EDITORIAL
Dear EARLI SIG 19 members,

Welcome to our Spring/Summer edition of the SIG19 newsletter! As incoming editors of the SIG19 newsletter, we are very excited to share this newsletter with you. We are also aware that we had big shoes to fill after the excellent work that Inkeri Rissanen and Elina Kuusisto did as the previous SIG19 newsletter editors. We'd like to pass on a thanks to them on behalf of our SIG for this. We hope that we'll be able to continue at the standard they've set in our new role as editors.

In this edition of the SIG19 newsletter our focus turns firstly to the upcoming SIG19 conference to be held at the University of Helsinki on August 6-9, Identities, Cultures and World Views: Religious and Spiritual Education in Pluralistic Settings. The newsletter includes the preliminary programme for the conference, an interview with the keynote speakers, Professor Emerita Helena Helve, Professor Hans-Georg Ziebertz and Dr Elisabeth Arweck, and some tourist information about beautiful Helsinki. As you will see, the conference looks very exciting, and it sounds like the weather will be lovely for it as well!

Next, we introduce a new section in the newsletter: Spotlight on Religion in Your Context, with our focus in this edition on Finland. We hope to make this section an ongoing part of our newsletter so that we can better understand the role that religion and spirituality play within different contexts in our diverse group.

Finally, we have an impressive list of recent publications towards the end of the newsletter as well as important reminders about your EARLI SIG19 membership.

Enjoy!
Marjaana Kavonius & Dan Fleming
SIG19 newsletter editors

Note that you can now also join EARLI group in Facebook for information updates and discussion.
There is also an EARLI group at LinkedIn.
IDENTITIES, CULTURES
AND WORLDVIEWS

RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION
IN A PLURALISTIC CONTEXT

European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction EARLI
Special Interest Group 19: Religious and Spiritual Education
Fourth Biennial Conference 6-9 August 2014
University of Helsinki, Finland http://www.helsinki.fi/university/

Organisers: EARLI SIG 19 Coordinators & Local organising committee. More information from Arniika Kuusisto (arniika.kuusisto@helsinki.fi)
EARLI SIG 19 BIANNUAL CONFERENCE ‘IDENTITIES, CULTURES AND WORLD VIEWS: RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL EDUCATION IN PLURALISTIC SETTINGS’
6th - 8th August 2014
Preliminary Conference Programme

Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki, Finland
Conference Venue Minerva Plaza, Siltavuorenpenker 5A (floor K2, in the basement)

Wednesday, 6th August 2014
11.00 Registration desk opens
11.30 Lunch
12.30 Opening of the Conference
13.30 Keynote address: Professor Emerita Helena Helve, University of Tampere
14.30 Coffee / Tea and Snacks
15.00 Paper Presentations
→ Leaving together for the Dinner in a Charming Empire-style Villa by the University Botanic Garden: 18.00 Dinner Restaurant Viola, Kaisaniemenranta 2.

Thursday, 7th August 2014
08.30 Coffee / tea
09.00 Paper Presentations / Roundtable Session
10.30 Keynote address: Professor Hans-Georg Ziebertz, University of Würzburg & University of Uppsala
11.30 Lunch
12.30 Paper Presentations / Roundtable Session
13.30 Break
13.45 Paper Presentations
15.00 Coffee / Tea
15.30 Paper Presentations
16.30 Business Meeting
→ Leaving together for the Dinner on an Island Sirpalesaari: 19.00 Dinner Restaurant Saari.

Friday, 8th August 2014
08.30 Start with coffee / tea
09.00 Keynote address: Senior Research Fellow, Dr Elisabeth Arweck, University of Warwick, UK
10.30 Paper Presentations
11.30 Lunch
12.30 Panel Discussion
14.00 Closing Words and Farewell
IT’S EASY TO GET AROUND IN HELSINKI

The best sights in Helsinki are accessible by bus, tram or the Metro, it is also very easy to walk around the central areas.

A Helsinki internal ticket takes you for example to the Linnanmäki amusement park and Seurasaari outdoor museum. Tram routes 2 and 3 are ideal for city sightseeing. You can get on and off the trams at any stop, the whole tour takes about 60 minutes. Brochure on tram routes 2 and 3 will be available at the conference venue.

Bus 16 goes from Rautatientori (Central Railway Station) platform 8 to Mustikkamaa, from where you can cross the bridge to the Helsinki Zoo in Korkeasaari.

With a Helsinki internal ticket you can travel to the Suomenlinna sea fortress by a ferry from Kauppatori (Market Square) and Katajanokka. If you want to spend an entire day in the fortress, a Suomenlinna ticket valid for 12 hours is practical.

for more information, see:

1. What started your career as a researcher in the area of religious and spiritual education?

I got my PhD from Helsinki University, Department of Comparative religion (now Dept. of World Cultures). Before studies there I studied psychology, education and sociology. These studies created my interests in studies of comparative religion. Actually I think that my research has been quite multidisciplinary. In the beginning I wanted to study the traditional beliefs and practices of African people and their traditional religions and cultures including beliefs in a Supreme Being, belief in spirits and other divinities, use of magic etc. However, the idea to conduct my fieldwork in Africa was unrealistic because of my small daughter. I recognized that beliefs of children and how they form them were also very interesting topics. This was a beginning of my longitudinal study of the worldview of Finnish young people living in a suburb of metropolitan Helsinki. I wanted to know how children and young people form their worldviews: what kind of ideas they had at different ages for example about the origin of the world and life, of life elsewhere in the universe, supranormal powers, what kind of religious and other ideas they had in cognitive, affective, conative, cultural and social dimensions of a worldview and how education, primary and secondary socialization, age and gender affect the shaping of a worldview. I was also interested in how the parents, school, media and other factors influenced to the formation of a religious, metaphysical of scientific world-view which are compatible with various perspectives of beliefs, attitudes and values. Now I have gathered material for my longitudinal study of worldviews from three generations. My longitudinal and comparative studies have been related to belief systems, attitudes, values and worldviews of
young people already during four decencies. Those issues have been key words of my research having impact also to my career as a researcher.

2. What, in your opinion, is the most important area for religious and spiritual education research today?

My studies have shown value shifts and changes in worldviews partly explained by the theories of secularization, globalization, individualization and late-modernity, and the rise of new information technologies that facilitate the spatial spread of beliefs and ideas of many kinds. The values of many young people are situational when they are not anchored any more to the religious or other ideologies. This leaves young people alone to decide which is right and wrong. Mostly young people are not tied to the values of any given ideology but rather they choose different values according to the situations in which they find themselves. It is worth asking a young person’s development as an ethically action-competent person with his/her identity formation in the global society. In the globalized and fragmented context of the late modernity we have to ask if there are evident bases for one’s identity and moral orientation in the situations when a young person has to do personal choices, responsible decision-making and responsible action. Young people’s sense of how broad or narrow are their future options shows that those with a narrow horizon tend to experience “identity anxiety” at the prospect of moving out of their comfort zones, while those with broad horizons welcome the opportunities to become global citizens. I see, that the focus of most important area for religious and spiritual education research today is a young person’s development as an ethically action-competent person with his/her identity formation in the global society. This should give an intervention to religious curricula, pedagogies and school programs that aims at enhancing the construction of positive and ethical identity in personal, community and societal levels, finding one’s own talents and strengths, strengthening students’ feelings of hope and prospects of personal future.
1. What started your career as a researcher in the area of religious and spiritual education?

As adolescent I joined a church youth group, where I later took over management responsibilities at regional and national levels. Those experiences in youth work had been decisive for studying pedagogy and theology, even though I remembered RE as a rather boring subject. My first professional appointment was as head of the council of Catholic youth organizations on the diocesan level, later I moved to the national level. When I decided to work on my first dissertation I naturally chose RE – with an empirical study on value education. So biography can work...
2. What, in your opinion, is the most important area for religious and spiritual education research today?

The European scene shows that there is a general disagreement about the objective of RE: should RE focus on information about religion(s) or rather offer a space for the exchange and discussions about experiences in and with religion? And – for both cases: how should this be done and is it a good or false dilemma? To complicate matters even further, RE is faced by secularization processes which account for a low degree of religious literacy among students. Concepts for developing that literacy are therefore needed. Then we have to consider religious pluralisms and the challenge to continue working on concepts of interreligious learning in RE. And lastly, I think it is necessary to reflect on RE in relation to societal areas, such as civic education, politics, and human rights, to avoid a self-evident religious or spiritual orientation of RE.

Abstract for the Helsinki conference keynote, by Professor Hans-Georg Ziebertz

Dealing with Pluralism – still a problem, still a challenge?

Pluralism is a topic in many disciplines, and surely not a new one. Perhaps surprisingly, pluralism has engaged scientists, politicians, educators, and citizens over decades. If we assume that this is not because of the lack of other interesting themes, then pluralism is probably still an ambivalent or even problematic issue. The concept of pluralism contains at least two successive referenced dimensions: it refers to a specific reality and experiences that can be described and analyzed. It also contains a normative dimension: how should pluralism be understood and evaluated and how should it be dealt with in politics, pedagogy etc.? – The first part of my paper will focus on the concept of pluralism. There are many theories about pluralism and a selection is therefore necessary. A descriptive approach, the theory of “functional differentiation” of modern societies, was proposed by sociology. This theory points out the shift from a unifying overarching umbrella of one world view to several subsystems with particular functions in society. The motivating expectation is that these subsystems are autonomous and independent, and operate on a specific rationality. This creates pluralism at the very bottom of society. Another theory is the so-called postmodernism. Protagonists of postmodernism made a very strong position on radical pluralism when all forms of unity were fundamentally questioned. Empirically, heterogeneity was considered as fact and, in a normative perspective, heterogeneity should be accepted. Socio-political theories have developed the concept of multiculturalism to find a theoretical basis to understand and operate modern (esp. Western) societies in answer to the ongoing process of migration. Here again, description and ideals go hand in hand. Multiculturalism was also understood as fact, and, at the same time, multiculturalism was the program for politics and education. Multiculturalism was one of the key-concepts at the beginning of the European unification process. Today we are aware that in many European countries a strong counter-movement has become powerful: populism. When EARLI meets in Helsinki we can look back on the election of the European parliament. Right now the established parties are anxious of an increase of the populist parties. The program of those populist parties is clearly directed against multiculturalism. When reflecting on pluralism we finally have to contemplate Religion – which has an important impact on how pluralism is expressed and experienced. All together pluralism
shows a certain ambivalence: it seems to be problematic, and it should by no means be ignored. – In the second part of the paper several empirical studies will be evaluated to find out what the attitude of young people towards different aspects of pluralism is. This will be done by a selection of themes which are relevant for the life orientation of youth and which are especially relevant in the context of religion and religious education. – In the third and final part conclusions will be drawn for education, especially religious education.
1. Can you give us a preview of your presentation for the conference?

As the topic of this year’s EARLI conference is “Identities, Cultures and Worldviews: Religious and Spiritual Education in Pluralistic Settings”, I have been invited to contribute a presentation on the experience of young people who grow up in families where the parents are from different faith backgrounds. The title of my presentation will be “Enrichment or Estrangement? The Dual Heritage of Young People in Mixed-Faith Families”. It will draw on data from a project during which I interviewed young people and their parents in order to investigate the religious identity formation of children in mixed-faith families. The parents were from Christian, Hindu, Sikh or Muslim backgrounds and married to a spouse with a background in another of these four faiths. One of the questions I shall explore in my presentation is whether young people in these families see themselves as grounded in one tradition and enriched by the other or whether they find themselves only loosely connected with, or even detached from, both traditions.

The findings on which I shall draw emerged from interviews conducted with both the young people and their parents. They can be placed in the theoretical context of, on the one hand, ‘dual heritage’ and ‘mixedness’ and, on the other hand, cultural and religious transmission. The experiences of the young people are discussed in terms of cultural enrichment and alienation, with the experiences of their parents forming the background and also providing points of comparison.

2. What started your career as a researcher in the area of religious and spiritual education?

This questions sounds easier than it is to answer. I would say that my interest in such matters started with the research which I carried out as part of my PhD thesis, although the focus of that research involved was not education, but young people or, more precisely, emerging
adults. The specific focus on religious and religious education came when I joined the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (WRERU) at the University of Warwick, whose Director then was Prof. Robert Jackson. The WRERU team was looking for a researcher at that time who could work on a project, led by Prof. Eleanor Nesbitt, which investigated a particular educational programme on values. This programme is used in state-funded schools, but was developed by a non-mainstream religious organisation. The project was about finding out what the programme was, how it found its way into schools, and how it was used in schools.

Since the completion of this project, I have worked on other projects within WRERU which have been concerned with topics relating to young people, education (in the wider sense) and religion and/or spirituality. Recent projects have investigated mixed-faith families, as mentioned, and young people’s attitudes to religious diversity.

2. What, in your opinion, is the most important area for religious and spiritual education research today?

Given the increasing plurality and diversity of societies, I think it is important to find out how young people relate to multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious contexts and what role religious education plays and or can play in equipping young people with the skills they are likely to need in such social environments. This also means that we need to have an idea of how young people grow up themselves, whether with or without a religion, how that shapes their outlooks on people who are different from themselves, and how they form their attitudes to ‘the other’—whoever that ‘other’ may be. Thus issues revolving around tolerance, understanding, and dialogue are important, as is understanding what individuals’ stances, such as religious, non-religious, atheist, agnostic, etc., actually mean in each case.
In this issue we are introducing a new section to the newsletter: Spotlight on Religion in your Context. We have such a diverse and interesting group of members and participants in SIG19, so why not learn more about each other’s contexts? In each issue, we will choose the home country of some of our members as a country of focus and invite members from that context to submit 1-2 paragraphs describing some of the issues in religion and spirituality that are currently being dealt with there. Examples could include: discussions of religion in politics; religious issues in the ‘public square’; religion in popular culture; new interest in spirituality; religion and spirituality in education; and so on.

For this edition, our focus is on FINLAND, given that our next SIG19 Conference will take place in Helsinki. Thank you to the following members who submitted some reflections for us!

**INTEGRATED MODEL OF RE IN FINNISH CONTEXT**

*By Saila Poulter, Arto Kallioniemi, Vesa Åhs*

According to the current Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (2004), RE is taught according to one’s own religion, which physically separates children on the basis of their worldviews. The research context of this study is a secondary school in Helsinki that has a particular way of dealing with the issue of RE in the Finnish context. Very recently, the school launched a pilot project for combining the teaching of different religions and secular ethics in the same classroom for all 7th and 8th grade students. The teaching is non-confessional by nature and mirrors the plurality of worldviews of the families and society in general. The focus is on teaching different religions and worldviews from a non-religious standpoint and dealing with the religious plurality of the students present in the classroom.

This research is an ethnographic study combined with broad surveys for different stakeholders. The study critically examines the everyday life, student interaction and pedagogical practices of
the integrated RE as well as the societal and philosophical dimensions of the subject. This study will further develop the theoretical analysis of religion and RE in a secular society.

**ISLAM AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN FINLAND**

By Inkeri Rissanen

Finland differs from other European Muslim immigration countries in that it has had a small Muslim population, Turkish Tatars, over a hundred years, but the post-war immigration started as late as at the end of 1980s. Nowadays the Muslim population in Finland is still quite small (approximately 1% of the population) but growing. In Finland, students have a right to their own religious education in school if at least three students in the same area belong to the same religious tradition. However, teaching should not be confessional in nature and also other religions are covered in the contents of teaching. Despite the plurality of Muslim population, only one form of Islamic education, "general islam" is being taught. Teachers of Islamic education support this model, even though there are many practical challenges - very heterogeneous classes, lack of teaching material, teachers are obliged to circulate between numerous schools, and only a few teachers have a formal qualification for this challenging job. In my dissertation I observed three teachers of Islamic education and found how Islamic education offers a space for negotiating on the one hand identities of Finnish Muslims and Finnish Islam, and on the other hand Islam in relation to its different contexts. Islamic education seemed to support the immigrant Muslim students in their identity negotiations. They appreciated the right to their have their own religious education in school, but considered its contents often too easy and repetitive.

*This text is taken from Inkeri’s dissertation. The full published text can be accessed by clicking here.*


Pekkarinen, V. & Hiristo, L. (submitted). University lecturers’ evaluations and reflections of their own pedagogical competence areas. Paper submitted for International conference of educational development (ICED 2014) conference proceedings


Riegel Ulrich & Macha Klaas (2013), Videobasierte Kompetenzforschung in den Fachdidaktiken, Münster
SIG 19 Newsletter
NOTES AND GUIDELINES

We want to encourage a wide participation in SIG19 and in the Newsletter. If you intend to contribute to the newsletter, please take into account the following issues. You can make suggestions concerning to content of the SIG19 and the newsletter. However, the editors retain the rights to alter and modify the contributions.

Interviews:
In each newsletter we will focus on two or three researchers connected to the SIG19. One of the covered researchers is preferably a junior researcher. Please do not hesitate to make suggestions concerning the interviewees.

Reviews:
In this section the SIG members can review different things, such as, books, articles and conferences, etc. Please do not hesitate to contribute and to present also your own works. A review should not exceed 250 words.

Special feature:
This section we feature some interesting and inspirational aspect concerning the SIG19 areas of interest. The author is invited by the editors with regards to the suggestions by the members. The contributions should not exceed 500 words.

Announcements:
if you feel that there is something relevant happening in the interest areas of SIG19, please use this section. Such things are up-coming conferences and projects. This section can also include propositions for shared projects. The announcements should be 100 words at maximum.

New members:
We wish new members warmly welcome to our SIG. 19! We will list the new members in this section after we have been informed by them.

Publication & contact:
Marjaana Kavonius, University of Helsinki, Finland (marjaana.kavonius@helsinki.fi)
Dan Fleming, The Broken Bay Institute & The University of Newcastle, Australia (dfleming@bbi.catholic.edu.au)

EARLI SIG 19 MEMBERSHIP
How to join us?
To become a member, you must first become a member of EARLI.
For more information, please visit the EARLI website:
http://www.earli.org/

LIST OF SIG 19 MEMBERS

Belinda Boogaerts belinda.boogaerts@ppw.kuleuven.be
Daniel Fleming dfleming@bbi.catholic.edu.au
Laura Hiristo laura.hiristo@helsinki.fi
Essi Ikonen essi.ikonen@helsinki.fi
Marjaana Kavonius marjaana.kavonius@helsinki.fi
Cees Klaassen c.klaassen@pwo.ru.nl
Mandy Krah mandy.krah@ualberta.ca
Arniika Kuusisto arniika.kuusisto@helsinki.fi
Shirley Larkin S.Larkin@exeter.ac.uk
David Lefrançois davidl@point-net.com
Terence Lovat terry.lovat@newcastle.edu.au
Fritz Oser FRITZ.OSER@UNIFR.CH
Dimitris Pnevmatikos dpnevmat@uowm.gr
Tahereh Pourshafie tahereh.pourshafie@gmail.com
Ulrich Riegel ulrich.riegel@uni-siegen.de
Brigitte Rollett brigitte.rollett@univie.ac.at
Sturla Sagberg ssag@dmmh.no
Martin Ubani martin.ubani@uef.fi
Wiel Veugelers w.m.m.h.veugelers@uva.nl

NOTE!
If your name is not on the list above, please check from the EARLI office earli@ped.kuleuven.be whether you have formally renewed your membership (http://www.earli.org/renewal) of EARLI (JURE) and the SIG 19 for 2014!