

LASAR newsletter No. 8 (March 2013)

Dear Reader,

The Institute of Education at the University of Reading offers courses of various lengths for teachers looking to engage with continuing professional development.



Information about courses for teachers and others who are interested in children's thinking about the relationships between science and religion can be found by following the link from the home page of the Faraday Schools website, www.FaradaySchools.com

One such course, which still has some places, begins after Easter ...

Mini-Masters: Children's Developing Thinking in Science and Religion

The course has weekly sessions in the Summer term and provides an opportunity to work at Masters level and also carry out supervised research. The course can be taken as a 'stand-alone' course but it also provides 20 credits towards a 180 credit Masters in Education at Reading University. Great preparation for a PhD application! Cost £580. Tuition is provided using a distance education format with the option of an introductory session on campus. You will also have personal tutorials and group electronic discussion. A selection of papers and book extracts are provided for Independent study.

Website news



We now post regular updates on what's new and what's happening on the website via a link on the homepage. (Recent posts highlight a new world faiths section and a page on Einstein)



Time travel, black holes and more!

Discover whether a **time machine** could be yours soon.

TASTERS Not sure where to start? The home page has a taster section to give you an idea of what's on the science and religion menu and links to take you there!

Science and Religion in Schools Project



SRSP was set up in 2002. The Project produced an amazing and extensive suite of materials for secondary and primary schools to support the teaching of Science-and-religion. For many years the materials in the SRSP resource were available for purchase as books and CDs. By arrangement with the SRSP team, those materials are now available for you to **use for free** on the Faraday Schools website. Go to the teachers tab and pick SRSP from the menu.

Please use our email address lasar@reading.ac.uk for any comments about the website.

Posters

We have free A2 posters to send out to schools. If you haven't received yours yet, please visit the website and leave your request using the 'contact us' form. Please do leave your school's postal address too!

Background about the project

The LASAR, Learning about Science and Religion, Project was motivated by a concern that there is a strong public perception (reinforced by some popular

media) that science and religion are in some sense opposites, that is that science is an atheistic activity. In particular, we were concerned that school pupils may come to accept this as a normative standard: something that is both incorrect, and which could deter students who hold religious faith from considering science as a suitable basis of future study and career. Such an effect would not only be unfortunate when there is widespread concern about the limited numbers of young people seriously considering science careers, but in principle could set up a self-fulfilling prophecy. If people of faith are significantly deterred from science, then science could over time become dominated by atheists!

LASAR is looking at this issue from two complementary directions. We are planning research which will help us find out more about exactly what secondary age students do think about science and religion, something of the factors which they feel influence their views, and how their ideas shift over time. We intend to report our findings widely, and when we have results available we will use this newsletter to direct readers to these reports. We are also looking to develop curriculum materials and approaches which can support teachers in engaging secondary age pupils with something of the broad range of opinions and scholarship in the area of science and religion. In this way we hope to make sure that there are sufficient accessible and balanced presentations to help pupils to recognise that this is a nuanced area where there are no simple answers (so scientists hold a wide range of faith positions and views on religious matters), and offer them interesting resources to stimulate their own thinking in this area.

Yours with best wishes

Berry, Keith, Fran and Helen

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