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European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction EARLI Special Interest Group 19: Religious and Spiritual Education is advocating research on religious and spiritual development that includes cognitive, social and emotional components. Values and beliefs are important aspects in religious and spiritual education which need a discussion forum of their own.

EDITORIAL

This is the twelfth EARLI SIG 19: Religious and Spiritual Education Newsletter. The purpose of our special interest group is to endorse discussion on the importance of religious and spiritual aspects in education. The Newsletter notifies the special interest group members about upcoming events as well as recent and forthcoming publications on the field.

In this issue, we will report from the 14th biennial EARLI conference Education for a Global Networked Society which took place 30 August to 3 September 2011 in Exeter, UK. We will cover some conference and JURE-preconference experiences, and pictures, as well as the Minutes of the SIG 19 Business Meeting held during the conference.

We are also very glad to inform that Theo van der Zee will continue to coordinate our SIG 19.

You will find information regarding the forthcoming SIG 19 conference 2012 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. In the conference we will explore the fascinating question: What is Religious and Spiritual Education good for?

As Newsletter Editors we, Inkeri Rissanen and myself, want to thank all of you who have contributed to the Newsletters during our first year as Editors. Next year we will continue to do our best to keep the newsletter informative and interesting. However, we cannot do this without your help, so if you have any ideas concerning the contents of the Newsletter or news to be announced, please contact us!

We wish you all the best for the new academic year!

Elina Kuusisto
Newsletter Co-Editor
University of Helsinki, Finland

Note that you can now also join EARLI group in Facebook for information updates and discussion!
REFLECTIONS ON EARLI CONFERENCE 2011
Education for a Global Networked Society
University of Exeter, United Kingdom

The whole city was welcoming us!

This summer I did participate in the biennial EARLI-conference, an overwhelming and exhausting experience. Here I like to share some impressions.

First, Exeter was a perfect location. I did like the short distances, the British way of life and the friendly helping hands of the local organizers.

Second, the biennial conference was a huge crowd. Around 2000 people attended. I learned that EARLI is not just the acronym of our society, but also programme: you have to show up early in the seminar rooms, if you want to participate in collegial sessions.

Third, in this crowd there have been just a few colleagues from religious education. On the one hand this had been a great opportunity to get an idea of the research which is done in other educational disciplines. On the other hand this made me think about the standing of our discipline within the educational context: Do we participate in the main lines of educational discourse and research or do we do our own thing? I’m still working on this question.

Forth, most presentations had been empirical, many of them excellent. This made me think about the current research in religious and spiritual education, because it is predominantly hermeneutical. Although my own research is empirical, too, I’m not arguing, that research in religious and spiritual education should be empirical. And I do hear many voices that argue that most of current empirical research in education lacks pedagogical theory and is not interested in such theory. However, if we don’t want to end up in the backyard of research we have to cope with this reality. For instance, the conference board did skip one of our proposed SIG 19-symposia and the one, which did take place, was poorly attended by persons not being member of our SIG. As SIG we should think about possible answers to this challenge.

All in all in Exeter I got a feeling of international standards of educational research and a lot of ideas to develop my further research. Then I did meet again lovely colleagues from our SIG and got into contact with some colleagues from other educational disciplines. This made Exeter a great experience and I’m looking forward to Munich 2013.

Ulrich Riegel
The campus was located on a hill and offered beautiful views.

The conference venue: First of all the conference venue was very beautiful. Every morning we were privileged to enjoy English breakfast with a wonderful panorama view over the City of Exeter and over the green pastures. I was also happy that I got quite a lot of exercise when I tried to find my way to different hubs at the wide campus.

Jure-preconference: I was very impressed with the Jure-preconference process. We had to submit the whole paper during last spring. After that my paper was reviewed by an expert-researcher and Jure-member. Also I myself had to review someone else’s paper. We received the feedback beforehand and were able to make corrections to our papers. During the Jure-preconference in Exeter I met the Jure-member who had reviewed my paper and I encountered the person whose paper I had reviewed. We were able to continue our discussions and notice how the paper had been improved. I think this procedure was one of the main factors that influenced the relaxed and supportive atmosphere at the Jure-preconference.

Earli-conference: It was incredible to see the wide range of topic and researchers that were discussed in Earli-conference. Sometimes it even felt like the themes were so different from each other that organizers had to use all their imagination in order to find the link. One man described to me his experience like this: “All the themes of the posters were so different from each other, and I was the last one to present in that session. When my turn came, I started my presentation saying: ‘I cannot find any shared theme or reason between the posters, except destiny.’ ” I had quite similar experience, since I was presenting in my poster a model of Christian religious education, and next to me there was poster about eating fish. However, it was interesting to hear about different areas of educational research, and I was so impressed by all the enthusiasm and dedication that we have in Earli.

Elina Kuusisto

Poster sessions stimulated interesting discussions. Elina Kuusisto with her poster.
Interesting presentations at the SIG 19 symposium. Terry Lovat presenting his paper.

I found the conference to be especially stimulating. Some of the keynote sessions were among the best I have attended. I especially enjoyed the talk by Prof. Gert Biesta of Stirling University on the implications for Education of the Global Services Network. It was a balanced presentation that illustrated both the potential and some risks of the network’s reach and impact, especially on the younger generation. It also offered some salient thoughts around the importance of Education’s response and the ongoing importance of schools, provided they address the bigger social, moral, emotional, aesthetic and spiritual developmental issues. I felt there was an important link here to the focus of our SIG. I also enjoyed our SIG’s symposium and meetings and believe there is an importance in them to the entire EARLI agenda.

Terry Lovat

Picnic lunch with Elina Kuusisto and Martin Ubani.
I have been developing instruments with my research group during the last 15 years that measure multiple intelligences and moral sensitivities. In our new book Petri Nokelainen and I are introducing all of those instruments. I was hoping the book would have been published in Earli. Unfortunately it was not possible. However, my highlights of the Earli conference are connected to our book and our instruments. In symposium “An international perspective on stimulating excellence in higher education” Ingrid Schutte and I presented our research and cooperation, which has been especially interesting, since Ingrid has collected a large Dutch data with our instruments. Also for my research group Earli provided an excellent venue to meet and plan how to gather new data with those same instruments from Finland. In addition, I am happy to say that a new member of my research group is gathering comparative data from Iran.

Kirsi Tirri

Back page: In this book, we introduce several sensitivity measures in educational contexts that can be used in research, education and self-evaluations. In Chapter 1 we discuss the framework of Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences theory and introduce our Multiple Intelligences Prolifing Questionnaire. We present the psychometrical qualities of the instrument with empirical data sets of children, youth and adults. In Chapter 2 the Spiritual Sensitivity Scale is introduced with the theoretical framework it is connected to.

The existence of spiritual intelligence has been a widely debated issue and not everybody is ready to call advanced thinking in religious or spiritual domains as intelligence. This has guided us to use the term sensitivity, which is easier to justify than intelligence in these areas of human behavior. In Chapter 3 we introduce the Environmental Sensitivity Scale, which is close to the possible intelligence of naturalist suggested by Gardner. In Chapter 4, Ethival Sensitivity Scale is introduced followed by Emotional Leadership Questionnaire in Chapter 5. All these scales have a solid theoretical framework and earlier empirical work to support the instrument building. Chapter 6 introduces Intercultural and Interreligious Sensitivisy Scales with their theoretical frameworks and earlier empirical work. Following each chapter, we have included a ready-to-use version of the questionnaire and SPSS syntax to compute factors. A commentary by Dr. Seana Moran compliments the book and challenges the readers to further reflect the meaning of education in supporting holistic development of learners in their life-long journey. We have authored this book to contribute to this goal and hope it will be used in the hand of researchers, teachers and students in their mutual effort to grow and to learn new things in life.

Publishers were introducing new publications in Earli. For example, on Waxmann’s table there were books written by members of our SIG 19.
How to get one's articles published? Journal editors were answering questions about the process.

Going to an academic conference is like going to the market place.

You go out for something new: New ideas on research, new findings on interesting topics, new methods to work with. I have gathered some new ideas on research from the dual process theory: human thought processes (as learning) are subserved by two distinct mechanisms, one fast, automatic, intuitive, the other slow, controlled, reflective. I learned about research from this theoretical perspective in other fields (f.e., mathematics), and think that we can understand religious and spiritual development better by using these kind of theories. I am also very enthusiastic on research in which teachers and children (!) themselves are participating as co-researchers by not only using videos but also by co-analysing the data. This corroborates with a participative perspective on (research about) religious and spiritual education.

You go out to meet other people. People who you already know, and who you like to meet again. Co-members of our SIG for example. Most of them I meet only once a year. It was really nice to meet them at our business meeting, at our dinner and other social activities in the evening. I have also met some new people who do interesting research on the same or related fields. You get new ideas, you share ideas. That’s what conferences are about. And then afterwards, you fly back to your home country with a bag full of ideas, leaflets, deals and other things. At least, I did.

In short, I enjoyed Exeter, and look forward to our SIG conference in Nijmegen, 2012.

Theo van der Zee

SIG dinner in an authentic English atmosphere
Participants
Robert Crotty, Zehavit Gross, Laura Hirsto, Elina Kuusisto, Terry Lovat (chair), Fritz Oser, Dimitris Pneumatikos, Inkeri Rissanen, Ulrich Riegel, Kirsi Tirri, Martin Ubani, and Theo van der Zee.

Opening
Terry welcomed all the participants and asked them to introduce themselves. Our SIG currently has 31 members, which is well beyond that which is required by EARLI regulations.

Election of the coordinator
A SIG coordinator can serve for four years and then has to resign. Theo van der Zee’s term had expired and he resigned his seat accordingly. Because no-one had applied for the job of coordinator, even after several attempts were made to receive expressions of interest, Theo was asked if he would be willing to continue. Theo responded positively, so the chair recommended that Theo be appointed for another term (or at least a part of it).

Newsletter
Last year, Elina Kuusisto and Inkeri Rissanen took over the job of newsletter editors from Arniika Kuusisto and Frank Willems. Elina and Inkeri told about their experiences as newsletter editors, conveying that it’s not easy to find copy for the newsletter. The chair completed their story by telling everyone that they did a great job, and encouraging them to continue looking for good copy. It was suggested to send out reminders to deliver copy for the newsletter. The newsletter is perceived as an important medium to hold us together in between conferences and for ongoing information.

Book New Perspectives
Contributors to the book will be informed shortly about the acceptance or otherwise of their manuscript. Terry and Theo will do the editing work on the contributions, and they expect to send the final versions of the contributions in the course of November. The book will be published in the Book Series Research on Religious and Spiritual Education, by Waxmann, probably in the Spring of 2012.

Next SIG 19 Conference
Our next SIG 19 conference will be organized at the Radboud University Nijmegen (The Netherlands) from 23 – 25 August, 2012. A leaflet was dispersed at the business meeting. Invitations will be send out this Autumn to invite people to send in proposals and to participate at the conference. The last conference in Malta (2010) was a great experience – good quality presentations, nice social activities, a book to be published – and we expect another good conference to eventuate in Nijmegen in 2012.

New members
We now have a nice group of members of our SIG, and would like to continue on the track that we are on now. One of our core characteristics is our research profile. It has been discussed how we might attract new members (from inside or outside EARLI), and it was suggested to look at scholars who publish in British Journal of Religious Education and other similar publications.

Miscellaneous
The junior colleagues shared their experiences on the JURE conference, conveying that they are very satisfied with JURE.
The chair informed members about two new initiatives of the EARLI board: a new EARLI journal (which is more of a platform), and a Handbook on Learning and Instruction (in which every SIG would be involved).

Dinner
After closing the business meeting the chair invited everyone to join the group, together with the SIG 13 group, for dinner.

Report by Theo van der Zee
EARLI SIG 19 CONFERENCE 2012
What is Religious and Spiritual Education good for?
Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands

The Third EARLI SIG 19 conference will be organized from Thursday 23rd till Saturday 25th August, 2012 at the Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands (visit: http://www.ru.nl/english/).

The theme of this conference will be “What is religious and spiritual education good for?” The answer on this question can be formulated in terms of personal development (understanding religious and spiritual experiences, i.e.) or in terms of societal themes or topics (citizenship, democracy, participation). What are the implications of these answers for research on religious and spiritual education? The conference will deal with these implications especially. Which themes in the field of religious and spiritual education should be examined? Which approaches appear to be relevant? Which methods should be used? How can findings of research be interpreted with a view to practical implications on a personal or societal level?

The EARLI SIG 19 Conference aims to provide a scholarly venue for high quality research in religious and spiritual education. Scholars in the field are invited to present their current research and discuss their findings with a view to theory formation as well as to enhance educational practices.

Your proposals for collegial papers and workshops are mostly welcomed. Participants from any research discipline concerned with the spiritual and religious education of children and adolescents are welcome to submit a paper or workshop presentation. The language of the conference is English. The scientific committee encourages participants to be creative. Those wishing to present a paper or conduct a workshop should send a title and a 300 word description (including research questions, method, results, conclusion & discussion) to the conference organizers by 15th January, 2012. Requests for further details and for registration can be sent to t.v.d.zee@iko.ru.nl

EARLI SIG 19 Coordinators
Arniika Kuusisto, Terry Lovat & Theo van der Zee
Special Issue on
The Moral Core of Teaching

Call for Papers

Nowadays, schools all over the world are under pressure to create safe, orderly, and effective learning environments where students can acquire social as well as academic skills that will allow them to succeed in school and beyond. Over the last two decades, student populations—and also teachers—have become increasingly diverse. Students and teachers sharing the same school can come from a broad range of cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. Schools face the challenge of creating pedagogical environments that are sensitive to numerous individual backgrounds in order to support students’ social and academic success. In this kind of educational atmosphere the moral core of teaching and the teacher’s role as a moral educator are important issues in school pedagogy. Furthermore, updated research illustrates that pedagogy imbued with a moral core has ramifications for student wellbeing and achievement.

The main focus of this special issue will be on the moral core of teaching. The special issue will become an international forum for researchers to summarize the most recent developments and ideas in the field, with a special emphasis given to the role teachers should take in moral education in schools. Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- The values and ethics in teaching
- The moral nature of teaching
- Teachers’ moral competencies
- Pedagogical approaches to moral education
- The role of religion and spirituality in teaching
- The possibilities of character education
- Moral education in different school subjects
- International trends in moral education
- Moral education and student achievement
- Service learning as moral teaching

Before submission authors should carefully read over the journal's Author Guidelines, which are located at http://www.hindawi.com/journals/edu/guidelines/. Prospective authors should submit an electronic copy of their complete manuscript through the journal Manuscript Tracking System at http://mts.hindawi.com/ according to the following timetable:

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1. Please describe your work.
I'm interested in the pluriiform modes how spiritual and religious education happens in modern society. I want to know what teachers and students think about spiritual and religious education and what happens in spiritual and religious education. Both aspects I do research by empirical means. I have some experience in analysing questionnaires. Right now I do some studies according to quasi-experimental design. In near future I'm planning to get familiar with video studies in religious education.

2. Describe your path how you became a researcher.
Looking for a job after finishing my teacher training at school I got in contact with Hans-Georg Ziebertz from Würzburg University. There I learned to do empirical research within the field of theology. I appreciated this approach to spirituality and religious learning, because it was rather descriptive than normative. With the time I got acquainted with the thought of doing research as core of my professional life - even more because I like the "Würzburg style" of doing research in teams. Finally the call of the University of Siegen enabled me to earn a living with doing research.

3. Who has influenced your career most and in which ways?
Of course, Hans-Georg Ziebertz, who introduced me into empirical research in theology, coined my descriptive style of writing and taught me, that research is about concepts as well as about money. Besides him there are no outstanding persons as such. I do like working in teams and doing so I met a lot of people who made me think, share, learn and grow as researches as well as personality.

4. What do you feel are currently the most important areas of research in Religious and Spiritual education and why?
Religious competence and analysing the processes that happen in real religious education. Both subjects form the core of our field of research and need further exploration (conceptual as well as empirical). Moreover both areas are important fields of current educational research, too. I do see a lot of effort in exploring the nature of religious competence, maybe there could be more effort in exploring spiritual competence. About religious education I do see a lot of innovative models right now, but rather few studies about what is really happening.

5. Please name up to three publications of your own, which you would like to represent here. Please describe the reason for choosing each particular item.
Reasons: 1) They are in English language. 2) They give a quite good overview of what I'm doing.

6. Please define shortly what you mean by religion and spirituality.
Sorry, there is no short definition of religion or spirituality. I personally prefer a contextual understanding of both concepts. According to the research question I take a more subjective approach or a more functional approach to both phenomena.

7. When and how did you become involved in EARLI?
I got a nice invitation by our current president and regarded Malta a nice place to get in contact with the SIG 19. The people I met there were so great that I took interest in EARLI.
8. How would you describe the role of SIG19 in EARLI?
Is there a role (see my impressions of Exeter 2011)?

9. Greetings and wishes for EARLI SIG 19:
Malta was a great experience because I met wonderful people from all over the world who dig into the field of religious education with great expertise. Keep on going and get even more international by attracting more colleagues from different countries.

We'd like to thank you very much for the interview!

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:
The newsletter is published twice a year. If you intend to contribute to the newsletter, please take into account the following dates. Please send your contributions and suggestions to: inkeri.rissam@helsinki.fi or elina.kuusisto@helsinki.fi

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/

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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 2011.