



Earli

SIG 19 Religious and Spiritual Education Newsletter

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Newsletter Editors

Elina Kuusisto, University of Helsinki,
Finland (elina.kuusisto@helsinki.fi)

Inkeri Rissanen, University of Helsinki,
Finland (inkeri.rissanen@helsinki.fi)

Coordinators

Theo van der Zee, Radboud University
Nijmegen, the Netherlands

Terry Lovat, University of Newcastle,
Australia

Arniika Kuusisto, University of Helsinki,
Finland (*Junior Coordinator*)

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 already the eleventh [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 of education. The Newsletter notifies the special interest group members about upcoming events as well as recent and forthcoming publications on the field.

The 14th biennial EARLI conference *Education for a Global Networked Society* is approaching fast, taking place 30 August to 3 September 2011 in Exeter, UK. In this issue you will find some information regarding the conference. Since the website www.earli2011.org provides comprehensive general information, we will concentrate on announcing the SIG19 - activities at the conference.

Regarding research on religious and spiritual education, Finland has experienced an exceptionally active spring: four doctoral dissertations have been defended. In this newsletter, the brand-new PhD's tell about their experiences and future plans as well as reflect on the practical implications of their thesis for religious and spiritual education.

You will also find information on the first three volumes of the new book series *Research on religious and spiritual education* that have recently been published.

As you can see, the editorship of this newsletter has been changed: we would like to thank Arniika Kuusisto and Frank Willems for their efforts as editors of SIG-19 newsletter. As the new editors we, Elina Kuusisto and myself, will 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 summer and hope to see you soon in Exeter!

Inkeri Rissanen
Newsletter Co-Editor
University of Helsinki, Finland

Note that you can now also join [EARLI group](#) in Facebook for information updates and discussion!

DISSERTATION DEFENCE BOOM IN FINLAND

If you have participated in the SIG 19 conferences, you might have noticed them being crowded with Finnish participants. During this spring, the Finnish interest in religious and spiritual education has borne fruit in the form of four doctoral dissertations. We asked the brand-new PhD's to answer the following questions:

1. How was it like to defend your dissertation?
2. What kind of plans do you have for your life after dissertation?
3. What kind of practical implications do the findings of your dissertation have for the research and/or implementation of Religious and Spiritual Education or Education more generally?

Eija Hanhimäki defended her dissertation *"Moral Professionalism in Interaction - Educators' Relational Moral Voices in Urban Schools"* on 1 April 2011.
Webpage: <http://www.waxmann.com/buch2490>



1. The day of the public examination was exiting, beautiful and very memorable. It was an end point of this process and my opponent Professor Freema Elbaz-Luwisch (University of Haifa, Israel) made it easy to discuss the stories of my dissertation.

2. I hope that I could continue my work as a researcher with the themes which are based on my dissertation and moral voices in urban school context. In addition, my attention is more and more in my second child who will be born in August.

3. The results of this study emphasize the need for practical approaches such as case studies and the narrative approach in teacher education to encourage educators to become moral professionals capable of meeting the needs of people of varied backgrounds. In addition, opportunities for moral, religious and spiritual education should be noticed and utilized in the plural interaction of urban schools when nurturing pupils and creating a moral school culture. Furthermore, multiprofessional cooperation in moral education and parents as the school's primary cooperation partner are needed to carry out the shared duty of moral education in urban schools.

Arniika Kuusisto defended her dissertation *"Growing up in Affiliation with a Religious Community: A Case Study of Seventh-day Adventist Youth in Finland"* on 15 April 2011.
Webpage: <http://www.waxmann.com/buch2498>



1. Despite being really nervous beforehand, the discussion was actually really enjoyable. After all it is almost a once-in-a-lifetime experience in terms of being able to have academic dialogue with a distinguished scholarly expert in your own field, who has carefully read throughout your whole work, the result of your several years work. The defence and the succeeding festive celebrations (we had first an "official" breakfast with the Opponent, Supervisor and Custos; then cakes & coffee for everybody in the afternoon; and later in the evening a festive academic dinner party), with all the old academic

traditions that belong to these, made the day a really memorable occasion. Someone has, somewhat humorously, compared the huge hassle of the Finnish doctoral defence tradition to a “One-person’s Wedding”, and I think this is very much to the point ☺

2. I have started my “post doctoral” research already in 2008, looking at the Multicultural kindergarten context and the position of worldviews in that (many of you remember this from the Malta conference). I have written a more general focus report on the project in the Spring 2010, and since then – alongside caring for my two little girls – I have started working on articles that are more targeted to the worldview aspects of this study. In May I will present some of these themes in the ‘Symposium Interreligiöse Bildung in Kindertagesstätten’ seminar at the Universität Tübingen, Germany, and I very much look forward into hearing there about what is going on in this area of research in the other European countries.

3. Being an article-based dissertation, the book covers a wide range of “big” concepts, each covered in one of the sub-studies presented in the included articles. Namely, the book examines value education in the homes, youth’s religious (social) identity in different social settings, agency in the negotiation of values, and social capital as a network resource in bringing up children. Besides serving the researchers investigating these issues, the book also provides a range of findings with practical educational implementations. For example, the young people’s personal experiences presented in the book reveal the sometimes difficult negotiations the children and youth growing up in minority settings face in navigating between differentiation and belonging when there is a tension between the values of a minority group and the larger society. Thereby, reading these will help the educators working in multicultural, multi-faith settings to understand and better support the children’s worldview and identity construction. Since the book focuses on socialization in different levels of the society, namely the society, community, family and the growing individual, the findings can be applied to, for example, the value education taking place in the homes, schools and the youth work in churches or communities; both in formal and informal educational settings.

Mia Matilainen defended her dissertation **“Ihmisoikeuskasvatus lukiossa — outoa ja itsestään selvää [Human Rights Education in a Finnish Upper Secondary School: Alien Yet Obvious]”**

on 16 April 2011.

Information about dissertation and dissertation as pdf-file:

<https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/25934>



1. I had my dissertation defence on 16th April and the day was wonderful and unforgettable. For my surprise, I was quite relaxed. My Opponent was professor Rauni Räsänen from the university of Oulu. The discussion with the ex officio opponent was interesting and I almost forgot I was in my dissertation defence when I concentrated to this discussion. Also the academic dinner party in the evening was really a fantastic experience! I have done my PhD (on educational sciences) on human rights education. Before my research project and the position in our university as a doctoral candidate I worked as a teacher of religious education, psychology, philosophy and secular ethics.

2. Ongoing year I continue teaching teacher-training students at our teacher education department in the University of Helsinki. Because my dissertation was written in Finnish language I am also planning to write some articles in English about my research. I would like to work in the area of research and teaching also in the future.

3. My study focused on conceptions of human rights and human rights education (HRE) among students and teachers. I examined how human rights and HRE are understood by the students and teachers. The aims of human rights education (HRE) as specified in UN documents on education seem not to have been

achieved in the Finnish context. The students' knowledge of human rights seemed weak and very limited. Teachers appear to be human rights educators in the sense that they try to follow human rights principles in their daily work and respect the human dignity of everyone. The special role of a human rights educator was usually assigned to someone else — a teacher or an expert outside the school. HRE was not an intentional or conscious part of teachers' educational work and was not seen either as belonging to the curriculum or as an obligation prescribed by international documents. The teachers and students connected human rights education especially with religious education, history and social studies. Human dignity is mostly dealt with in religious education, while matters concerning the history of human rights are mostly dealt with in history classes. HRE plays an important role in creating a culture of human rights. It is important to implement HRE so that the international aims for HRE will be fulfilled.

Religious education (RE) has an important role from the perspective of HRE. The human rights viewpoint should be strengthened when dealing with the aims, contents and organization structure of RE. Human rights dimension and perspective of human rights education should be an intentional and conscious part of teachers' educational work. At the moment, the quality and extent of human rights education is heavily reliant on individual teachers and their personal interest in the field.

Elina Kuusisto defended her dissertation “Avoimesti sitoutuneena. Lähetystyö kristillisessä kasvatuksessa ja vapaaehtoistyössä [Openly committed. Mission in Christian Religious Education and Voluntary Work]” on 11 March 2011. Dissertation is published as an e-thesis: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-10-6830-0>



1. In the beginning of the day I was quite nervous. But the day turned out to be really wonderful mostly

because my opponent docent Seija Mahlamäki-Kultanen (University of Tampere, Finland) was very constructive and conversational. She made excellent remarks and I felt that my dissertation was raised into another level. The whole situation was memorable learning situation and it was interesting to hear later that many people of the audience also felt the occasion educative. They learned not only about my dissertation but also how to be opponent in a pedagogical way.

2. I hope to continue to do research on Religious Education and multicultural aspects. I am writing articles about my dissertation in English. I will be introducing my first article in the JURE-conference in Exeter. I will also present my key results with a poster in the main conference in Exeter. At the moment I am working as a Secretary of the Conferment Committee. The Conferment Ceremony at the Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki will be on 27 May 2011 so I will be quite busy with the arrangements for the next weeks.

3. The key result of the study was the forming of a model of Christian Religious Education, especially a model of mission education. Theoretically the model helps to understand the complicated and versatile aspects of Christian Religious Education. This is evident especially when Christian mission is taken into account. The model includes horizontal-vertical and inward-outward dimensions, which are named as the metalevels of mission education.

The model can be used as a practical guide in reflecting and evaluating the goals, values and methods of the Christian Religious Education within the Church and congregations.

The study's context was educational voluntary work and it was interesting to find out how important the atmosphere of the community was. This is also valuable result in order to improve formal learning environments such as schools.

SIG 19 – activities at the 14th BIENNIAL EARLI CONFERENCE, EXETER, ENGLAND

The next biennial EARLI conference will be held from Tuesday 30 August till Saturday 3 September, 2011. We hope that you all registered for this conference yet, and could book a flight and hotel accommodation.

At this conference we as SIG 19 -coordinators organize activities as an invited symposium, a business meeting and a social activity. We like to inform you on these activities and to invite you to participate at these activities.

(1) Invited Symposium and Presentations

SIG 19 organizes a symposium on Religious and Spiritual Education under the heading 'Issues of Effectiveness and Competence'.

At this symposium the next papers will be presented: *Perceptions of competence during training among RE student teachers*, by Martin Ubani (Finland); *Primary school students' beliefs about the afterlife. A developmental perspective*, by Theo van der Zee (The Netherlands), *Interfaith Religious and Values Education: A Judaeo-Christian-Islamic Instance*, by Terence Lovat/ Robert Crotty (Australia), and *Does religious learning through physical activity lead to a better ability to empathize with actors?*, by Ulrich Riegel (Germany).

At this stage not yet known is at what time this symposium will be scheduled. Please visit the Exeter 2011 website (www.earli2011.org) to find out when this will be.

Elina Kuusisto will present a poster titled *To Be Committed and Open - A Model of Mission Education* at the main conference, and a paper titled *Yeung's octagon model as a deductive outline in examining reasons to practice educational voluntary work* at the JURE-conference.

Inkeri Rissanen will present a poster at the JURE-conference, under the heading *How do Finnish Muslim students deal with religious and cultural difference?*

(2) Agenda Business Meeting SIG 19

Our business meeting is scheduled at Thursday, 1st September, 2011. We suggest the next agenda for this business meeting.

1. Opening and welcome
2. Election of a new coordinator
The term as coordinator will end for Theo van der Zee this year.
Candidates who like to do the job of SIG 19 Coordinator are kindly requested to indicate their candidacy by sending an email in which they motivate their application and include a short cv. They should send this email to Terry Lovat Terry.Lovat@newcastle.edu.au at 8 July, 2011 latest. Please visit the EARLI website for guidelines on this job:
http://www.earli.org/special_interest_groups Theo is, however, willing to continue the job.
3. Newsletter – newsletter editors present details on the proceedings
4. Book “New perspectives on religious and spiritual education” – editors present information on the proceedings
5. SIG 19 Conference in 2012 – details on the Nijmegen conference “What is religious and spiritual education good for?”
6. Recruitment of new members
7. Other matters to be discussed
8. Closing

(3) Social activity

After the business meeting we invite you all to join us for dinner at a local restaurant in Exeter at Thursday evening 1st September. We will gather right after the business meeting and then go out for a restaurant. In case a reservation for a restaurant is made we will inform you on this. Join us for dinner!

We hope to meet you all in Exeter this summer, and have time to discuss and share.
See you in Exeter!

Theo van der Zee & Terry Lovat
EARLI SIG 19 coordinators



EARLI CONFERENCE 2011
EXETER, UNITED KINGDOM

Education for a Global Networked Society

14th Biennial EARLI Conference for
Research on Learning and Instruction



30 August – 3 September 2011
Deadline for submission of proposals:
29 October 2010

www.earli2011.org


European Association
for Research on Learning
and Instruction



THE FIRST THREE VOLUMES OF THE NEW BOOK SERIES
Research on Religious and Spiritual Education (Waxmann Publishers)

San van Eersel

Towards Dialogue

Teacher/Student Interaction in Interreligious Communication

2011, *Research on Religious and Spiritual Education*, Band 1, 168 Seiten, broschiert, 27,90 €, ISBN 978-3-8309-2483-8

This study deals with the use of dialogical communication in religious education by teachers and students from different religious backgrounds at Catholic primary schools in the Netherlands. Until recently interreligious communication did not occupy a very prominent place in religious education. This changed as a result of the growing number of immigrant students, an increase in religiously mixed classes and new awareness of and sensitivity to interreligious relations. In recent decades there has been a growing body of literature on the challenge that religious diversity poses for religious education. Increasing religious diversity also raises new questions that have not yet been properly analysed and for which no satisfactory answers have been found. One such question concerns the content and method of dialogical communication in the context of interreligious and intercultural learning: what communicative and cultural practices acknowledge and appreciate otherness and difference, yet at the same time cultivate awareness of the interdependence of self and other? Questions like these are central to educating a generation with a truly social outlook and a truly social will (education for citizenship). To this end the author investigated the implications of the dialogical principle in (inter)religious education.

Eija Hanhimäki

Moral Professionalism in Interaction

Educators' Relational Moral Voices in Urban Schools

2011, *Research on Religious and Spiritual Education*, Band 2, 178 Seiten, broschiert, 26,90 €, ISBN 978-3-8309-2490-6

This study investigates educators' relational moral voices in urban schools and describes, with the help of their stories, their moral professionalism and moral practices in challenging school contexts. The educators' moral voices are investigated in relation to themselves and other people, their work and society. In addition, the interaction process between the educators' moral voices and the urban school context is considered. The book consists of four original refereed articles and a summary. The book brings together the findings in the articles and draws a picture of the educators' moral professionalism in interaction. The data included narratively constructed interviews with educators in four Finnish urban schools. This study combined the case study method, the narrative approach and the critical incident technique as the methodological framework for both analyzing and reporting the data. The results of this study describe the main themes of these educators' moral professionalism and the loudest relational moral voices heard through the main themes.

Arniika Kuusisto

Growing up in Affiliation with a Religious Community

A Case Study of Seventh-day Adventist Youth in Finland

2011, *Research on Religious and Spiritual Education*, Band 3, 176 Seiten, broschiert, 29,90 €, ISBN 978-3-8309-2498-2

How does the religious affiliation of the family affect the growing up process of young people? Religious minority as a socialization context is a scarcely researched topic. However, as a case study setting for examining the experiences of growing up—and bringing up—a relatively cohesive community provides an interesting context. The findings of this study present insights into value education, identity construction, and the negotiations on values and memberships. These are not only of interest for the researchers in the field but also make the book an essential read for the educators working in multicultural, multi-faith settings. The personal experiences presented in the book reveal the sometimes difficult negotiations the youth face in navigating between differentiation and

belonging when there is a tension between the values of a minority group and the larger society. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate the diversity within both the majority and the minority communities, as well as exemplify the variety in the paths to a personally meaningful way of belonging.

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.rissanen@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/>

LIST OF SIG 19 MEMBERS

Christine	Bruce	c.bruce@qut.edu.au
Adrian	Gellel	adrian.gellel@um.edu.mt
Laura	Hirsto	laura.hirsto@helsinki.fi
Shirley	Larkin	S.Larkin@exeter.ac.uk
Terence	Lovat	terry.lovat@newcastle.edu.au
Vassiliki	Mitropoulou	mitro@theo.auth.gr
Fritz	Oser	FRITZ.OSER@UNIFR.CH
Dimitris	Pnevmatikos	dpnevmat@uowm.gr
Brigitte	Rollett	brigitte.rollett@univie.ac.at
Anna	Tapola	Anna.Tapola@lnu.se
Kirsi	Tirri	Kirsi.Tirri@helsinki.fi
Ray	Godfrey	rcg1@canterbury.ac.uk
David	Lefrançois	davidl@point-net.com
Theo	Van der Zee	t.v.d.zee@iko.ru.nl
Christine	Bieri	christine.bieri@phzh.ch
	Buschor	
Tapani	Innanen	tapani.innanen@helsinki.fi
Frank	Willems	f.willems@iko.ru.nl
Peter	Fastré	peter@level27.be
Kati	Niemelä	kati.niemela@evl.fi
Ulrich	Riegel	ulrich.riegel@uni-siegen.de
Final2	Test2	tibby_7704@hotmail.com
Robert	Crotty	Robert.Crotty@unisa.edu.au
Arniika	Kuusisto	arniika.kuusisto@helsinki.fi
Elina	Kuusisto	elina.kuusisto@helsinki.fi
Inkeri	Rissanen	inkeri.rissanen@helsinki.fi

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 2010!
