



ISREV 2025: Abstract Book

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ISREV 2025 BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Keynote abstracts

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(Religious) Education in times of uncertainty: Enhancing trust and agency

Many nowadays young people feel overwhelmed by high demands, expectations and responsibilities and at the same time perceive a lack of facilities and skills to meet them. Partly as a result of global, societal and political developments, they experience an ‘accumulation of uncertainties’ which effect their well-being and mental health. Especially amongst youth, there’s a lot of hopelessness.

In this presentation, I will elaborate on why and how education can and should better educate students how to deal with the many uncertainties they are confronted with. I argue that mainstream meritocratic, technocratic thinking has a flawed perspective on uncertainty and that, as a result of that, the repertoire provided to help youngsters dealing with uncertainty tends to fall short. The crux lies in dealing with the existential nature of uncertainty, which requires other ‘repertoires’. I argue that at this point attention to the worldview dimension in education is important. Worldviews do not reduce existential questions to technical issues and, moreover, they can offer a trusting and receptive approach to uncertainty and to an uncertain future.

Both with an eye on mental well-being of youngsters and their will and competence to contribute - both individually and collectively - to a better society for all, attention to existential needs of youngsters should be included in education. On the basis of a couple of concrete educational practices and pilots, I elaborate on how this can be done and what is needed to realize this - both in terms of teacher qualities and preconditions.

Keywords (3-4): (Religious) Education, Uncertainties, Existential Needs, Well-being

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“Listening for the Divine amidst digitality: Finding hope for a world on the brink”

Learning from indigenous and other communities long marginalized within dominant spaces may well be one of the last resources humanity has for engaging the climate catastrophes that are unfolding around us. Spiritual insights emerging from relational and communal epistemological frames that perceive the Divine in and around and among and beyond us can be articulated using specific religious ideation. These insights in turn align well with frameworks digital media educators are offering as a way to help young people resist algorithmic enclosures and amplification of misinformation and disinformation.

Understanding “digitality” in terms of digital ecologies is particularly helpful, as it is then possible to consider the ways in which news, entertainment, social media, and so on are being polluted with conspiracy theories, deceptive messaging, dangerous propaganda, and more. Meaning-making practices that are more communal and relational – learning from our indigenous neighbors – can be retrieved within religious communities and resonate well with specific environmental pedagogies that seek to resist pollution and heal existing ecologies. We can draw on the often suppressed yet still vital frames of knowing to be found deep within our religious traditions to live into a grounded and resilient hope. This paper will offer several specific practices of digital storytelling, digital contemplation, and digital

networking for doing so, using examples drawn from my specific Christian tradition but with openness to the resonance to be found in many other religious traditions.

Keywords (3-4): Media education, digitality, indigenous epistemologies, religious education

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If not optimism, then what?

Potentials of religion and worldview education in times of ecological crisis and climate crisis

The history of environmental and sustainability education goes more than 50 years back, being an educational response to the massive human impacts on nature and the climate, with harmful consequences for human and more-than-human life alike. Within this interdisciplinary field religions, worldviews and even ethics in education have to a small extent been mobilized. In a recent systematic review of articles addressing climate change, published within the field of religious education Viktor Aldrin (2024) found all together 49 contributions in the period 2000-2022, demonstrating the modest interest. However, nine of them were from 2022, indicating that the situation is about to change.

In this paper I start up with illustrating the lack of attention to ecological crisis and climate change within religion and worldview education, with reference to approaches developed by Robert Jackson, Andrew Wright, and Wanda Alberts. As I have demonstrated elsewhere (Kvamme, 2025), these accounts nevertheless showcase potential contributions to environmental and sustainability education, with their emphasis on situatedness and a global perspective, encouraging an existential orientation and accentuating the need of critique, with a sensitivity for the formative dimension of education.

In the main part of the paper I discuss how religion and worldview education may accommodate the challenges of facing ecological crisis and climate crisis while also nurturing hope among the students. Central are the notions of realistic hope and critical hope. Hope is here seen as both an existential, political and pedagogical phenomenon. I discuss how the current situation is not an invitation to optimism, with regard to intergenerational justice and ecological justice in the years ahead. I suggest to mobilize the value dimension demonstrating what is at stake, and provide spaces for imagination, critique and utopian experiments rethinking in the present what a sustainable future may be like.

Keywords (3-4): Environmental and sustainability education, religion and worldview education, ethics, hope

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Citizenship, diversity and hope: Dialogue about what and for what?

I attempt clarifications of several concepts, processes and purposes concerning society, education and religious education (RE). The concepts are citizenship, understood as exercising the right to participate positively in society and have one's views heard and respected, whilst protecting others' rights to the same; diversity, where what might be called a super-diversity or diversity of diversities is present; and hope, grounded in the existence of the future and the educability of all. Dialogue can be approached initially as a concept, but I show how my own experience has been to work on the process, in the RE classroom, and then draw wider recommendations for re-interrogation. My argument is that the dialogue should be about values and the establishment of a better world. In RE, this means that the focus is on values as objects for critical reflection and discussion, or possible resources to improve the world. There

are no guarantees of hope, but education is itself optimistic, and a better prospect than a form of schooling based on competition for status or wealth.

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Digital Ethics Education as a Challenge for Religious and Value Education

One development that has continually been contributing to making our times turbulent is the digital transformation. Increasingly, awareness has grown that the enormous chances of the “4th revolution” (Floridi, 2014) also imply great risks. These ambivalences of digital technologies have generated the need for ethical competence and have led to a veritable boom of publications and institutions in the field of digital ethics. However, many concepts of digital education at schools still concentrate on the instrumental side of digital technology (how to use digital media for learning) and neglect the side of critically engaging with its ambivalences (digital ethics education).

This plenary will chart the major challenges confronting young people in their everyday digitalized lifeworld and their wider political dimensions. It will evaluate current concepts that address these challenges such as “Digital Thriving” (James & Weinstein, 2022), “Digital Citizenship Education” (Council of Europe, 2019; Polizzi et al., 2022) and “Digital Sovereignty Education” (Aktionsrat Bildung, 2018). It will explore these concepts’ potentials for integrating perspectives of a *Critical Connective Digital Theology* and for thus designing a digital ethics education in RE that finds its normative compass at the intersection between human rights values and religious values. As part of it, a model of teachers’ professional competencies for digital education in RE will be presented that has been developed in conversation with other existing models in this field. As concrete examples aspects of a research and development project on social media influencers in RE will be introduced.

Keywords (3-4): Digital education; digital ethics; digital religion; digital theology

Symposium Abstracts

SYMPOSIUM 1

The Challenges of Prayer in Contemporary Schools

Presenters: Julian Stern, Yonah Matemba, Eli Kohn

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This paper draws on a wide range of empirical research, to explore some of the foundational challenges raised by prayer in schools. In the UK, all community schools – not just those of a religious character – have been required since 1944 to start every day with an act of collective worship (Armstrong 1948). Yet many students are not religiously inclined and may feel that this is not a meaningful experience. In Israel, some scholars have focused on the challenges faced by educators in the implementation of prayer worship in schools, and some of the reasons for these challenges. Steinsalz (1996), for example, claims that prayer can only be taught within the perspective of educating for belief in God and for a prayer service to be successful it must include the opportunity for the young people to develop connections between themselves and God. Religious schools may do a good job in teaching prayer literacy but do not do enough in developing the spiritual world of young people. As such there is a dissonance between the formal act of prayer recitation and the spiritual world of the young person. Steinsalz's conceptions of prayer education were clear in the discussions with the young people in this research. Similarly, South of the Sahara, prayer, scripture reading and hymn singing—in the main based exclusively on Christianity—has been a common feature at morning assemblies in schools since missionary times (Nthonto, 2020). This too may be challenging for students who come from different religious and non-religious backgrounds. This paper sets the challenges of prayer in school in the wider context of the relationship between schools and religions, and the presence of absence of the 'personal' in schooling.

Armstrong, H (1948) 'The Act of Collective Worship', *Religion in Education*, 15:2, pp. 47-50.

Nthonto, M.A. (2020) "School Principals Managing Policy Change: The Case of Religion Policy," *Religion & Education*, 47:1, pp. 77-97.

Steinsaltz, A. 1996. "Education for Prayer." In *Prayer in Judaism: Continuity and Change*, edited by G. H. Cohn and H. Fisch, 179-188. Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson.

SYMPOSIUM 2

Eco-sustainability dilemmas and religious perceptions. First results of a comparative quantitative study with Austrian, German, Finnish, Greek and Hungarian youth

Presenters: Stefan Altmeyer, Vasiliki Mitropoulou, Eszter Kodacsy-Simon, Martin Ubani

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This symposium presents the initial findings of a five-country comparative study on 15-year-old students' perceptions of ecological issues and the influence of religious orientations. Adolescence is a critical period for shaping beliefs and worldviews, making it essential for educators to understand the role of religio-cultural factors in students' attitudes toward controversial and troubling contemporary issues. Existing research has emphasized the dual role of religious heritage in shaping both positive and negative social responses (Weber, 1964; Brouwer, 2002), as well as attitudes toward environmentalism (Altmeyer & Dreesmann, 2020; Uitto et al., 2015) and lifestyle choices (Rissanen et al., 2023; Taylor et al., 2020).

This series of studies replicates the Altmeyer and Dreesmann (2021) research conducted in Austria and Germany, extending it to Finland, Greece, and Hungary. It utilizes the so-called “poplar dilemma” and a 32-item scale assessing ecocentrism, anthropocentrism, eco-pragmatism, and religious stewardship, as well as clustering youth into five worldview groups: eco-ethicists, non-normatives, eco-realists, eco-sceptics, and eco-activists. The updated questionnaire includes four additional items and a self-assessment section for evaluation of the group clustering. Data collection via an online questionnaire is planned for autumn 2024, with analysis in early 2025.

The symposium will include three presentations and an introduction, offering a comprehensive overview of these early results.

SYMPOSIUM 3

The human being - through varying theoretical and contextual lenses: A methodological reflective contribution to the RE research field

Presenters: Christina Osbeck, Karin Sporre, Cok Bakker, Nigel Fancourt, Olof Franck, Ole Andreas Kvamme, Annika Lilja

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One crucial issue in a RE context concerns what it means to be a human being. So, to have access to texts where young people write about this is of great value. New knowledge on pupils’ perceptions on what a human being may be and what constitutes her existential situation can be of importance for how RE teachers plan and conduct their teaching.

In this symposium an international group of scholars – from Sweden, Norway, the UK and the Netherlands – present varying interpretations from a row of chosen theoretical perspectives of an empirical material consisting of children’s texts about the human being. The overarching purpose, besides the individual contributions, is to discuss width and variation in interpretations and reflect on what kind of methodological insights that can be gained that could strengthen RE-research.

The material used in the study are texts written by 209 Swedish 11 to 12-year-old pupils and was collected 2019-2020 within the project *The Child and Curriculum. Existential Questions and Educational Responses*. It has previously not been analysed in its entirety and consists of texts of approximately, all in all, 12,000 words. For this study it has been translated into English. The creative question the children was asked to respond to was to describe to a fictive researcher from another planet what a human being is and how they are. In responding a number of questions, for example regarding equal rights, equal opportunity, characteristics of human beings etc. were offered. The method has been developed by Sven Hartman and used in previous Swedish research projects from the 1970s and onwards.

From a methodological point the idea of interpreting the same material from varying theoretical perspectives and contexts raises questions regarding reliability and validity. As within qualitative research in general, such an undertaking as this one, builds on the RE researchers’ reflexivity as part of the methodological considerations of the research process. Conclusions that are drawn are depending on the theories and previous research used, as well as on the researchers as individuals and their contextually coloured pre-understandings. That different interpretations show different findings, can be both a strength and a weakness. It belongs to the conditions that are considered when the posed knowledge claims are critically reflected on. However, the question about how varied interpretations and findings may be are seldom examined empirically, but in this symposium the interpretive approaches are at the centre.

Collegial Paper Abstracts

A

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Title of the presentation: OER and OEP as a chance for RE in Germany and beyond.

Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Educational Practices (OEP) are seen as forms of education with a high potential to help young children, pupils, students and adults gain the 21st century skills and a critical awareness of technology.

As defined by UNESCO, OER are more than resources which are free of charge, but are placed under a license that allows the 5R activity: retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute (UNESCO 2019: 4; Wiley & Hilton 2018: 134f.). OEP focus on the whole pedagogical setting/ process around OER. Cronin defines OEP as "...pedagogical practices employing participatory technologies and social networks for interaction, peer-learning, knowledge creation, and empowerment of learners" (Cronin 2017: 4).

In the German context, OER communities in the field of religious education have been among the pioneers of producing OER and practicing open educational forms. Our research project FOERBICO (<https://oer.community>), that is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education, aims to help OER communities within the field of religious education to ensure high quality RE and build an even stronger network of religion-related communities. The leading research question of the paper is therefore: What do OER communities need to this end? To answer this question, the paper will report about interviews with leading figures of the religion-related OER communities and their views of the strengths, the deficits and future perspectives of their respective community.

Finally, it will be discussed in how far our research results may be relevant for OER communities and strategies in other countries, too.

Keywords (3-4): Open education, Open Educational Resources, Open Educational Practices, 21st century skills

B

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The educational potential of conflict. And how this is a fundamental challenge for the teacher

The polarization in society has taken on intense forms. The war in Ukraine, the conflict between Israel and Gaza, but also the way in which people deal with different views and positions in society. It is often said that society is reflected in the classroom. And that is true, if you only pay attention to difference in points of view, how they possibly can be harmonized, but also how irreconcilable points of view will continue to exist. Yet the school, consisting of daily practices in the classroom, is more than just a mirror of society. There is the pedagogical task to create an intermediate space in a specific way between private points of view and the intensity of differences in society. It is also the space in which students can experiment with points of view and explore which opinion suits them best, without this having direct consequences in society.

To create and provide this pedagogical intermediate space is a point of principal, requires great attention and makes a huge appeal to the professional attitude of the teacher. We elaborate on the idea that a difference in points of view in the classroom has a pedagogical potential. There are even arguments to

be made that teachers should escalate a conflict in order to learn from this. It could be too easy for teachers to strive to harmonize all conflict. I would like to explore in this paper in what way learning with conflicting points of view can be optimized and what this requires of the professional teacher, who of course also has his/her own views.

Keywords: Educational friction, conflicting points of view, pedagogical intermediate space

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The Dynamics of Children's Religious Education in Islam

The past few years have witnessed a significant increase in scientific research examining the characteristics, objectives, scope, and methods of religious education in childhood. However, several theological issues related to childhood remain unresolved. One key issue is the tendency to view the child's role in religion through an adult-centered lens, which often overlooks the potential for children to serve as role models or sources of learning for adults. In many studies, children are perceived primarily as beings to be guided by adults. However, their innocence and purity often embody the ideal human model that many religions seek to cultivate. This study aims to explore the theological perspective on children in Islam to identify the fundamental dynamics of child education in the Islamic context. In Islam, children are seen as inherently sinless and as both a blessing in response to prayers and a trial for the parents. This dual perspective reflects the child's role as both a divine gift and a challenge. It also emphasizes that children are not possessions of their parents, but rather a trust (amanat) from God, a key aspect of the parents' responsibility to God. These principles highlight the theological view of children in Islam. Building on these aspects, this study outlines the general framework of child education in Islam with the child at the center. By emphasizing the value of the child in religious education, it aims to strengthen the theoretical background in this field. The study employs qualitative research methods, with a focus on document analysis.

Keywords (3-4): Child Education, Children in Islam, Religious Education

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Sharing Worldviews: The Contribution of Religious Education, Ethics, and Philosophy to Mutual Understanding in a Diverse

The Erasmus+ project 'Sharing Worldviews: Learning in Encounter for Common Values in Diversity' is an interdisciplinary and transnational project and education project for schools and teacher training that promotes dialogue within and beyond heterogeneous societies.

In schools and universities, pupils and students of different religions, denominations, worldviews and individual worldviews meet either locally on site or translocally in video conference rooms in a didactically guided 'Learning in Encounter', which starts from the subjects of religious education and the subjects of ethics or philosophy education. The following article outlines (1) the theoretical foundations, (2) the motivations of student teachers to participate, and (3) key results of the evaluation from 2021-2024.

C

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Does an age-appropriate disciplinary approach to religious education improve Reception age (4-5 years) children's knowledge and understanding of religion and worldviews?

My PhD research is exploring if, and how, a disciplinary approach to Religious Education, i.e. using the lenses of theology, philosophy and the human/social sciences, can support the learning of children aged 4-5 years (Reception in England and part of the Early Years Foundation Stage). It explores whether by drawing on teaching approaches and philosophies drawn from early years, such as Froebel, Montessori and Reggio Emilia, children can be supported to begin to build disciplinary knowledge and can deepen their understanding of religious concepts and make better links between aspects of what they are learning, and between what they have learnt and their prior life experience of ways of living and celebrating. I am also drawing on approaches to primary RE that have been developed over the past 40 years. A disciplinary approach is currently advocated by many in England, including Ofsted the English schools inspectorate, but research into the approach mostly comes from Secondary education and therefore is influenced by philosophies and uses approaches that may not be in line with what has traditionally been recognised as good early years practice. This research will take place in the context of RE lessons.

In carrying out this research I am seeking to ensure that children are enabled to express their knowledge and their views as independently as possible. To achieve this, drawing on research with young children, I will provide a range of methods of communication, including drawing, small world play and photographs as well as discussions/interviews.

Keywords: Disciplinary, Early Years, Classroom, Children

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Towards a hermeneutic of otherness: saving Bible study from the culture wars

In his 2020 apostolic letter Pope Francis challenged young people to take ownership of (and be passionate about) their cultural history. His question comes in the midst of a turbulent political battle taking place over what we do with the past, and in particular how, or even if, we must preserve a set of socially canonised stories about what has been.

Some argue our task is to redress the messages from the past and seek out lost voices who have been marginalised or ignored, a key tenant of the decolonisation educational movement. Countries have witnessed a new iconoclasm, with the toppling of literal statues acting as a metaphor for a rage against traditions that some accuse as leading to planetary crisis, institutional racism or exclusion. Sociologist Frank Furedi argues this is leaving young people homeless, uprooted with a loss of intergenerational transmissions of community way of life and ideals.

Others argue for a restoration of the past - that it has gifts for the present that warrant protection, such as is exemplified in the Classical Christian Education schools movement or what is called Christian humanism in Jesuit Education. There are signs of curriculum take up of classical subjects. However, these movements run counter to progressive waves in university education and education research in many countries.

Either way, Francis' observation that illiteracy, specifically 'the hermeneutic skills that make us credible interpreters and translators of our own cultural tradition, are in short supply' offers a particular challenge to those in Catholic education and schools.

This paper asks if, and if so, what, we can learn from the ancient text we call the Bible. Should we lean towards traditionally orientated approaches and attempt to redress the past, or move towards approaches

which restore and preserve the gifts that history can bring? And what role can, and must, hermeneutics play in this debate?

This paper argues that we must put aside polarising or binary views and move towards a nuanced position which builds a hermeneutic of otherness. The bible contains a cacophony of voices; rather than seeking a singular voice in its pages, can we move to hearing to all those whose voices it contains? Might this facilitate significant meaning in the lives of all readers today? And might textual hermeneutics be a locus for the study of religious and non-religious traditions in RE, and intergenerational education as a whole?

Keywords: Hermeneutics; otherness; Bible study; culture wars

F

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Enhancing ‘dialogue’ by providing an initial understanding of self and others through a Personal Worldviews Framework

The benefits of teaching RE have been observed internationally, including facilitating effective intercultural education. Dialogue is often promoted as a tool to improve intercultural understanding and promote respect around religious belief. However, this article argues that dialogue is the second step towards intercultural and interreligious communication and awareness. The first step is that of understanding self. There are many ways to categorise the ‘self’ such as ‘lifeviews’, ‘existential configurations’ and ‘worldviews’. This article employs the term personal worldviews (PWVs) as a shorthand for the multifaceted nature of self.

As people live in proximity but have very differing, possibly vastly divergent, PWVs this may lead to conflicts arising. PWVs are intertwined with identity which may cause friction if challenged, as this may be perceived as a challenge to the essence of ‘self’. Increased globalisation has exacerbated the potential for this occurrence. Whilst Vroom proposes that the solution is dialogue and mutual respect he acknowledges a foundational challenge: the problem is not that people disagree but rather that their ‘paradigms are incongruent’ (2006:x). Examination of these paradigms may facilitate more effective dialogue. Paradigms are models of the way an individual or community sees the world and I employ the term PWVs to illustrate these personal paradigms. Current research amongst teachers in England (n=142) has investigated the link between teacher’s PWVs and their RE teaching. The findings illustrate that teacher’s PWVs can wield magnetic repulsion and attraction power as teachers encounter worldviews that differ from their own. Examination of these may enhance dialogue.

Keywords (3-4): Personal worldviews, worldview consciousness, intercultural communication.

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Religious Education in Transition: A Comparative Research Overview of South Africa and Sweden from 1994 to 2024

What function can Religious Education fill in pluralistic societies? What role does the surrounding society play in designing and developing Religious Education in public education? In the present paper, RE in South Africa and Sweden are contrasted and compared. Today's multi-cultural and multi-religious South Africa is a young democracy and the South African education system, in addition to inequality and economic challenges, is primarily characterized by issues related to the country's history and the

divisive and polarizing effects of the apartheid system, which also affects teaching about religion in the public school system. Sweden must also be described as a multi-religious and pluralistic society, but the role of religion in society is different, as Sweden is highly secularized. Through the comparative approach, it is possible to broaden perspectives and get a more nuanced picture of how factors interact in other contexts and an understanding of variations and common patterns. Through a systematic review of studies from 1994 to 2024, 87 peer-reviewed articles were analyzed for dominant trends. The preliminary results indicate that handling religious diversity in the classroom and respect for differences is a common dilemma. At the same time, nation-building, societal transformation and social justice are dominant themes in the South African context, while secularization is a theme only addressed in research from Sweden. By summarizing, comparing and discussing the themes that have dominated these two national contexts, an understanding of the role RE can fill in different national contexts at different historical times is generated.

Keywords (3-4): Religious Education, comparative analyses, systematic review, South Africa – Sweden

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Discourses on the meaning of religion for the individual and for society in interviews with 15- to 16-year-old Swedish students

In our secular but multi-religious society, the understanding of religion and religiosity is central. The dominating discourses about religion and religiosity influence the learning about religion and religiosity and how students experience and view each other which in turn effects the society. In this lies opportunities but also challenges in relation to a school and a curriculum with the aim of contributing to tolerance and increased understanding, also in religious terms. As stressed by sociocultural perspectives on learning, having access to a wider repertoire of discourses on religion provides a basis for nuanced thinking on religion.

The aim of the article is to explore what discourses on the meaning of religion for the individual and for society may be identified in interview answers from Swedish students. Students from grade 9 in 3 different schools have been interviewed. The identified discourses have been placed in two separate category systems: religion and its meaning for the individual and religion and its meaning for society. The category system with religion and its meaning for the individual has been shown to be of a more descriptive nature, and with few exceptions the answers are non-problematizing. On the other hand, the category system religion and its meaning for society is more normative and with few exceptions the answers are problematizing. The results also indicate that the available discourses on the meaning of religion for the individual and for society differ between different context and may be related to different discursive practices in classrooms and schools.

Keywords (3-4): Student, discourse, understanding, religion

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Religious Education in turbulent times: Revisiting the Mary Whitehouse experience

In 1964, in opposition to the ‘permissive society’ and ‘new morality’, an English school teacher called Mary Whitehouse launched the ‘Clean-up TV’ campaign (renamed National Viewers’ and Listeners’ Association in 1965). Whitehouse sought to combat the subversive ‘propaganda of disbelief, doubt and dirt’ on radio and television. Despite gaining widespread support, she was ridiculed by left-wing liberal progressives, partly because of the evangelical Christian beliefs underpinning her moral crusade.

Memories of Whitehouse remain vivid in UK popular culture, but her nation-wide campaign, launched in January 1976, to ‘Save Religious Education in State Schools’ (SRESS) has been ignored. Analysis of the origins, aims and results of SRESS was presented at ISREV Session XVIII (Turku, Finland, 2012). Over a decade later, while the research remains unpublished, the themes continue to resonate, for example, regarding culture wars, no platforming, popularism, and political extremism. By revisiting the original archival sources and looking afresh at the accumulated historical evidence, this paper will summarise the provocative curriculum developments, theoretical innovations and policy proposals to which SRESS reacted; discuss the perceived connections between Christianity, national identity and morality on the one hand, and Humanism, Communism and immorality on the other; and contextualise SRESS with regard to other examples of cultural restorationism and political and religious conservatism at the time. Overall, the paper seeks to provide new insights into a significant period in the development of multi-faith RE in England by rigorously (re-)assessing historical sources from those socially, politically and culturally turbulent times.

Keywords (3-4): Mary Whitehouse, Religious Education, State Schools

G

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Exploring Digital Ethics and Digital Awareness among Religious Culture and Ethics Teachers (RE) in Türkiye to Contribute Digital Wellbeing

The rapid advancement of the digital technologies has significantly transformed education systems. The widespread integration of digital devices and platforms into teaching has provided educators a level of convenience and flexibility. However, this shift has also introduced various concerns. One emerging field of interest is ‘Digital Ethics’ a concept that has gained prominence with the evolution of digital technologies. Despite its increasing relevance, digital ethics remains an evolving area without a universally accepted definition.

Raising awareness about digital ethics is crucial for educators. Understanding digital ethics helps educators and students navigate issues such as digital minimalism, cyber security, netiquette, and digital obesity, etc. This awareness can enhance their digital well-being and contribute to their overall happiness and peace of mind in daily life.

In Türkiye, RE teachers, who are responsible for imparting moral values and ethical principles, are particularly positioned to address these issues. For RE teachers, digital ethics is not just an ancillary topic but a vital part of their role. Their awareness of digital ethics is essential for guiding students toward ethical behaviour in digital environments and fostering a sense of responsibility among young people.

This study employs a quantitative research design, specifically a cross-sectional survey, to assess the level of digital ethics awareness among RE teachers in Türkiye. By evaluating the current awareness levels, the study aims to develop strategies to enhance teachers' pedagogy for mastery of digital ethics. The findings will be instrumental in improving the ability of religious culture teachers to impart ethical values effectively, ultimately contributing to the well-being of young people and preparing them for a balanced digital life.

Keywords (3-4): Digital awareness, digital ethics, education, digital wellbeing.

H

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Encountering life lived as a Muslim: teaching Islam in the public school

At a time when xenophobic and anti-Muslim attitudes are growing across Europe, this paper proceeds in three steps to explore some current and pertinent questions regarding the teaching of Islam in the non-faith, public school. First the current context is laid out, before a critical consideration of concerns regarding how Islam is represented in religious education from Panjwani (2005), and Hussein and Panjwani (2024). Through a consideration of educational questions as well as those pertaining to religion, and specifically what it is to live as a Muslim, a modest proposal is offered. This is one orienting around ensuring religious education is educational, and so capable of ensuring Islam, and what it is to exist as a Muslim, can be fully encountered in the classroom.

Keywords: Islam, education, religion, existence

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Religious Education in a New Reality: The Voice of Children on Religion and Religious Education in an Irish Catholic Primary School Classroom

The study of religion and religious education has become a contested space in Europe and in the wider international context. Thirty-five children aged between eleven and thirteen become co-researchers in a participatory-based exploration of their views on religion and religious education in one Irish Catholic primary school. An interpretive paradigm is used, which is concerned with understanding the world as it is from the subjective reality of the individual. The study is grounded in their own experiences and perceptions within the qualitative field of study. Children in the study are from a variety of religious and belief traditions. The children highlight how their families' belief systems have an influence on how they perceive their religious selves. Many try to reconcile the different religious and belief systems that are to be found within their homes with the articulation of their own belief systems. All children articulate their desire to learn about other religions or beliefs. Identification of and respect for diversity is evident, but little knowledge is articulated in relation to the content of the others' religious traditions. Interest is shown in learning about the religious other in children's environment by engaging in what Ipgrave (Mc Kenna, et al, 2008) refers to as "Spiritual Sharing". Suggesting that children have a clear sense of "being" religious. They identify how it is to "behave" in a certain way as a result of this. The paper concludes by considering the implications of this research and offers recommendations for reflection going forward.

Keywords (3-4): Religious Education; Child Voice; Spiritual Sharing; Participatory-Based Research

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"Seeing and Being Seen": Insights and Outlooks from Theology and Religious Education

Insights

In the age of social media, there are billions of opportunities to be 'seen'. The goal: as many likes as possible, which activates the brain's reward system, similar to other forms of recognition in social contexts. Conversely, few followers imply social insignificance, accompanied by a feeling of being

overlooked. Additionally, comparing oneself and one's life with the optimized self-presentations of other users can severely impact self-esteem.

But why do we actually want to be seen? Because we rely on social recognition and appreciation. The fact that these two aspects are closely linked to various forms of seeing can be observed in different areas:

- Pedagogy/Psychology

Learners who feel noticed by their teachers and peers develop a stronger sense of belonging and security, which strengthens their confidence in their abilities and fosters a willingness to learn.

- Language

The connection between seeing and relationships can be seen in countless terms, idioms and language games.

- Theology

In the Bible, "seeing" plays a central role, and it has much more than just a physical meaning, as it often represents deeper levels of understanding, both in interpersonal relationships and in the relationship between humans and God.

Outlooks

Teacher training and religious education should increasingly become "learning environments of seeing," based on the trust in the promise "You are a God of seeing" (Gen 16:13), which means:

- Strengthening the person-oriented dimensions in education, rather than focusing on performance-oriented aspects
- Intensification of relationship skills
- Training in mindfulness
- Experience-oriented exploration of the Bible and theological content

Keywords (3-4):

Religious Education, Pedagogy of appreciation, Theology, Teacher Education

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‘Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you’ (1 Kings 19:7): Christian Religious Education and the Journey ‘Into the Unknown’

School education is designed to help individuals mature by developing their reason and will, enabling them to take control of their lives by setting goals and acquiring the competence to achieve them, thereby eliminating randomness. However, the modern world is changing so rapidly that predicting events and maintaining control over them is increasingly difficult. This article aims to demonstrate that Christian religious education, when implemented through the analysis of biblical stories, can help students overcome the deterministic thinking fostered by traditional school education and prepare them for the necessity of embarking on journeys into the unknown. Reflecting on the stories of biblical heroes reveals that they often faced events that compelled them to undertake journeys without knowing their destinations. For instance, Abraham was called to leave his country and his father's house for a land shown by God (Gen 12:1). Neither he nor Joseph, Moses or Elijah knew the purpose of their journeys at the outset, only in retrospect. When Elijah asked God for death, he was instead told, 'Get up and eat,

or the journey will be too much for you.' Perhaps the purpose of religious education is to prepare young people to embark on journeys even when the destinations are unknown and the challenge is accompanied by fear.

Keywords: crisis, textual hermeneutics, biblical heroes, meaning of life

I

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Simulation-Based Learning for Arab Teachers in Jewish Schools: Navigating Identity and Professional Conflicts

This paper explores the use of simulation-based learning (SBL) as a pedagogical strategy to address the challenges Arab/Muslim teachers encounter in navigating multicultural and multireligious interactions within Jewish schools in Israel. As cultural "boundary-crossers" within a majority system, these educators navigate complex tensions between personal, national, and professional identities. Through structured simulations of authentic classroom scenarios, this study explores how SBL facilitates the development of conflict management strategies, intercultural competence, and professional resilience. Findings suggest that simulation-based methodologies provide a reflective space for teachers to rehearse responses to microaggressions, identity conflicts, and ethical dilemmas while balancing authenticity with professional role expectations. Implications for teacher education in multicultural and conflict-affected settings are discussed.

Keywords: simulation-based learning, teacher education, multicultural education, identity conflict, Arab teachers, Jewish schools, Israel

K

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What kind of model for religious education? A national survey on Finnish teachers.

The purpose of this presentation is to describe results from a quantitative survey on the perceptions of Finnish teachers (N=2753) on religion and religious education in school. The participants included both subject teachers and class teachers. The survey was carried out in Spring 2023 by the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC). The data was collected with a digital questionnaire. It is the only questionnaire of such extent conducted ever in Finland. The research questions were: 1. How do teachers perceive religion in public education, 2. How do they perceive religious and ethics education, and integrated worldview instruction? These were studied with 33 items. Some of the items were selected from REDCO-project. We included different types of instruction when studying their preferences in the questionnaire. In addition, there were open ended questions focusing on for example materials used. In our presentation we will distinguish between subject and class teachers and teachers from larger municipalities and smaller. In addition, we aim to cluster participants or items. However, we are yet to study the material. The preliminary glance shows for example positivity toward integrated instruction (M=3.82) and for a new subject altogether (M=4.06). The study will provide a general view about the current perceptions of the teachers in Finland concerning religions and religious and ethics education in Finland.

Keywords: Religious education, questionnaire, teachers

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Together and/or separately? Pedagogical approaches to worldview education in the future

Finnish society has undergone significant transformations in recent years. The increasing diversity within the population has prompted a re-evaluation of how worldview education should be adapted to suit the needs of a future society. Currently, worldview education is offered according to individual religious affiliations, resulting in the existence of fourteen distinct curricula for religious education (RE). For students who do not belong to any religious community, an alternative subject titled secular ethics is provided. The prevailing model of worldview education is often viewed as inadequate in addressing the requirements of contemporary society. In response to these concerns, the National Agency for Education has established a development group to explore potential scenarios for developing worldview education. As part of this initiative, many schools have begun to implement worldview education as a partially integrated subject, wherein the curricula of various religious education approaches are combined with secular ethics education, thereby uniting students from diverse backgrounds. The joint research and development project ODYSSEUS at the University of Helsinki aims to address the demand for change from both practical curriculum development and research perspectives through the implementation of partially integrated worldview education. This project will investigate this integration from various angles, including subject matter didactics and the identification of core content. The methodological framework for this project is participatory action research. In our presentation, we will share initial findings from our research process, which is based on thematic interviews. The development process and preliminary results provide valuable insights for international discussions concerning the future of Finnish worldview education.

Keywords (3-4): worldview education, partly integrated worldview education, curriculum development, participatory action research

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Confirmation work as learning arena: a safe or a brave space in turbulent times?

The aim of this paper is to examine confirmation work in the Church of Sweden as a learning environment that fosters hope and well-being among young people. The discussion is based on interviews conducted in the spring of 2022 with a total of 28 Swedish youths, who shared their reflections on what they learned and experienced during their time as confirmands. The theoretical framework for the study is grounded in the concepts of "safe space" and "brave space." The findings suggest that confirmation work serves as a safe space, where young people feel they can express themselves authentically. However, as a learning environment, the confirmation work described by the youths is not perceived as a brave space in terms of exemplifying a challenging and courageous Christian faith. Overall, the interviews indicate that the participants learned relatively little about Christian faith and tradition.

Keywords: Confirmation work, safe space, brave space, Swedish church

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Preparing future RE teachers to integrate democratic principles into teaching practice. Research on implementation of Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

Abstract: This research demonstrates that RE student teachers blended training programs through mentorship based on Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture help develop participants understanding of democratic culture and their teaching competence. The research was a part of an Erasmus+ project, the STEP UP-DC which through its three-year duration includes an online training platform and blended training course. The research involved 360 prospective RE teachers alongside 67 RE teacher mentors in Greece (2021 to 2023). It used surveys together with interviews as its data collection methods. SPSS statistical analysis software in addition to content and topic analysis of the data were used. The findings demonstrate that RE student teachers develop their democratic competences and classroom teaching abilities after participating in CDC training. The research demonstrates how these trained RE student teachers who function as change agents can successfully implement democratic principles in RE classes. It also shows how school-based teacher practice mentors influence the professional growth of RE student teachers. The development of CDC by RE student teachers leads to better learning for themselves and improved professional development for their mentors. The ripple effect enabled mentors to implement the CDC model throughout their lesson planning and teaching approaches and assessment methods. Findings indicate that teacher education programs should deliver direct instruction to future teachers for their ability to teach and implement CDC in their classroom practice. Also, findings provide educational policymakers and curriculum designers and teacher educators with valuable insights to enhance democratic culture in schools and society through RE.

Keywords (3-4): Democratic competences, Teacher training, RFCDC (Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture), Mentoring

L

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Title of the collegial paper: Interreligious and Peace Education in Times of Crisis. A History of Religions for Peace

I intend to give an introduction to my new book “Interreligious and Peace Education in Times of Crisis. A History of Religions for Peace”. It delves into the critical role of interreligious education and peace education, especially during times of crisis, and highlights the interaction of different religions in promoting peace. Since its inception in 1970, the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP)—now known as *Religions for Peace* (RfP)—has emerged as the world’s largest coalition of religious communities dedicated to peace-building. Over the past 50 years, this movement has made significant strides in fostering interreligious understanding and contributing to global peace efforts. In this comprehensive exploration, it is shown how RfP expanded its focus from specific conflicts, such as the Cold War and the nuclear threat, to broader concepts of peace that encompass justice, human rights, and the preservation of life. The book addresses crucial questions: How can we define a positive concept of peace that goes beyond the mere absence of war? What is the relationship between peace and justice? How can religions uphold human rights, contribute to the preservation of the basis of life and guide cooperative efforts? The importance of learning, education, and training in achieving these goals is emphasized throughout the publication. By tracing five decades of initiatives, declarations, and projects, this work offers valuable insights into the ongoing quest for peace and sets the stage for future endeavors in interreligious and peace.

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Fin de Siècle 1889 – The Year, when the Eiffel tower was built and Friedrich Nietzsche became crazy. Dealing with the ambivalence of liberty in turbulent times. Two miniatures for the discourse in Religious Education

Times of big technical progress and (neo-)colonial dealing with other cultures can have tense effects on society and subject: On the one hand there is an intensive striving for liberty and power, on the other subjects painfully experience their own limits to survive these developments.

The paper will first introduce in two examples – or miniatures – from history, which present a large-scale technical project in Germany and an intercultural conflict in France. Both are standing for symbolic figures concerning the ambivalence of liberty. They represent the fin de siècle as a time of life-feeling similar to the present.

Second we will consider about the question, in which way Friedrich Nietzsche influences the life-feeling in past and present times, when he said, that "the crazy human beast" must liberate himself of the Christian compassion morality, not God would become human-being, but the human-being will become God. Does his thinking also has effects on thinking and acting today?

Third we will look at didactics and media for RE, which can help to

- take up the topic of ambivalence between striving for modern liberty and the vulnerability of the subject,
- promote biographical learning,
- build up a sensitive and empathetic attitude of learning,
- support skills of perception, remembrance and tolerance,
- enable students to manage achievements of transfer,
- strengthen the power of critical judgement,
- (...).

The workshop will present concrete examples for RE based on didactics theories in concerning the interconnectedness of technology, religion and education in turbulent times.

Keywords (3-4): technical progress and colonialism – ambivalence of modern liberty – vulnerable subject – learning by examples in past and present

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Title of the presentation: Considering Parents' Perspectives on Religious Education as a way of fostering hope and well-being of young people

Since families have a far-reaching influence on their members in almost every respect of life, they are viewed as highly relevant contexts for religious socialisation and education. Recent research on family religiosity in Germany turns the previous, deficient view of families upside down and wants to adopt a more constructive perspective. This leads to the overall question: What do families need for their well-being? And how can religious education help to foster this well-being within families?

As parents are a crucial part of the family system, it seems especially important to know more about their role in religious education. Therefore, the presentation focuses on the parental perspectives to religious education in selective fields, e.g. the family itself, church or school.

Based on an international research review and on different quantitative and qualitative data collections, the paper addresses the following questions:

- What do we know about sociodemographic backgrounds and milieus of parents who want their children to get religious education outside the family? Are there certain types of families that are overseen, e.g. due to conventional family images?
- What expectations and experiences do parents have with religious education programmes? Are there any inconsistencies that could be changed to achieve a better balance between religious education programmes and families' needs?
- What can we say about parents' religiosity? Are there differences between their individual religious profile and their 'parental' profile within the family? How could family religiosity and parental religiosity be promoted through religious education programmes?

Keywords (3-4): Religious parenting, Protestant Parents, Family and Religion

M

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Pushing Back on contemporary Western culture's challenges to Christian belief and practice by enhancing catechists', religious education teachers' awareness of the threats posed by 'soft' and 'hard versions' of post-modernity

In its introduction the paper engages with the thinking of Canadian philosopher Bernard Lonergan, S.J. in establishing an 'objective' foundation for religious truth. Reacting to the age-old distinction between objective 'out there' reality and subjective 'inner' reality, his epistemology requires us to understand that genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity. By this he means that we arrive at truth, as Michael Paul Gallagher S.J. puts it, "through fidelity to a ladder of imperatives present in our ordinary, selftranscending questions." The steps on this ladder could be seen as; pay attention to experience in all its forms, be intelligent (seeking to understand); be reasonable (checking out the truth) be responsible (making decisions in line with your knowledge); be in love (with God) because that is where faith is born from recognising God's love for you. Lonergan's epistemology challenges Atheism, Humanism.

This is followed by a critique of current liberal ideologies that, while claiming to be the champions of social justice turn out, on examination, to be misrepresent such a cause. A clear manifestation of this is the development of 'wokism', which at face value is commendable if it simply means being awake to various forms of oppression. Where it is not commendable is where it includes all forms and manner of perceived oppression as contrary to human flourishing. Emanating from Critical Race Theory, wokism has moved from being anti-racist to become a 'champion' of many other groups. The paper concludes with suggestions on how the religious education teacher could expose the anit-Christian nature of much of 'wokism'.

Keywords (3-4): atheism, standpoint epistemology, wokism, intersectionality;

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Relevance-orientated religious education

In the 1960s and 1970s, problem- and pupil-centred approaches were developed in Religious Education (e.g. H. Loukes in the UK, K.E. Nipkow in Germany). Pupils' questions and problems were thematised (such as friendship, violence or peace) and linked with Christian questions and impulses (keyword: "correlation"). In many cases, however, this remained a top-down approach. The pupil-centred approach had its origins, at least in part, in the teachers' interest in tailoring their concepts better to the young people. Despite the claim that was made in many cases, it was not the pupils who decided on the topics, but usually the teachers in the end.

This article takes up the basic ideas of this period, but goes one step further. In Saarland, an approach was developed in which the pupils not only identify the topics relevant to them, but also develop parts of the curriculum themselves. This was trialled at three grammar schools with seven classes (year 10). Over the course of eight weeks, the pupils worked on religious topics that were relevant from their point of view. In line with the self-determination theory (Deci/Ryan), the pupils contributed to the overall organisation of the religious education lessons with their competence and experienced themselves as autonomous decision-makers. They participated in the didactic development. The theory and implementation of this process are presented in the collegial paper

Keywords (3-4): pupil-centred, relevance, planning RE, new curriculum

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Nurturing Existential Resilience in Secular Youth through Values-Based Religious Education

In a world increasingly characterized by existential uncertainty, secular youth face complex emotional and spiritual challenges that traditional educational systems are often ill-equipped to address. This study explores how values-based religious education (RE), informed by principles of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), can nurture existential resilience among secular youth aged 15–29. Framed within an inclusive and interdisciplinary paradigm, this research reconceptualizes RE not as doctrinal instruction but as a reflective, ethical, and dialogical space where young people—regardless of religious affiliation—can engage meaningfully with life's ultimate questions. The study employs Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) based on in-depth interviews with ten Latvian hospital chaplains who provide spiritual care to secular adolescents and young adults navigating health crises, loss, and identity disruption. Findings reveal several core themes, including the significance of relational presence, embodied meaning-making through adventure therapy, the role of realistic and symbolic hope, family stabilization, and legacy creation. Chaplains described secular youth as spiritually curious and emotionally transparent, often seeking connection, truth, and symbolic practices to process suffering. The structured spiritual care model used in CPE—focused on themes such as Meaning, Hope, the Holy, and Community—proved effective in supporting these needs. The research concludes that when RE incorporates spiritual care practices, it can foster emotional and existential resilience in secular learners by validating their experiences, enhancing self-understanding, and equipping them with inner resources to face adversity. This study advocates for a reimagined RE framework that integrates spiritual literacy and pastoral sensitivity to meet the developmental needs of today's secular youth.

Keywords: Existential resilience, secular youth, values-based religious education, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), spiritual care, chaplaincy, adolescent development, meaning-making, inclusive education, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

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The Significance of a Critical Education on Antisemitism in Teacher Training of Religious Education

The present paper deals with the necessity of critical education on antisemitism in the field of teacher training especially for teachers of RE, focussing on the situation in Germany. Empirical studies show that antisemitism still is a present phenomenon at schoolyards. Antisemitism is a persisting – and since October 7, 2023, a clearly visible – problem in society. Within educational contexts teachers need appropriate skills to deal with antisemitism and to educate children and young adults in a way to prevent antisemitisms. Therefore, various academics plead for an appropriate teacher training and structural changes. Hereby it is not just a question of knowing how to be able to decipher and recognize antisemitic narratives and to act professionally. But it is also part of a critical self-reflection and a way of questioning one's own attitudes.

Having a look at educational programs of universities, new initiatives from different institutions can be named engaging with a critical education on antisemitism, although these programs are not (yet) mandatory. (Universities of Würzburg, Tübingen, Bamberg, and Ludwigsburg).

This paper takes a closer look at the certificate program „Education against Antisemitism and Anti-Muslim Racism” at University of Tübingen. The program is managed by an interreligious lecturer team (Jewish, Muslim, Christian) and officially starts in the winter semester 2024/25. Finally, some insights in the empirical examination of the certificate program are given. The qualitative research is conducted as problem-centered interviews and questionnaires with students, analysed with the qualitative content analysis.

Keywords: teacher training, critical education on antisemitism, prevention of antisemitism

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How to Foster the faith of Young People through teaching Bible Class in Japan. Qualitative Research on the Effects of Christianity during Six Years at a Christian Girls' Junior and Senior High school

Christian schools are popular in Japan, despite the low Christian population-only 0.7% as of 2024. Based on nine years of teaching Bible classes at a Christian girls' junior and senior high school, I observed that many students deeply internalized Christian teachings and values yet never pursued baptism. Since baptism is an apparent goal for Christian education, hope settled in students' spirit, discerning reasons for not getting baptized should show hints for better curriculum.

I've conducted qualitative research, as final project for a Digital Curriculum, Lived Theology & World Christianity, at the Overseas Ministries Study Center and Princeton Theological Seminary in 2023, adopting interpretivist methodology incorporating the four voices model from Theological Action Research to articulate my educational context and evaluate my teaching practices by investigating what students gained.

Results showed their internal gains during school years are: 1) perceived Christianity as positive, in contrast to the broader Japanese societal view that tends to regard “religion” as something suspicious. 2) learned biblical verses and internalized Christian ethics. 3) some learned prayer. 4) learned God as someone trustworthy. 5) rarely but learned faith. However, despite these gains, most did not choose baptism. Reasons for not being baptized was not doctrinal issues, but simply cultural, e.g. seeing baptism as merely an initiation into a “strange minority group.” Based on these results, theological reflection and suggestions for Bible teaching are shown in the paper. As a conclusion, teaching Christianity as religious education at schools in Japan has the potential to foster students' hope by nurturing faith and love.

Keywords: Christian schools, religious education, mission, bible class curriculum

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Dietrich Bonhoeffer's peace ethic (developed 1939 - 1943)

In June 1939, Dietrich Bonhoeffer returned from the USA to Germany “into the trenches of the German resistance”. At the urging of his brother-in-law Hans von Dohnany, he decided to take part in Oster and Canaris' secret conspiracy to assassinate Adolf Hitler. He justified this assassination attempt with the sentence: “There are situations in which you have to break the 5th commandment “Thou shalt not kill” in order to fulfill it.” The plan failed, as we know. But a complete peace ethic, written down on countless pieces of paper of his 'ethics', was the result of this assassination plan.

I summarize this peace ethic in key words: The first step to peace is the willingness to become guilty. Every unrest or war is based on a blatant injustice that should be fought. Jesus fought the purity laws. Bonhoeffer fought the Jewish laws. Today we are fighting minority laws. Anyone who violates these laws is guilty. But innocently guilty because he/she is fighting for humanity. – In addition, he/she takes on the guilt of those who do not care about the injustice suffered by those who suffer, but only think about themselves

According to Bonhoeffer, this commitment to justice and peace should not be based on principles and norms, but only on the “conscience of an innocent child”. Just as a child, faced with glaring public injustice, screams, “Stop it! He/she has done nothing!”, then we should spontaneously “fall into the spokes” of the wheel of violence. We should stop injustice not with our minds, but with our healthy feelings. There are no ifs” and “buts”, but only the law comes into its own.

Is this peace concept still relevant today? Let us discuss this question!

N

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Citizenship and worldview — Pupils' experiences of belonging in the Swedish secular and multi-religious society

What binds societies together? How do individuals experience trust and belonging in their immediate surroundings and larger, more abstract communities, such as national or global ones? Historically, religion has played a key role in national identity, but with increasing secularisation and societal diversification, its role has shifted. This project aims to analyse how students across various age groups describe and reflect on meaning making and identity-building in relation to place, belonging, and citizenship. Despite growing awareness of the need for education grounded in young people's realities, research on how young people navigate their civic identities and the role of worldview/religion remains sparse. Using a broad functional definition of religion, this study explores religion as a social “glue” that provides meaning, creates community, and connects individuals to both people and places. By comparing curriculum goals with students' lived experiences, this project seeks to deepen the understanding of how civic identities are negotiated in pluralistic environments; specifically, the context of Sweden. The methodology involves workshops utilizing LEGO Serious Play where students construct symbolic representations of meaning-making arenas, shifting the focus from themselves to their creations. This method facilitates discussions on belonging, Swedish identity, and religion. Data will be collected through audio recordings and photographs of students' LEGO models, capturing how students articulate their views on citizenship, meaning, and community across local, national, and global contexts. In this paper, we will present preliminary results from workshops conducted with pupils in the ages of 8–9 and 14–15 years old.

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Hope and Well-being in hopeless and destructive contexts: Critical Education on Antisemitism for Teaching

Hope and well-being can only arise for young people if they can understand the world which they live in as their world and if this understanding also offers them opportunities to shape it. Dealing with century-old problems, such as antisemitism, is a context in which religious didactics must be tested: Can religious education (RE) even promote hope and a kind of well-being in a world plagued by destruction, chaos, war, and hatred? The study program Critical Education on Antisemitism for Teaching (ZABUS: <https://www.ev-theologie.uni-wuerzburg.de/ccea/zabus>) offers students of all teacher training courses at the University of Wuerzburg the opportunity to draw intensively on their own pedagogical resources in dealing with antisemitism over three semesters and to broaden their skills beyond this.

The paper presents fundamental information and research objectives within the study program which is considered a model project throughout Germany. An iterative educational design intertwines research on antisemitism with teaching practices, thereby integrating its characteristic approach by fostering the resources of the teaching profession.

Keywords (3-4): Teacher profession, Resources, Critical Education on Antisemitism

P

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How to exist with a loss? Grieving children in the secular age

In this study, I will examine how adults narrate and make meaning of their death-related childhood grief as an existential question of how to be with loss, and how to relate to a lost loved one. Death is a significant interruption in a child's life, and inevitably invites the griever to question not only the life of the deceased and its ending, but also one's own mortality. The data of this study consists of grief narratives written by university students recalling their childhood experiences of grief. The theoretical framework is based on cultural-psychology, and educational theorist Gert Biesta's ideas of education as an existential challenge, and the critical event analysis is applied as a methodological tool. The analysis shows that grieving can be understood as a disruption that puts the narrators' subject-ness under question. Grieving offers an aspect of 'being taught by' loss, and thus, it can reveal something valuable about the "I", teaching us how to exist as human beings. In the grief narratives, I will particularly look at the existential interruptions related to religious/ spiritual aspects in loss, which show that bereavement can be a kind of catalyst leading to a change in one's religious life. Religious beliefs can be a powerful existential resource and offer a horizon of meaning for children to respond to the ontological and existential challenges that come their way. However, losses can also force a bereaved person to go on a long journey into the self in which doubts, spiritual confusion, and even a loss of faith.

Keywords: grief, existence, religion, subjectification

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Religious Education as shared space for existential reflection in a time of transition - a Danish classroom research project

My classroom research indicates that when religion is constructed in a philosophical-existential way, it opens up participation for students. When religion and religious texts are constructed as answers to universal questions of life and existence, it creates opportunities for participation, attention and responsiveness in the students. The classroom becomes a space for shared reflection, where students become co-creators of the teaching and are invited into enriching conversations they have nowhere else. The discourse acts as an identification rule, a 'relay' that captures student interest and engagement and encourages participation and can be both student- and content-oriented. The philosophical-existential discourse contributes to an experiential dimension in teaching linked to the students' life world, where personal reflections are expressed in the classroom while the students' experiences are expanded in the encounter with the subject matter. The teacher's role in the dialogue has a crucial impact on how this is achieved.

Keywords (3-4): the reflective community, philosophical-existential religious discourse, participatory opportunities, classroom research

Niina Putkonen

Learning within Religious Tradition. Navigating the Educational through 'Existential' in Islamic Religious Education

In this paper, we explore the educational purposes for Islamic religious education (IRE) and discuss IRE as a place for navigating the 'existential'. Towards this goal we employ the conceptualization of the three domains of educational purpose, subjectification, socialization and qualification, introduced by Gert Biesta. The research data consisting of interviews with IRE teachers (n=17) working in comprehensive schools in Finland is analysed using thematic analysis. According to the findings in this study, the relationship between socialization and subjectification in IRE is close, and the educational purposes relating to qualification are mostly mirrored towards this relationship. The apparent emphasis on learning within Islamic tradition links the epistemology of the Islamic tradition closely to ontological and existential perspectives in IRE. Meanwhile the negotiations related to Muslim existence in Finnish society embody the negotiations on the boundaries of the ideas of liberal education on neutrality and nonalignment to any cultural value system.

Keywords (3-4): Islamic religious education, 'existential' in religious education, religious tradition, Finland

R

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What motivates student teachers to select RE as their subject specialism?

This paper responds to the challenge posed by the ISREV theme: 'There is a need for new research that would shed light on the role of RE in preparing young people to face the challenges of our time both on the individual and collective level.' Our contention is that new research with student teachers of RE will make a significant contribution to how the RE community understands what motivates the religious educators of tomorrow.

Inspired by the authors' own experiences as RE teacher educators this paper reports on a current cross-border (N. Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) research study inquiring into student teacher motivation for selecting RE as their subject specialism. This is set against the backdrop of findings from Kieran, Parker-Jenkins and Ryan (2020) and Nelson and Yang (2023) which suggest that teachers' personal beliefs and bias emerge as key to informing their professional practice. Our hypothesis is that student teachers' personal beliefs and assumptions cannot be considered as separate from the question of what

motivates them to choose to teach RE. Our qualitative study elicits a rich data set from which we can identify recurring themes such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, the ability to articulate a worldview or faith stance, an understanding of the purposes of RE, and key influences during the course of their studies. Initial findings make it possible to posit that explicit reflection on initial and developing motivations for teaching RE needs to be a key element of initial teacher education programmes.

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Keywords (3-4): Motivation, student teachers, qualitative study, religious education

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Title of the presentation: Dealing with stereotypes and prejudices in (inter-)religious education

The accelerating social transformation processes are changing the framework conditions for dealing with religion. Religious learning no longer appears to be a matter of course. Religious education must take a new approach to the social demands of the migration society. There is a growing number of voices in favour of an expanded, positionally sensitive, joint RE for members of different denominations and religions. In doing so, teaching in a co-operative way with different religions encounters specific difficulties arising from stereotypes and prejudices. Corresponding exclusion mechanisms have been proven for members of majority religions; they are discussed for members of religion(s) in a minority situation (Gmoser 2023). So far, there has been no discussion of whether or to what extent religion-cooperative teaching can develop inclusion strategies. This article asks empirically whether and to what extent lessons in which members of different religions are taught both together and separately contribute to overcoming mutual prejudices.

Keywords: Stereotypes, prejudices, religions, strangers, societal expectations

S

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Children and Religion: Exemplary Insights and Reflections on a Qualitative Study from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland

The results of a qualitative-empirical international survey (Schwarz, Witten, Lorenzen, Stockinger, in production), in which more than 80 children were interviewed about their religious and worldview attitudes, are presented. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in Germany, Austria and Switzerland and ten- to twelve-year-old children with different socio-economic and religious backgrounds were interviewed. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using the qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2010). In the presentation, particular reference is made to the complex of questions relating to the concept of God and the perception and handling of religious diversity. Selected results are presented on children's conceptions of God, the extent to which children know about different religions and their attitudes towards religious diversity. The results are embedded in the discourse of religious education and, based on religious education theories, the consequences that can be derived

from the results for religious education processes are discussed. In light of the results of the empirical study, the question is discussed as to what religious education must pay particular attention to if it is to strengthen children's hope and well-being. The results illustrate how relevant it is to take children's attitudes into account when it comes to developing religious education in uncertain times.

Keywords: International survey, concept of God, diversity

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Defying the Odds? How Protestant Adolescents in Europe Experienced their Confirmation Time During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In many European countries, confirmation and confirmation work are a particularly important and sometimes even the last encounter of adolescents with the Protestant Church. This paper draws upon the third international study on confirmation work, which was conducted by researchers from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland. In this study, almost 10000 European adolescents reported their expectations and experiences in the 2021/22 confirmation year, which was strongly shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This paper deals with how these adolescents perceived and experienced their confirmation time in the exceptional situation of the global pandemic. By highlighting the perspective of young people, it complements existing literature on church work and religious education during the pandemic, which has so far mostly focused on the perceptions and experiences of professionals in this field.

After a contextualising introduction, the paper proceeds in four steps: It first highlights the impact of the pandemic on the adolescents' willingness to participate. After that central findings on the experiences during confirmation time are presented. In the third part, the pandemic serves as a general framework for interpreting the data collected in the third study. The paper ends with concluding thoughts on the implications of the comparative findings for the further development of this specific field of youth work.

Keywords: confirmation work, COVID-19 pandemic, international-comparative research, youth studies

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Religious Education Teachers' Struggle with "Reality" in terms of Student Centeredness: An Evaluation through Experience-Based Field Studies

Religious education's contribution to increasing hope and well-being in turbulent times or revealing them when they seem absent cannot be denied. However, the issue of structuring religious education in a way that centers the consciousness that will form the basis of this effort is also worth discussing. This study focuses on how religious education can support the efforts of students who face difficult times to make sense of life through their own experiences while striving to develop hope and well-being in young people. It also tries to define student-centered teaching through students' own life experiences. This attempt raises several questions. What do students bring to the classroom from his/her context and how? Is the teacher aware of clear or implicit messages and meanings while centering the student? Or does he/she experience the peace of fulfilling his/her teaching task in a good way with a romantic view (used as a symbolic connotation) without being aware of it? While making sense of being human/student-centered, does relying on technical methods provide a comfort zone for the teacher, but does he/she manage to keep the point where he/she will touch people alive? Where is the center of the teacher? How does the teacher define and position themselves?

In discussing these questions, I focus on the formal religious education practices in the context of Turkey. I examine the data of some field studies conducted in recent years on the above components of RE courses in the country through an interpretive analysis. In this way, I discuss which skills the teacher should be equipped with when trying to put the student at the center, what should be emphasized while putting these skills into practice, and whether their position in terms of the student is to find meaning, to produce meaning, or to guide the revealing of meanings.

Key Words: Religious Education, Student-Centered Approach, Reality, Guidance

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Perspectives from the classroom: Integrating Religion, Values and Ethics into a new curriculum

Until recently, statutory Religious Education in Wales largely shared the same legislative framework as Religious Education in England, although clearly differentiated Welsh and English education systems became increasingly visible across three decades when responsibilities for education and training were devolved to Wales. The latest curriculum review in Wales saw the implementation of the radically new Curriculum for Wales in 2022 for all learners from age three to sixteen, enabled through the passing of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021. Radical features of the new curriculum include: an integrated approach to learning and teaching in which Religious Education (renamed Religion, Values and Ethics) is for the first time legally embedded in the curriculum; and the principle of subsidiarity with a shift of responsibility for curriculum design, progression, and assessment to individual education settings, giving teachers new professional autonomy. At the beginning of a period of great change for religious education teachers in Wales, this study aims to capture a ‘snapshot’ of teacher experience of and engagement with curriculum change through a survey of teachers across Wales, reflecting a variety of education settings. Research findings will provide insight into teachers’ attitudes towards Religion, Values and Ethics within the Curriculum for Wales, their understanding of the Curriculum’s vision and values, their confidence levels and challenges they face, and their hopes for the future.

Keywords: Religion, Values and Ethics; teacher survey; Curriculum for Wales; curriculum change

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Fostering hope and contributing to the well-being of young people – Contextual and global perspectives within Religion Education.

In 41 interviews with children 10 to 12-years old conducted 2019 in South Africa and Sweden, the children were asked to share their thinking regarding sustainability (Sporre, 2021). When asked, for example, about the need for saving water several of them connected access to water with the survival of human beings, animals and plants. When speaking about the future, some focused on opportunities others on challenges or threats, and both personal matters but also concerns relating to global problems were mentioned.

Existential concerns as the above can be said to be relevant within Religion Education, where ethical issues also form an obvious and integral part. How can then children’s existential concerns be met

within RE? An RE where both personal contextual concerns and global perspectives meet – and students’ well-being increases?

In recent interviews with 11 Swedish RE teachers a discouraging finding is that children's questions are rarely noticed and put to use in teaching (Kärnebro, 2023; Kärnebro, Lilja & Osbeck, forthcoming). Furthermore, comparative studies of RE curricula demonstrate that the degree to which existential issues of children and youth are described as being part of the RE subject varies considerably (Sporre, 2022; 2023).

UNESCO has in two recent documents (2015; 2021) raised questions as to how education can contribute towards a global common good, arguing that education needs to be reimagined to meet today's challenges. How could this have a bearing on RE? What can be envisioned to meet the existential and ethical issues of students in RE?

Keywords (3-4): Existential issues; Students' well-being; Reimagining RE

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Two Kinds of Hope: A Macmurrayan Approach to RE in Troubled Times

The Scottish philosopher John Macmurray wrote extensively about religion. Having been brought up within a Presbyterian household, he was disillusioned by institutional religion as a result of his experiences of World War One and the attitude of churches to that war. Later in his life, he lived in a Quaker community, and his writings are well represented in the Society of Friends' Quaker Faith & Practice. Macmurray's philosophy is often described as a religious philosophy, as religion is so central to his views on personhood and community. He wrote extensively on education, and although he wrote little about religious education (a subject he saw as a matter of training in a specific religion, or what we might now call 'confessional' religious education), his writing about hope in religion, when combined with his general educational philosophy, provides a valuable lesson in what I wish to refer to as the 'two kinds of hope' evident in different forms of religion, religious education, and schooling as a whole. One kind of hope is – as I will describe it – a falsely utopian hope, a trick to help people forget about real troubles and challenges; the other kind of hope is – for me – a realistic (if still uncertain) hope, perhaps a 'realistic utopian' hope. All religious and non-religious traditions have elements of both kinds of hope. I recommend that, in troubled times (and, to be clear, all times are troubled times), religious education has an obligation to explore both kinds of hope.

Keywords: Hope, John Macmurray, utopianism

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'The dangers must be growing for the rowers keep on rowing': Religious education in turbulent times: How to foster hope and wellbeing of young people

The theme of this year's seminar 'Religious education in turbulent times: How to foster hope and wellbeing of young people' prompts reflection on our perception of Religious Education (RE) as a problem-solving tool used to cultivate resilience in future generations. One assumption behind this theme may be that it is a task for older generations to foster hope and well-being in younger people and it is widely acknowledged that such efforts are largely implemented through curriculum and other policy-related interventions in school settings. The Irish post-primary context is used to illustrate curriculum and other policy-related developments regarding wellbeing.

The title of this paper uses a quote from the 1971 film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*. Using the lyrics of 'The Wondrous Boat Ride' from film based on the 1964 Roald Dahl book called *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, this paper invites reflection on questions including:

1. What do we mean by ‘turbulent times’ and is this positive or negative?
2. What is the nature of the curriculum for school-based efforts to foster hope and well-being in young people?
3. What might be the competencies required for religious educators to effectively foster hope and wellbeing in young people?
4. How can the efforts of religious educators in this task be measured and / or evaluated?

In raising these questions, this paper will prompt consideration on aspects of educational and curriculum theory particularly pertaining to religious education as well as elements of psychology and faith development. It concludes with proposals for the future consideration of the complex relationships between religious education and wellbeing.

Keywords: faith development, wellbeing, Irish education

T

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Educating Buddhist children and teenagers in the U.S.: a contemporary vignette

This paper sets out to fill a gap in academic educational scholarship by providing a hands-on vignette of the education, values and resources available to children and teenagers growing up Buddhist in contemporary America. Besides a literature review of contemporary public-school initiatives, Buddhist temple Sunday schools, private Buddhist schools, Buddhist publications and homeschooling networks, it offers a preliminary qualitative study of the values in U.S. Buddhist teenagers, who spoke about priorities, uncertainties, religious identity, home practice and receipt of formation, online engagement and response to stereotyping.

Keywords (3-4): USA, formation, Buddhist, religious education, children, teens

U

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Images of God and Interreligious Education: A Lacuna in Research and RE?

This contribution addresses a largely overlooked connection in religious education research: the relationship between images of God and interreligious education. While images of God have been a central topic in religious education and the psychology of religion for decades—especially in Christian contexts—there is a lack of systematic empirical research on their significance for interreligious perception processes. Responding to this research gap, the article presents initial findings from a qualitative study conducted in Germany with Christian and Muslim children and adolescents (n = 57), using both group and individual interviews.

The results reveal both commonalities and differences in the God images held by Muslim and Christian children and adolescents. Attributes such as God’s mercy, protection, and creative power are emphasized in both groups. However, the focus varies: Christian participants tend to highlight God’s personal closeness, whereas Muslim participants more often emphasize God’s transcendence and

justice. Overall, the findings show predominantly positive conceptions of God as well as a general openness toward other religions.

These observations raise new research questions—particularly regarding negative images of God and their possible correlation with exclusionary attitudes. The article advocates for greater integration of the topic of God images into both theoretical and practical discourses on interreligious education, emphasizing its potential as both a resource and a challenge.

Keywords (3-4): Images of God, Perception of other religions, Interreligious education

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Resilient Classrooms Movement in Religious Education Project

This study explores “How can we discover the supportive power of Islamic concepts and values during difficult times, and how can we use these values as resources to enhance our resilience?”

The "Resilient Classrooms Movement in Religious Education Project" emerged in Turkey following the devastating earthquake in February 2023. The project aims to explore the connection between challenging times and religion, rediscovering how Islamic values can support individual resilience. It focuses on enhancing teachers' ability to integrate three core dimensions of faith: mind, heart, and action. By guiding teachers to transform their experiences during crises into meaningful and transformative actions, the project introduces the concept of "the ethics of encounter."

The project employs a descriptive research method based on the Conceptual Clarity Model, a five-step learning framework. Its content is built around five key values: good deeds (praxis), trust, gratitude, hope, and altruism. In this context, it is a collaboration between the Ministry of National Education, Directorate General of Religious Education and the Directorate General of Teacher Training and Development, running from November 2023 to September 2025. Project participants are Religious Culture and Ethics (RE) teachers. Trainings of the project begin with face-to-face sessions, followed by online “Professional Development Communities.” The face-to-face sessions provide a theoretical framework and interactive workshops, while the online component fosters peer learning and professional growth. So far, 230 teachers from 70 provinces have participated to trainings. This presentation will share the project's objectives, training methods, and evaluation survey data.

Keywords (3-4): Values, Resilient Classrooms, Encounter, Education

V

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Reflection and existential wellbeing

A worrying trend in the Netherlands (as well as in other European countries) is the decrease of mental health among teenagers and young adults. In my ongoing phd-project that combines perspectives from philosophy, spiritual care/existential psychology, and worldview education, I focus on how the participants (adolescents and young adults) make sense of their experiences (in other words: how they incorporate experiences in their narrative). I explore how existential meaning, or lack thereof, is connected with their wellbeing. Within this broad question, I pay special attention to experiences connected with education; both experiences related to pressure and stress, as well as experiences with ‘life orientation education’ (which includes, but is not limited to, religious education).

One theme that emerges from this research is that of reflection. With examples from literature and the empirical parts of the study, I will illustrate three key points about reflection, wellbeing and existential meaning:

1. Reflection can change the meaning of an experience. Existential wellbeing is connected to the reinterpretation of negative experiences that happens in hindsight.
2. This reinterpretation opens up a new perspective: a story about suffering can become a story about growth and overcoming challenges. Furthermore, this new perspective on the experience is connected with a more positive view of the self and of the future.
3. A methodology that stimulates this type of existential reflection can be a tool for meaning making in itself. This can be a useful insight for educational practices.

Keywords (3-4): wellbeing; existential meaning; youth; reflection

W

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An exploration of the metaphorical nature of the term ‘understanding’ with implications for teaching and learning in Religious Education.

Despite its centrality to most, if not all educational endeavours, what is meant by understanding is not at all clear and is highly contested. The quest to better understand ‘understanding’ in the context of education and specifically in, the context of school based Religious Education, is the motivating force behind this paper. After all, if we are going to put understanding “up front and on the centre” of the educational stage, “we had better know what we are aiming at” (Perkins 1998, p. 39).

The purpose of this paper is not to arrive at a conclusive definition but rather to enhance our understanding of what might be meant by ‘understanding’ in Religious Education by paying close attention to the metaphorical nature of the term ‘understanding’ itself. Comprised of two morphemes (the prefix ‘under’ and the verb ‘standing’), the conceptual (albeit ‘sleeping’) metaphor implicit in ‘under-standing’ suggests that understanding has something to do with ‘standing under’ that which is to be understood. What exactly might be meant by this is explored in this paper by examining the etymological roots of the Old English term *understandan* with key implications for teaching and learning in Religious Education.

Keywords Understanding; Metaphor; Etymology; (Religious) Education

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The Follow Me Religious Education programme: redevelopment in the context of a new state primary school curriculum

In the Republic of Ireland, the new state primary school curriculum (NCCA, 2023) has a number of curricular areas, one of which is named the Patron’s Programme. The Patron’s Programme varies in structure and content, depending on the school patronage. In some schools it is an ethics programme, whilst in most schools it is a programme of religious education. This curricular area is regarded as an integral element of the school’s ethos and each Patron takes responsibility for the content of its distinctive Patron’s Programme and associated teacher education. There are nearly two hundred Church

of Ireland (Anglican), Presbyterian, and Methodist primary schools in the Republic of Ireland and in these schools the Patron's Programme is a religious education programme, *Follow Me*. This paper first demonstrates, through examples drawn from the programme and relevant publications, how the *Follow Me* programme plays a key role in supporting the ethos of Church of Ireland schools. It then presents evidence as to how the programme content and related methodologies are aligned with the principles and key competencies, regarded as central to all curricular areas. A redeveloped *Follow Me* programme is in progress and this paper provides clear evidence of the value of phase one of the programme within the overall curriculum in the schools in which it is taught.

Keywords: Ireland, religious education, primary school

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Fostering Ecological Awareness Through Worldview Education: Perspectives from Teacher Candidates

We live in an era dominated by crises, with human life and the narratives that shape it at the core. The ecological crisis, having transcended scientific awareness to become a public concern, has emerged as a direct consequence of human activities. The decisive role of humans in this crisis has inevitably shifted the focus of criticism toward assumptions about human existence and actions. In this context, individuals must reassess how they interpret their existence in order to take responsibility for their actions and develop an ethical stance toward life.

This process necessitates a reassessment of the religious and philosophical grand narratives that underpin human action. This is because anthropocentric worldviews are at the center of current debates. Therefore, the religious and philosophical worldviews underpinning human actions need to be considered from a perspective that goes beyond ecological destruction and enables human beings to act more constructively and responsibly.

Religious and worldview education can be seen as an opportunity to raise awareness about the global ecological crisis. The aim of the study is to determine religious education teacher candidates' awareness of the ecological crisis and their capacity to question anthropocentric discourses, and to analyse the effects of an educational process aimed at strengthening this awareness. This qualitative research conducted with a group of 7 teacher candidates through semi-structured interviews to identify their views on the ecological crisis. Discourse analysis is employed for analyzing the data. Following this, a training plan is developed and evaluated for the teacher candidates.

Keywords (3-4): Ecological Crisis, Worldview Education, Teacher Training, Anthropocentrism

Z

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Reimagining Abraham: Philosophy with Children through Stories from Qur'an

Thinking education is among the subjects that are discussed with a very low voice in the field of Islamic Religious Education. This is because the dominant paradigm focuses on teaching students "what to think" rather than "how to think". At the same time, trying to teach students "what to think" has certain

limits and does not involve any risk. It does not open the accuracy criteria of “standard truths” to discussion, which have been going on for years; on the contrary, it further reinforces and stabilizes them. This situation can result in the overlooking of two fundamental needs: (1) the ever-changing nature of societal needs and meanings as time progresses, and (2) the necessity of equipping students with critical thinking skills to engage deeply with their faith. In this context this paper is a gentle invitation to consider whether “Philosophy for Children” (P4C) can serve as a pedagogical tool in Islamic Religious Education to facilitate this critical engagement. Within the scope of this study, the stories in the Quran about Prophet Abraham were reinterpreted to be used in the Philosophy for Children sessions. By encouraging students to ask reflective questions such as, “What did God intend to say to Prophet Abraham and what does it mean for me today?”, P4C fosters a deeper understanding of both the Holy Text and the world around them. That is exactly what we need today; a more dynamic engagement with the Quran that takes into account both historical interpretations and contemporary contexts, which is essential for fostering permanent and internalized learning.

Keywords (3-4): Islamic Religious Education, Philosophy for Children, Abrahamic Stories

