

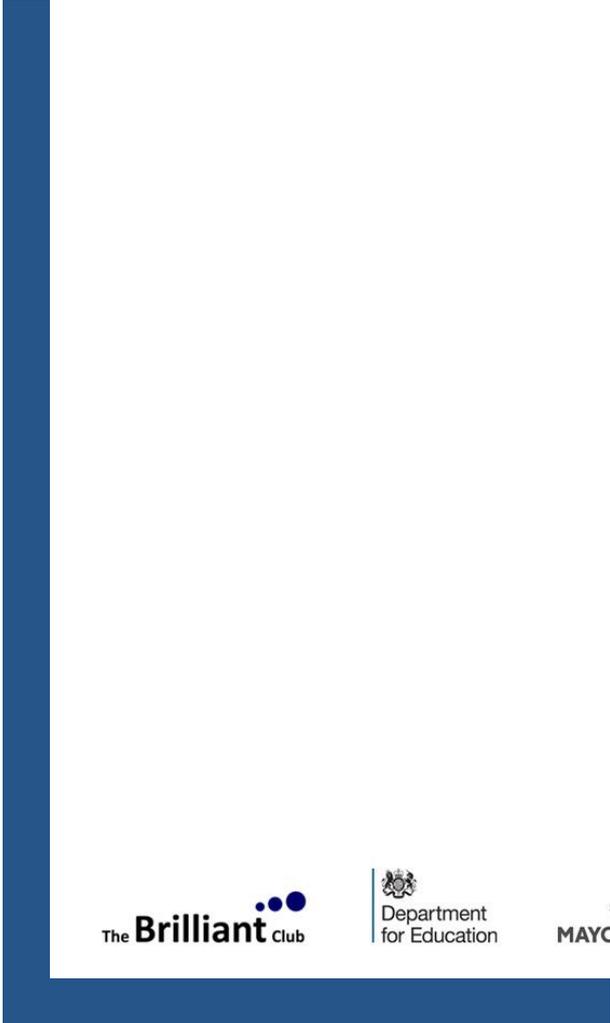


University Learning in Schools

RE

Buddhists in the World

Module Outline



University Learning in Schools

Module outline

Title of Module: Buddhists in the World

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Module outline

1. What is the overall topic area?

Buddhism at Key Stage Three. The course focuses on whether Buddhist monastic communities are isolated or integrated with wider society. The course examines Buddhist monastic communities in ancient India, modern Theravada Buddhism and other forms of Buddhism in the modern world.

2. How does it link to current research and why does the researcher think this is an important topic for pupils to get to grips with?

The relationship between the monastic community and the laity is a major theme in academic Buddhist studies today. The importance of this relationship was emphasised in anthropological scholarship, but has since redefined the study of Buddhism in disciplines like religious studies and archaeology. Buddhism is now interpreted not only as an isolated religion focused on the teachings of the Buddha, but also as one that is deeply affected by the specific society where the religion is practiced. These studies focus not only on the practice of the religion by the monastic community, but also by the laity.

This development in academic scholarship is an important one for pupils to get to grips with because:

Buddhist monks and nuns are no longer viewed as an unchanging, monolithic group, but as a diverse set of different communities with regional differences. Integration with wider society has led to the proliferation of diverse forms of Buddhism, through adaptations to local cultures. Buddhist studies now consider the way Buddhism is practiced (orthopraxis) in more detail rather than what Buddhists believe (orthodoxy).

Thus, a body of teaching based on the relationship between monastic communities and the laity can encompass a wealth of inspiring case studies that will bring the religion to life for pupils of school age.

3. How is this topic aiming to improve teacher subject knowledge?

The module will, first and foremost, improve teacher knowledge of Buddhism itself. Including the laity in the course provides a wealth of interesting case studies that can help to bring the religion alive. By including a discussion of diversity in the way the religion is practiced, rather than a discussion of belief, the course offers teachers an alternative method of teaching religion. A focus on practice allows the course to draw on content from a range of disciplines, including religious studies, anthropology, archaeology and geography. These disciplines might provide teachers with a broader view of religious studies than they might otherwise be used to.

4. What key texts/case studies/experiments/processes are being considered?

Introduction: A global perspective on the Buddha and Buddhism.

8-fold Path and Meditation:

The core of beliefs of Buddhism: 3 marks of conditioned existence, 4 noble truths, 8-fold path.

Meditation in the Buddhist monastery and to help people in everyday life.

No Labour, Begging and Buddhist Charity:

The life of the Buddhist monastic community and their belief in no labour.

Theravada Buddhist begging.

The Buddhist monastery as a charitable institution, orphanages and hospitals.

Impermanence and Death: Buddha's teaching of impermanence.

Buddhist burials from Tibetan book of the dead.

5. How is this topic aiming to enhance pupils' subject knowledge and improve pupil outcomes?

The use of current research into the relationship between the Buddhist monastic community and the laity makes the learning relevant and engaging. Teaching the social dimensions of Buddhism provides a broader range of skills than is possible by only teaching about beliefs. The course provides pupils a structure for interpreting religion. This structure consists of first teaching a belief, second teaching the idealised practice associated with the belief and third, teaching several real-life manifestations of the practice. Once learnt, this structure can be applied to other religions, in historical studies and elsewhere in the humanities. The clear focus on defined subject knowledge will make clear what mastery would look like, which will help with assessment. The interleaving of knowledge through the unit will help to ensure that pupils learn the material taught.