

**An analysis of Religious Education Coordinators'
perceptions of their role in Catholic Secondary Schools in
the Archdiocese of Melbourne**

**Submitted by
Gerard Patrick Fleming**

**BA (Melbourne University)
BEd (LaTrobe University)
MEd (Australian Catholic University)**

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School of Religious Education

Faculty of Education

**Australian Catholic University
Research Services
Locked Bag 4115
Fitzroy, Victoria 3065
Australia**

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Statement of Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in this thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees

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Signature

Abstract

This thesis analysed Religious Education Coordinators' perceptions of their role in Catholic secondary schools of the Archdiocese of Melbourne from 1970 – 2000.

The theoretical framework for the study, which was reported on in this thesis, was drawn from Catholic Church documents on religious education at both international and national levels, and from the work of researchers within the field of religious education. In particular the study investigated the diversity of language used to describe religious education and religious education theory and analysed the significance that this has had in the development of an understanding of the role of the Religious Education Coordinator.

It was argued that there were significant factors in the development of the role of the Religious Education Coordinator that included changes in the understanding of the nature and purpose of religious education during the second half of the twentieth century. In addition there were historical factors peculiar to the Archdiocese of Melbourne that played an important part in the understanding of the RECs role.

Quantitative data in the form of annual survey material (1988-1999) from the Catholic Education Office Melbourne provided a framework for the empirical component of the research. The empirical component involved the interviewing of Religious Education Coordinators from a deliberately selected sample that covered the range of skills and experiences deemed necessary in the research. The purpose was to ascertain from the perspective of the Religious Education Coordinators themselves how they analysed their role. Grounded theory methodology was used as the basis for the inductive analysis of the data that emerged from the in-depth interviews.

Theory that was generated on the role of the Religious Education Coordinator includes: the importance of an understanding of the theoretical dimensions of religious education and the role of the Religious Education Coordinator; an elaboration of the role of the Religious Education Coordinator in the school context and the necessary skills and attributes that are required to meet the challenges in the role; and the complexity of the challenges that are faced by the Religious Education Coordinator.

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Abbreviations

General

AST (Advanced Skilled Teacher)

CEO (Catholic Education Office)

CEOM (Catholic Education Office, Melbourne)

EAPI (East Asia Pastoral Institute)

FDC (Faith Development Coordinator)

Guidelines (Guidelines for Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne)

KLA (Key Learning Areas)

PAVCSS (Principals Association of Victorian Catholic Secondary Schools)

POL (Position of Leadership)

POR (Position of Responsibility)

REC (Religious Education Coordinator)

RE (Religious Education)

Documents

AREFTC (Australian Religious Education – Facing the Challenges, 1999)

CS (The Catholic School, 1977)

CSTM (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1998)

CT (Catechesis in Our Time, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 1979)

GCD (General Catechetical Directory, 1972)

GDC (General Directory for Catechesis, 1997)

GE (Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965)

EN (On Evangelization in the Modern World, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 1976)

LCS (Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith, 1982)

RDE (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988)

REF (The Renewal of the Education in Faith, 1970)

WDAU (The Word Dwells Among Us, 1977)

WPJAL (We Preach Jesus Christ as Lord, 1990)

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