‘Beyond the Textbook’
Implementing Philosophy in the RE classroom

Arabella Carter
Teacher of Religious Studies

@MissAVECarter
#BeyondTheTextbook
Why go ‘beyond’ the textbook?

“Using Nelson Thornes support materials means teachers and students can be absolutely confident that they are learning what we want them to learn and following the course as our examiners intended”

How do we PROVE that things exist?

Getting the tools for the job

Before we examine any of these arguments for the existence of God, it is important that we understand what 'prove' means.

There are three main types of 'proof'.

You need to know the difference.
What would it take to convince you that the Loch Ness Monster exists?

Write down one thing on your sticky note.
### Three Types of Proof

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Personal experience</strong></th>
<th>I saw it and therefore I know it exists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Reliable evidence</strong></td>
<td>I have not seen it but the evidence of other people has convinced me it exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Logic</strong></td>
<td>I have not seen it but there is a logical reason to believe it exists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Using a chain of reasoning to reach a conclusion)
As a group, come to a decision about which of the three proofs is the **best evidence** for the existence of God. Be ready to explain your decision.

1. **Personal Experience**
2. **Reliable Evidence**
3. **Logic**
Discussion:

What was good about the lesson?

What would you do to improve it?

What is an argument?

• The general structure of an argument is that of premises (or statements) in support of a conclusion.

• So an argument can be very simple:

  Premise 1 (P1) + Premise 2 (P2) = C

  1 + 2 = 3
Example 1

• P1- Man United are the best club side in Europe

• P2- Celtic drew against Man United on Wednesday

• C- Celtic are as good a team as Man United.
Example 2

• P1- Will is a bachelor.

• P2- All bachelors are unmarried men

• C- Will is an unmarried man
Spot the difference?

**Probability, Experience**
- P1- The moon is bright tonight
- P2- The moon was bright yesterday
- C- The moon will be bright tomorrow

**Definition, Not experience**
- P1- Vera is a spinster
- P2- A spinster is an unmarried female
- C- Vera is unmarried

**A posteriori**
Inductive

**A priori**
Deductive
Two types of philosophical reasoning

A posteriori
Inductive

• This reasoning is based on premises which are drawn from experience of the world
• There could be more than one conclusion
• We may need evidence from our experience to support the conclusion
• PROBABILITY

A priori
Deductive

• This reasoning is based on using logic alone (not experience)
• The conclusion is the only one that can be true
• PROOF
Group Task

1. Identify which type of philosophical reasoning is being used in each argument. (Fill in grid)

2. Analyse each argument. Do they have any problems within them? (Fill in grid)

3. Evaluate the different types of philosophical reasoning. What are their strengths and weaknesses? (Complete slides)

End
Which type of reasoning?

• P1- All men are mortal
• P2- Socrates is a man
• C- Therefore, Socrates is mortal

Deductive and a priori
Which type of reasoning?

• P1- All the boys in my class have short hair
• P2- Charlie has short hair
• C- Charlie is a boy

Inductive and a posteriori
Which type of reasoning?

- P1- God is the total of all perfections
- P2- Existence is a perfection
- C- God must exist

Deductive and a priori
Which type of reasoning?

• P1- All events require a cause
• P2- The creation of the universe was an event
• C- God is the cause of the universe
A posteriori inductive (probability)

✓ Is strong because...

- It is based on universal experiences
- It is persuasive as it is based in probability and shows what is the most likely conclusion

✗ Is weak because...

- The evidence is based in the senses
- It is based in probability so the conclusion is not certain—others might be just as convincing
A priori deductive (proof)

✓ Is strong because...

• It does not depend on the variables of experience

• If the premises are true, then the conclusion has to be true

x Is weak because...

• It requires that we accept the truth of the premises presented.

• It does not offer up any new information other than a definition
Tweecher plenary

Hack my account and Tweet a question about today’s lesson. Try to use #keywords- remember only 140 chars or less!

Swap with your partner. Tweet a reply to show your new knowledge.
Why go beyond the Textbook?

Engagement with philosophical concepts at a potentially deeper level.

Provide new learning opportunities.

Develop pupils' higher order thinking skills.

Promote good practice through creativity.

Continue the discussion...
#BeyondTheTextbook
@MissAVECarter
@PSSConference
- A good overview of the history of RE in the National Curriculum. A sound critique of pedagogical approaches. An insightful method of improving the rigour of the subject in schools through use of philosophy.

- Outlines provision for RE nationally. Highlights the sense of crisis felt by the RE community as it was left off national curriculum reform in 2013. Put together without public funding even though RE remains a subject required on the curriculum of all state schools. Launched at Westminster in Oct 2013. Will come into effect for GCSEs/A Level Sept 2016.

Clarke and Woodhead (2015), A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools (Westminster Faith Debates)
- A series of recommendations for complete reform of Religious Education. Calls to place RE on equal footing with other subjects in the National Curriculum and rename as ‘Moral and Religious Education’.