'comparative tool for working out the meanings of insiders' (p. 33). In the classroom, Jackson proposes teachers start with believers' (insiders) experiences and language, before looking at pupils' experiences and then 'oscillat[ing] between the two' (p. 130). Insider accounts may include young people's experiences of religions. However, Gearon (2013) has critiqued this possibility because they are likely to be misrepresentative of religions, and many religions may not accept them as representing their beliefs and practices.

Applying the interpretive approach to promoting mutual respect and tolerance, Jackson (1997) suggests acquiring knowledge of the beliefs of religious people might support pupils to develop inter-religious understanding. However, it would be a mistake to claim that this knowledge 'necessarily foster[s] tolerance' (p. 123). Rather, using insider accounts may support pupils' engagement with different perspectives. This links to the process of 'edification' (Jackson, 2000, p. 135): a re-evaluation of one's own perspective after exploring someone else's, which may arise spontaneously or through structured reflection opportunities.

More recently, Jackson's interpretive RE has formed the theoretical basis for studies focused on dialogue and discussion, mechanisms often used by teachers to explore disagreements and diverse worldviews (Jackson, 2011, 2014; Weisse, 2010). One key benefit is the emphasis on learning about a worldview in the words of an adherent. This emphasis is supported by Williams et al.'s (2019) survey research with 95 RE practitioners which identifies the most effective, but least commonly used, type of inter-group contact as 'Interaction', denoting approaches which promote direct exposure to difference and diversity alongside meaningful discussion.

However, Jackson (2014) observes that pupils being able to express potentially conflicting views requires a particular classroom atmosphere, sometimes labelled a safe space. He and others also acknowledge the impossibility of guaranteeing a safe space for all pupils, which has led some to prefer the terminology of a 'community of disagreement' (Iversen, 2019, p. 324). This reflects an RE classroom where pupils can expect to encounter 'disagreement and discomfort'. Exploring disagreements in RE also raises questions about the positionality of the teacher, including moral questions about how the teacher decides whose voices are heard and how they are represented. For instance, Jackson (2014) observes that teachers should adopt an impartial, but not necessarily neutral, stance by situating any contributions they make in a wider context. Everington's (2014, 2015) research with Hindu, Muslim and Sikh student teachers demonstrates some of the complexities of this in RE. Sharing experiences can be useful for building rapport and increasing engagement. However, sometimes teachers were troubled by pupils' keenness to view them as 'a Muslim like us' (2014, p. 168) and instead sought to use their religious identity to promote more critical engagement which supported pupils to build new knowledge of 'their Muslim identity in a multi-ethnic /religious society' (2015, p. 171).

Methods and methodology

The study used a multiple nested case study approach (Patton, 2015), in which three schools' RE departments formed case studies, with a total of seven RE teachers forming nested units of analysis in each case. The schools were purposefully selected from three

locations in England to provide insights from practitioners teaching pupils with different religious backgrounds (see Table 1). Data were generated between June and August 2021, comprising a document analysis of each department's key stage three scheme of work and semi-structured interviews with teachers of 45–90 minutes duration. COVID-19 imposed some logistical constraints, meaning some interviews took place online.

Drawing on Burgess' (1984) characterisation of interviews as 'a conversation with a purpose' (p.102), I saw the interviews as shared social interactions between researcher and participants, rather than information gathering events. Open-ended questions were shared with participants in advance and centred on exploring teachers' constructions of mutual respect and tolerance and their experiences of promoting them. Participants were invited to explore the differences between tolerance and mutual respect, to share examples of topics where they felt they promoted the concepts and to talk about the culture and ethos of their classroom. Additionally, based on Tripp's (2012) concept of 'critical incidents' (p. 24), participants were asked to talk about specific moments where they had promoted tolerance and/or mutual respect. These provided particularly rich insights into teachers' classroom practice.

The data were analysed using critical discursive psychology (CDP), a form of discourse analysis (Wiggins, 2017). Drawing on Edley's (2001) use of CDP, analysis focused on identifying three core features: interpretive repertoires, namely how teachers constructed and talked about promoting mutual respect and tolerance; ideological dilemmas, referring to searching for moments of tension within and between different interpretive repertoires (Billig et al., 1988); and subject positions, considering how teachers' approaches to promotion resulted in them constructing particular roles and positions for themselves and others (Davies & Harré, 2001). Transcription captured details of the talk beyond speech to help enable the identification of these features (see Appendix). Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the author's institution (reference 19/11). In line with the British Educational Research Association's (2024) ethical guidelines, informed written consent was obtained from headteachers and teacher participants. The researcher sought to be transparent about the nature of the study and participants were reminded of the optionality of all interview questions. Schools and teachers have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities. In the following section, to make clear each teacher's context, their names are accompanied with the initials of their school, for example Yasmin BH = Barehill School.

Table 1. The key characteristics of participating schools and teachers.

School & characteristics	Participants & length of experience
Barehill Church of England (London) (BH) (a) Voluntary Controlled (b) Mixed with approximately 50% Christian, 35% Muslim and 15% other faiths	• Emily – Head of Department (6 years) • Amara (10 years) • Yasmin (4 years)
Newton High (North West) (NH) (a) Academy Convertor (b) Predominantly non-religious	• Anna – Head of Department (15 years)
Westridge School (West Midlands) (WR) (a) Community (b) Predominantly Muslim	• Rahim – in charge of KS3 RE (11 years) • Fahima (2 years) • Sadia (2 years)

Findings

The study found that teachers do not employ any singular pedagogical approach to promote mutual respect and tolerance. Instead, they blend and move between approaches, in line with Freathy et al.'s (2017) concept of teachers as pedagogical bricoleurs. The findings presented below thus set out the key elements of the bricolage teachers talked about. CDP advocates for the analysis of longer quotations to see participants' words within their micro-level context. Whilst space constrains a detailed exposition of all aspects of the pedagogical bricolage, I exemplify the core elements, also captured in Figure 1: the need for a frank and open classroom space, which underpins other pedagogical choices teachers make; the identification of substantive knowledge as an important, but insufficient, tool; and the use of real-life examples and interplay with pupils' self-reflection. Overall, I seek to illustrate how teachers are pedagogically agile, weaving together and moving between approaches.

A frank and open discursive space

All seven teachers used an interpretive repertoire of the importance of a classroom space that is open and permits frankness. The teachers constructed the RE classroom as a space with particular hallmarks, where teachers position themselves as 'allowing the young people to speak' (Amara BH = Barehill School), contrasting with some teachers in other

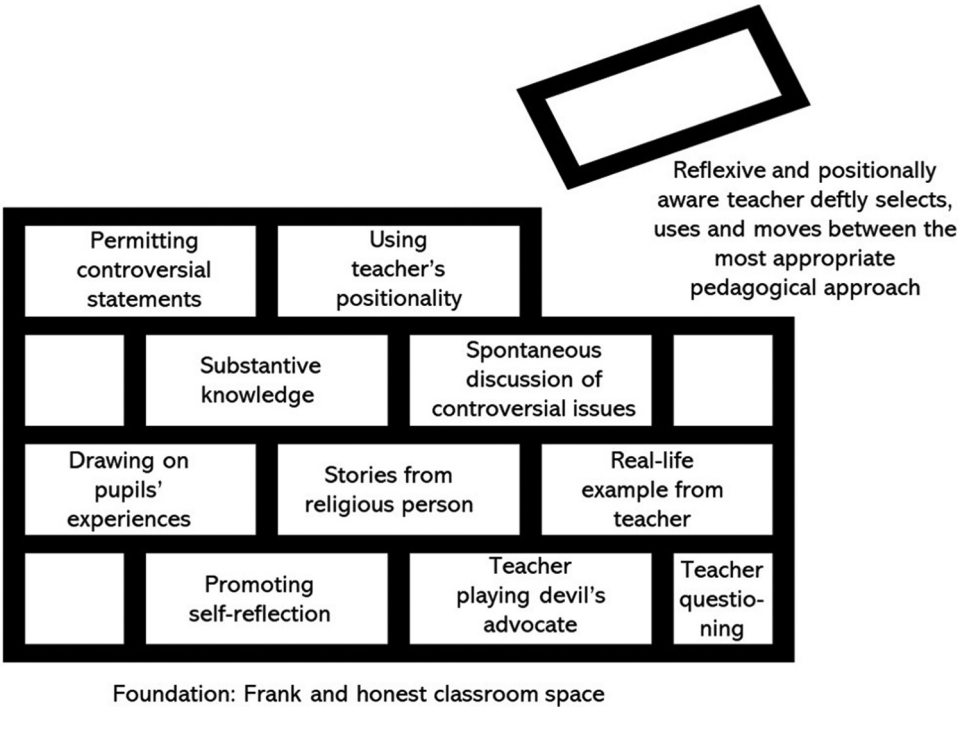

Figure 1. Illustration of the core components of a pedagogical bricolage for a critical promotion of mutual respect and tolerance.

subject areas. For example, Yasmin BH described how 'those kind of conversations don't arise in every classroom' and Anna NH (Newton High School) observed how 'in many other subjects teachers are very very uncomfortable with those moments between the moments', positioning RE teachers as more able and willing to engage in difficult discussions. Some teachers went further, characterising the space provided by RE as one where it might be possible for pupils to voice intolerant or disrespectful comments. Moreover, these might represent spontaneously arising but crucial moments for promoting mutual respect and tolerance, as Yasmin BH explains.

< < 19.60>>

(1) **Yasmin BH**: they just don't know sometimes (.)
(2) **Researcher**: mm
(3) **Yasmin**: when they say stuff that it comes across really like controversial
(4) **Researcher**: mm
(5) **Yasmin**: sometimes they say it cos they want a reaction
(6) and sometimes in a debate you kinda need it you need a one £kid to be like that one£
(7) that's like (.) erm says something so opposite to everyone else
(8) because it engages them though and they love it
(9) **Researcher**: yeah=
(10) **Yasmin**: = cos then they can really um discuss it
(11) but I think it's like there's no point having a go at them
(12) it's just literally like educating them

Yasmin identifies two separate features of the types of comments made by pupils which lead to discussions. In the first possibility (line one) Yasmin positions pupils as innocent: whilst they make inappropriate comments this is not constructed as occurring because they hold prejudiced views, but because of pupils' lack of knowledge (lines 11 and 12). The second possibility is that pupils make controversial statements because they 'want a reaction' (line 5). Rather than criticising this, Yasmin points to how this engages other pupils, with controversial comments enabling pupils to 'really um discuss it' (line 10). Here, the word 'really' implies that frankness is a key quality of the resulting discussion. Yasmin proposes that such comments from pupils are advantageous, using the hedging word 'kinda' and speaks whilst smiling (line 6), which functions to soften the suggestion, implying teachers cannot openly advocate for this as they risk being seen as in favour of prejudicial comments. The proposal to start from pupils', sometimes conflicting, experiences as a beneficial educational approach has some resonance with C. Erricker's (2000) conceptual enquiry approach and Iversen's (2019) observation that safe spaces might be better re-framed as communities of disagreement. Whilst Yasmin advocates for exploring pupils' potentially prejudiced comments, these are not left free from critique because they form the starting point for deeper exploration (lines 10–12).

Substantive knowledge as important but insufficient

When talking about how they promote mutual respect and tolerance, using substantive knowledge was often one of the first ideas put forward by teachers.

By substantive knowledge, I mean key religious and non-religious concepts, knowledge of texts and artefacts, knowledge of different expressions of religions and worldviews in people's lives, and the debates surrounding this content (OFSTED, 2021). Three teachers (Emily BH, Yasmin BH, Rahim WR) particularly emphasised the importance of pupils having an 'understanding of why' (Emily BH) and 'knowing what people's beliefs are (.) and why people would hold those beliefs' (Rahim WR). This also included 'learning about the differences that people might have in their own religions' (Fahima WR). However, as the interviews progressed, ideological dilemmas emerged regarding the teachers' assessment of the efficacy of utilising substantive knowledge alone as a means of promoting mutual respect and tolerance, as illustrated in Emily's BH discussion of a moment in her classroom.

< < 38.18>>

1Emily BH: we have a lot of fundamental and evangelical Christians in the school (.)

(1) so one side of the argument (.) one boy turned around and said 'I think all
(2) homosexuals are going to hell'
(3) 'all gays are going to hell' (.) he said
(4) 5.hh so then firstly we had a conversation about why we don't call them gays
(5) and call them homosexuals
(6) but then it was a case of well (.) unpicking=
(7) **Researcher**: =°right°
(8) **Emily**: what he was saying and why he was saying it (.)
(9) and looking at the biblical scripture
(10) so what we did was we looked at where the bible talks about homosexuality (.) being subversive in almost a way
(11) and then we looked at scripture that promotes mutual respect um like Galatians 3:28 and Mark 12:31
(12) and (.) even though we did both of them things
(13) I came to a bit of a sticking point
(14) (.) neither was seeing the other side

In this extract, Emily describes how a tension arose in her classroom regarding pupils' views on homosexuality. In line 1, Emily provides context about the Christian beliefs of pupils in the school, which is significant in her later description of attempting to use knowledge about the Bible (lines 10–12) to counteract the prejudiced comment made by a pupil (recounted in lines 2–4). The presence of this prejudiced comment points towards the absence of a chilling effect in Emily's classroom, which in turn creates scope for a pedagogical response from Emily.

However, in lines 13–15, Emily suggests that relying on substantive knowledge was unsuccessful. This highlights an ideological dilemma, in that whilst substantive knowledge might lead to tolerance and mutual respect, this is not necessarily the case. Emily constructs this as a 'sticking point' (line 14), with the metaphor emphasising the complexity of the situation. This points towards the significance of the pedagogical choices made by the teacher, which result in different modes of encountering substantive knowledge, an issue I now explore further.

Real-life examples and self-reflection

One pedagogical possibility regarding how pupils encounter substantive knowledge was the use of real-life examples. All participating teachers talked about using, and sometimes inter-weaving, three types of real-life examples: religious people's stories, pupils' lives and teachers' personal life stories. As such, the teachers in this study appear to draw from and blend the approaches of interpretive RE (Jackson, 1997) and conceptual enquiry (C. Erricker, 2000), alongside the use of dialogic approaches, which in some cases align with the effective use of the contact hypothesis in the manner identified by Williams et al.'s (2019) research. Some of the success of the pedagogical blending was suggested by teachers to emerge when encounters with real-life examples simultaneously provided powerful opportunities for pupils' self-reflection, as illustrated in the following example from Emily BH.

< < 31.20>>

(1) **Emily BH**: it promoted such a mutual respect in the classroom
(2) that one of the girls who'd been on Hajj
(3) actually felt the
(4) and she's not a (.) bubbly outgoing charismatic kinda girl
(5) she felt the (.) place to come up to the front and tell us about her experiences
(6) **Researcher**: mm
(7) **Emily**: and everyone was awestruck (.)
(8) and everyone was looking at her and just (.)
(9) listening to her
(10) and it was almost like the atmosphere in the class changed
(11) **Researcher**: how so?
(12) **Emily**: because there was just this (.) peace and quiet
(13) which you £don't get in the classroom much£ (.hh)
(14) and this like a sense of understanding

[. . .]

21. and then everyone clapped

Emily recounts a moment from teaching about Hajj (pilgrimage in Islam) of a year 7 (aged 11–12) pupil who felt comfortable to share her experiences of Hajj with the class. Emily uses a three-part list in line 4 to emphasise this was out of character for the pupil. Throughout this extract Emily uses detail and a narrative structure to recount the impact of this moment on the class, tools Wiggins (2017) observes can help to make an account seem more credible. Emily also uses an emotion category of the class being 'awestruck', reinforced through the account of the class 'clapp[ing]' (line 21), features which reinforce Emily's construction of this as an unusual moment (line 13). Whilst this example highlights how Emily develops a dialogic 'Interaction' in Williams et al. (2019), p. 223) terms through promoting personal exposure to a diverse other, this moment also raises an ethical question about whether pupils should be the religious experts in the RE classroom and highlights the importance of Gearon (2013) questioning whether this child's experience would be seen by other Muslims as representative of their faith.

Emily then recounts her own response to the moment discussed above:

< < 34.02>>

(1) **Emily**: and I was like wow
(2) and it was it was an experience for me as well
(3) because I didn't know half the things she told me about

Emily's acknowledgement of her own ignorance in line 3 positions Emily as a learner and the pupil as the more knowledgeable party, in line with C. Erricker's (2010) identification of the shift in classroom dynamic which can occur when starting from the experiences of pupils. This raises questions about the role of pupils' knowledge in the classroom, with Emily's thinking highlighting that the teacher is not necessarily the expert, which creates a potential ideological dilemma about the teacher's role as a pedagogue.

Alongside stories from pupils and religious people, teachers' use of their personal life knowledge was also prominent. One function of such examples was to help pupils see teachers as authentic values educators: 'promoting mutual respect because she's (.) actually that's something she actually does in real life' (Fahima WR). Additionally, teachers creatively use their awareness of how pupils position them as a powerful pedagogical tool, as Sadia WR discusses here.

< < 26.10>>

(1) **Sadia WR**: the way I do it with my students is well (.)
(2) kind of play devil's advocate
(3) so yeah so say for example they'll come up with
(4) erm 'oh no but this is-isn't right'
(5) I'm like 'well why why is your way right?'
(6) 'I don't understand' (.)
(7) 'why is what you're saying right?'
(8) and they think just because they see a headscarf and I'm Muslim as well
(9) they think oh no she's automatically gonna have the same beliefs =
(10) **Researcher**: = mm
(11) **Sadia**: erm or a lot of the time they'll say oh that doesn't sound
(12) that sounds a bit silly for example (.)
(13) for example you will you'll say something about a religion like
(14) this religion believes that this happened or this miracle happened
(15) and they'll be like well 'that doesn't sound logical'
(16) and then I'll just turn around and say 'well is it does it sound logical for example
(17) for erm (.) a man to be able to split the moon in half'
(18) cos that's what the Muslim belief is

In this extract, Sadia uses active voicing (Wiggins, 2017), reporting the speech of herself and pupils from a moment where Sadia positions herself in the role of 'devil's advocate' (line 2). This idiom works to show that Sadia's account does not necessarily reveal her own opinions, but statements made in her role as an RE teacher. In lines 8–9, Sadia identifies that pupils focus on her external appearance as a sign she will share their views. However, in lines 16–18 Sadia explains how she uses her knowledge of Islam to challenge pupils' perspective that miracles in

other religions are not believable (line 15). Here, Sadia's thorough knowledge of beliefs and practices in Islam, other religions and her pupils' perspectives enables a critical exploration of beliefs (Wright, 2007). She unapologetically challenges the views of pupils, drawing on her knowledge of inter- and intra-religious beliefs and practices to do so. This results in a dialogic exchange which subverts pupils' expectations and which functions to critically promote mutual respect and tolerance.

Discussion

This paper has shown how using a bricolage approach informed by constructivist pedagogical theories from RE could enable teachers to move beyond the tokenistic and uncritical promotion of mutual respect and tolerance, which existing research into FBV has found to be commonplace (Bamber et al., 2018; Vincent, 2019). Teachers in this research did not advocate for using one pedagogy to promote mutual respect and tolerance. Instead, they draw on and weave together a range of approaches.

One key element of the pedagogical bricolage this study identified is the important, but limited, role of substantive knowledge. The teachers in this study carefully consider which beliefs and practices to emphasise in their teaching in order to relate to the context of pupils (C. Erricker, 2010). For example, they foreground knowledge and understanding of intra-religious beliefs and practices, which they see as areas where tolerance and mutual respect may be needed. However, the teachers in this study did not seem to acknowledge that, as pedagogues, their decision making about the inclusion and exclusion of certain worldviews and experiences also has implications for who and what is mutually respected and tolerated.

A second key element is the use of real-life examples. Teachers use insider accounts from religious people (Jackson, 1997) as well as those from pupils (C. Erricker, 2000, 2010; Jackson, 1997) and themselves. They highlight the potency of pupils engaging with insider accounts from peers, in line with the findings from Williams et al. (2019). However, teachers do not engage with the challenge of how the validity of these accounts should be explored with pupils (Gearon, 2013; Wright, 2007). Teachers also use their own life experiences not only to engage pupils, as Everington's (2014) research shows, but additionally as a pedagogical tool to encourage critical reflexive thinking about different perspectives on religious beliefs, which can aid in the promotion of tolerance and mutual respect. Some teachers also feel sharing their own experiences contributes towards them being positioned by pupils as authentic promoters of mutual respect and tolerance.

The third key part of the bricolage is teachers encouraging iterative self-reflection by pupils regarding how the ideas they learn about compare to their own experiences (C. Erricker, 2010; Jackson, 1997). In line with Jackson, teachers identify this should comprise a key part of teaching, rather than reflection being seen as an add-on to the end of lessons. Lastly, the use of these pedagogical approaches is constructed as taking place within an RE classroom which permits and encourages the frank expression of ideas, reducing the possibility of pupils' contributions being chilled (Thomas, 2020) and enabling even intolerant comments to lead to discussion and dialogue. This does not

comprise an advocation for intolerance but aligns with Iversen's (2019) concept of a 'community of disagreement' (p. 324) in which expressions of intolerance are harnessed as educational moments.

Concluding thoughts

In light of the political and securitising agenda which underpins the requirement to promote FBV, McDonnell (2021, 2023) and Farrell's (2016) research identifies that contemporary pluralistic RE pedagogies might offer a more critical approach to the promotion of FBV. This research has explored how using a pedagogical bricolage approach (Freathy et al., 2017), which draws from contemporary pedagogical approaches in RE, helps teachers to more critically promote mutual respect and tolerance. The teachers in this study did not appear to overtly engage with the moral issues which arise from the pedagogical choices which they make, for instance, the fact that their pedagogical responses to moments of disagreements and conflicts also involve prioritising one way of knowing about a worldview, or risk a particular person's experience of a religion being taken as representative. However, the study does show how, at its best, adopting a pedagogical bricolage approach to the promotion of mutual respect and tolerance enables teachers to hold in tension a plurality of views in the classroom. Using a pedagogical bricolage approach supports teachers to have confidence not to smooth over disagreements or implore pupils to simplistically 'respect each other'. Instead, they can make pedagogical moves and counter-moves which proactively and agilely respond to moments of disagreement in the classroom. Such moments then become rich opportunities for the critical promotion of mutual respect and tolerance through engagement with the complexity of differences.

This study had several boundaries, focusing on three case study schools and exclusively on mutual respect and tolerance. Future research could explore the transferability of the bricolage to other settings, looking at whether RE departments in schools with different pupil demographics utilise the same bricolage. Or, taking the pedagogical bricolage identified here as a starting point, it could consider whether RE teachers use the same bricolage when promoting other values.

Using a pedagogical bricolage requires strong pedagogical literacy on the part of teachers. Enhancing teachers' pedagogical literacy and awareness of the theoretical underpinnings of different pedagogies would support teachers to achieve a conscious balance of approaches and perspectives across their teaching, whilst also enabling greater pedagogical agility in response to complex moments of disagreement when they arise in RE classrooms. This might also include exploration and critical reflection by teachers about what they consider to be the aim of RE, and how this relates to the pedagogies they use. The simplistic mandate to promote 'mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (DfE, 2014, p. 5) arguably implies there is a straightforward approach to doing so. Using a pedagogical bricolage responds to this by offering a nuanced pedagogical response to engaging with different worldviews and religions.

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Ethical approval

Ethical approval for the research was obtained from the University of Cumbria's ethical approval panel (reference 19/11). Informed consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

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Appendix Simplified version of the Jefferson transcription system based on Potter and Wetherell (1987, 188-189)

Mark/symbol	Meaning
(.)	Short/micro pause
(0.1)	Timed pause in seconds and tenths of a second
(.hh)	Laughter
Word	Emphasised word
°Word°	Noticeably quieter word in contrast to other talk
WORD	Noticeably louder word in contrast to other talk
.hh	Sigh/exhaled breath
£word£	Spoken whilst smiling/suppressed laughter
[Speech]	Interrupted speech
'word'	Reported speech
word=	Continuous speech, no pause between
***	Word omitted to maintain anonymity
?	Voice rising, indicating question
!	Voice expressing surprise