SIG 19 Religions and Worldviews in Education *Newsletter*

Issue 2/2025

Dear SIG 19 Members and Friends,

We have a **new Coordinator Team**: Inkeri Rissanen, Sarah Delling and Frederike Gabelt (JURE). Therefore, we would like to express our sincere thanks to Alexander Unser for his dedication and hard work during the last years as SIG 19 Coordinator. At the same time, we warmly welcome Frederike Gabelt as the new JURE Coordinator. Welcome!

Furthermore, **EARLI and JURE conference** "*Realising Potentials through Education: Shaping the Minds and Brains for the Future*" at the University of Graz was a great success in August. In this newsletter we will have a textual, pictural and memorable look back at the conference and of course at our invited symposium titled "Religious Identities and Sense of Belonging: Their Relevance for Future Citizenship Education". You can also find the **Minutes of the Business Meeting** with all the important information included.

Finally, we would like to announce **Save the Dates** and **Call for Papers** for the upcoming JURE 2026, and EARLI SIG 19 Conference 2026 in cooperation with SIG 13. Also, the next EARLI Conference 2027 will be organised in Belfast.

A gentle reminder: Please renew your membership. You will find the link at the end of this newsletter.

We wish you a calm Winter Break and Happy Holidays.

Petra and Sanna

Coordinators

Inkeri Rissanen
Tampere University

Sarah Delling
University of Siegen

Frederike Gabelt
TU Dortmund University (JURE)

Newsletter editors

Petra Juen
University of Innsbruck

Sanna Väisänen
University of Eastern Finland

Number of SIG19 members

33

Renew your membership!

Your contribution is important!

THE NEW COORDINATOR TEAM

We warmly welcome the latest member of the coordinator team Frederike Gabelt!
Thanks for your engagement.
We wish you a happy and generous time as SIG 19 coordinator.

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What is your focus for the next two years for SIG 19?

We, the new Coordinating Team of SIG 19, Inkeri, Frederike and Sarah, want to focus on strengthen cooperation and networking within our SIG and beyond.

Cooperation means for us working together on several levels. First, we want to coordinate the SIG 19 together as a coordinating team, which is why we decided also to present a shared vision in the newsletter. Second, we want to enhance cooperation with other SIGs in EARLI, in order to strengthen interdisciplinary exchange as well as to build synergies for organising joining activities. At the moment we are actively cooperating with SIG 13, resulting with shared paper presentations at EARLI 2025 symposium and organising a joint conference for 2026.

Another focus is to strengthen our SIG 19 network. A key priority for us in the coming years is therefore to encourage more young researchers to join our network, whose

fresh perspectives will inspire new ideas. Furthermore, we are eager to broaden our geographical scope and invite researchers from countries that have not so far been involved in SIG 19, to widen up our international perspectives. There are also areas within the field of religious and worldview education that have so far been underrepresented in our community — such as Islamic religious education — and it would be wonderful to broaden our network in those directions as well. Last but not least, we want to proceed with the great newsletter that Petra and Sanna as editors create to inform all friends and members of SIG 19 about the latest news in our SIG.

Could you briefly describe one idea for the future of SIG 19?

- One concrete idea is certainly collaboration with other SIGs in EARLI, at the moment actualising in our joint conference with SIG 13 in June 2026 in Kristiansand, Norway. We are really looking forward to that opportunity for interdisciplinary exchange and would like to encourage all community members to join us at Kristiansand - and to invite new colleagues!
- For JURE members, we want to create new opportunities for networking and visibility within the SIG and beyond. A first milestone in this regard has already been accomplished, as a keynote speech will be given by a JURE member at the joint conference with SIG13 in Norway.

(Text and Pictures were provided by Sarah Delling,
Inkeri Rissanen &
Frederike Gabelt;
SIG 19 Coordinator Team)

- **Date**: 25-29 August 2025
- **Host**: EARLI and the University of Graz, Austria
- **Theme**: Realising Potentials through Education: Shaping the Minds and Brains for the Future

The 29th JURE Pre-Conference of EARLI took place this year on August 23 and 24 at the University of Graz and centered around the stirring theme 'Realising Potentials through Education: Shaping the Minds and Brains for the Future'. Over these two days, young researchers from across Europe and beyond gathered to discuss global challenges and opportunities in the field of learning and teaching in interdisciplinary sessions and workshops.

A special feature was the conference dinner held on August 23, which gave participants the opportunity to connect and exchange ideas in a relaxed atmosphere. Set at Gösser Bräu, a traditional Austrian restaurant with rustic charm, guests enjoyed a variety of classic Austrian dishes, including the traditional apple strudel.

The JURE Pre-Conference 2025 offered a variation of exciting and diverse research projects as well as insights into innovative empirical methods. It provided a space where researchers from various disciplines came together to collaborate on key educational issues. After these inspiring days, the event continued with the main conference of EARLI, which sustained further exciting topics and discussions.

(Text was provided by Frederike Gabelt;
JURE SIG 19 Coordinator
Pictures were provided by Janine Kuropka;
JURE SIG 19 Member)

The 21th Biennial EARLI Conference

Date: 25-29 August 2025
Host: EARLI and the University of Graz, Austria
Venue: Graz, Austria

EARLI 2025 conference was hosted by the University of Graz in Austria on 25th-29th of August. Despite being also a construction site, the University campus offered a beautiful and well-functioning venue for the conference. The conference experience was also shaped by the sunny and warm weather - sometimes the choice of which session to participate being based on the differing air-conditioning settings in the session rooms.

EARLI SIG 19 was mostly represented in the conference by team Finland and team Germany, with some delightful additions. In addition to our own business meeting (see notes published in the newsletter) and our participation in the General Assembly and Policy Meeting, SIG 19 members represented the SIG 19 with some high quality individual papers being accepted to the conference. The highlight was certainly the symposium with the title "Religious Identities and Sense of Belonging: Their Relevance for Future Citizenship Education" organised by SIG 19. Alexander Unser chaired the symposium and started it by sharing some perspectives from international policy papers around citizenship education in the context of religious education. Other papers brought different empirical insights to the topic, discussing human rights and democracy in religious education (Manfred L. Pirner), controversial statements in the classroom (Lene Sirevåg), and negotiations on citizenship in schools from the perspective of cultural broker teachers (Inkeri Rissanen, Niina Putkonen and Maija Yli-Jokipii). Martin Ubani served as discussant and offered her remarks on the papers.

The topic of the symposium can be regarded as a success, in terms of it inviting one of the largest audiences that we have seen in SIG 19 symposia in the big EARLI conferences. The focus on citizenship will be continued, since the 2026 EARLI SIG 19 & 13 focus on the theme of navigating polarization and fostering civic engagement.

(Text was provided by Sarah Delling & Inkeri Rissanen
SIG 19 Coordinators)

The conference in numbers

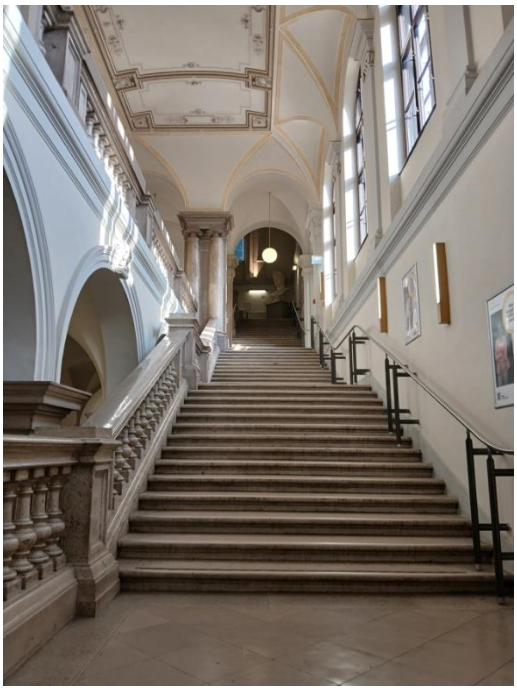
The focus of this year's EARLI Conference was 'Realising Potentials through Education: Shaping the Minds and Brains for the Future'. Over 2,400 scientists from a total of 73 different countries participated as speakers, chairs or eager listeners. Projects from a wide range of education-related disciplines were presented in the form of poster presentations, round tables, individual lectures or as part of SIG Invited Symposia.

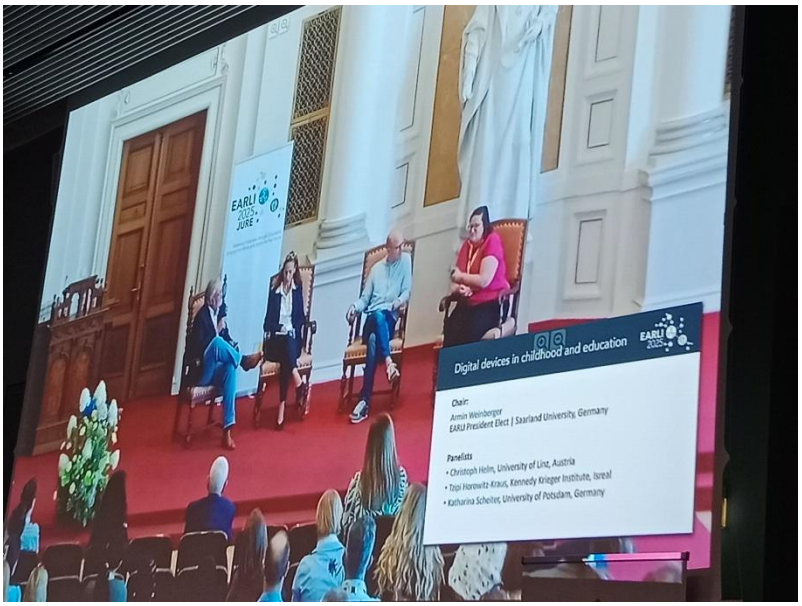
With 9 keynotes, 185 symposia, 803 lectures, 395 poster presentations and 93 round tables, the conference offered many opportunities for topic-focused discussions, in-depth content debates and ample networking opportunities. The programme was rounded off with an opening reception, the conference dinner and, finally, an after-party.

The next EARLI conference will take place in Belfast in 2027.

Keynotes	9
Symposia	185
Lectures	803
Poster Presentations	395
Round Tables	93

(Text by Petra Juen)





(Pictures were provided by SIG 19 Coordinators & Editors)

Minutes Business Meeting – EARLI SIG 19

26th August 2025

Chair: Inkeri Rissanen & Sarah Delling

Secretary of the meeting: Alexander Unser

1. Opening and welcome

Inkeri Rissanen opens the business meeting and welcomes all participants. She presents the agenda of the meeting and asks if any additional issues are desired. No additional issues are brought forward by the participants.

Alexander Unser agrees to act as secretary of the meeting.

2. Meeting with Armin Weinberger

Inkeri Rissanen reports on the meeting between the SIG coordinators and Armin Weinberger, President-Elect of EARLI, in January 2025. The most important point of the meeting was the announcement that the minimum number of members per SIG will be increased from 30 to 50. Among other things, this is related to the new policy of providing each EARLI member with two SIG memberships free of charge. However, Armin Weinberger emphasised during the discussion that the existence of our SIG will not be called into question if we cannot demonstrate 50 members, but that in this case no loans will be granted for conferences. It is more important to the EARLI EC to see that the SIG is dynamically striving for development.

3. Acknowledgements of SIG 19 activities

Sarah Delling reports on the SIG 19 activities of the past two years. She refers to three new publications in our Waxmann book series 'Research on Religious and Spiritual Education', the online SIG 19 conference in 2024, a gathering of SIG members during the 2024 meeting of the Religion and Citizenship network in Dortmund, and the SIG 19 newsletter. The participants of the business meeting express their deep gratitude to Petra Juen and Sanna Väisänen who act as newsletter editors of our SIG.

Petra Juen gives an overview of the newsletter and invites SIG 19 members to contribute via interviews, announcements of events or published research.

4. Next SIG 19 conference

The next SIG 19 conference will be a joint conference together with SIG 13 and will take place at the University of Agder in Kristiansand, Norway from 3 to 5 June 2026. The topic is "Navigating polarization and fostering engagement through education". JURE members are invited to apply for the JURE keynote. The conference is hosted by Inger Maria Dalhefte from the University of Agder. A call for papers will be published in September 2025. Deadline for submission is 5th of January 2026.

5. Election of co-coordinator and JURE coordinator

Inkeri Rissanen, on behalf of all present, thanks Alexander Unser who has served as EARLI SIG 19 Co-Coordinator for the past four years.

She informs that one application had been received for each of the positions of Co-Coordinator and JURE Assistant Coordinator. Sarah Delling (University of Siegen, Germany) is running as SIG 19 Co-Coordinator (2025–2029) and Frederike Gabelt (TU Dortmund University, Germany) as JURE Assistant Coordinator (2025–2027). Both were elected unanimously.

6. Discussion about possibilities to develop our EARLI SIG19-community

Currently, SIG 19 has 31 members. The coordinators plan to further increase the number of members and presented plans to, first, have conferences in countries with a strong community in our field of research which is – at the moment – not sufficiently connected to EARLI, and second, collaborate more strongly with other SIGs (especially SIG 13) to win some of their members for a second membership in SIG 19. Further ideas were discussed.

7. Other issues

Martin Ubani announces to publication of two handbooks on religion in education which will be published in November 2025 and early 2026. Many members of our SIG have contributed via chapters in these publications.

8. Closing

Inkeri Rissanen closes the business meeting and thanks all those present for their commitment to SIG 19.

JURE 2026 - 30th JURE Conference

Host: University of Tartu (Estonia)
Date: 6–10 July 2026
Theme: Learning in Transition: Science, Society and the Challenges of Tomorrow
Link: https://www.earli.org/events/jure2026

Call for Papers

The organising team of SIG 13 'Moral and Democratic Education' and SIG 19 'Religions and Worldviews in Education' warmly welcome you to our joint conference, 3rd - 5th June 2026 at the University of Agder, Kristiansand, Norway!

Both SIGs are engaged in addressing the balance of open discussions with the protection of minorities and diversity, as a significant matter in classrooms and societies, hence the conference theme is:

Navigating Polarisation and Fostering Civic Engagement through Education

In contemporary societies, polarisation significantly influences public discourse and threatens social cohesion (Emanuele & Marino 2024; Pausch 2021). Polarisation refers to the process of increasingly diverging opinions and attitudes. Social groups align along ideological, political, cultural, or religious lines, and

individuals retreat into “echo chambers” which reinforce existing beliefs and worldviews and portray differences as threats, normalising extreme positions (Cosentino 2020; Leivska 2024). Although it can empower minority groups, it also risks fostering radicalisation and the acceptance of violence.

Theoretical approaches to polarisation highlight both cognitive and affective dimensions: from in-group/out-group mechanisms and identity politics to competing truth claims and the decline of shared narratives (Leiviska, 2024). Consequently, the willingness to engage and the capacity to tolerate and constructively navigate ambiguity diminish. Thus, polarisation poses a threat to democracy, as it undermines dialogue, impedes collective problem-solving processes and makes it difficult to adopt alternative perspectives. Educational institutions face the challenge of countering these effects whilst striving to cultivate meaningful civic engagement and to foster students’ and pupils’ abilities to participate in society in a critical and self-determined manner.

This joint conference aims to explore how education can act as a transformative tool in navigating polarisation and promoting inclusive engagement across ideological, political, cultural and religious lines, with attention to the roles of citizenship and democratic education, and religious and worldviews education.

We seek to foster connection and collaboration between members of both SIGs and aim to develop unique and relevant perspectives with academic and practical implications. We welcome theoretical, empirical, and practice-based contributions from disciplines including - but not limited to - education, theology, political science, philosophy, sociology, and religious studies, which relate to the scope of the two SIGs — Moral and Democratic Education and/or Religions and Worldviews in Education. We encourage submissions relating to the conference theme, but emphasise that all submissions relating to either SIG are welcome at this joint conference!

SUBMISSION AND PRESENTATION FORMATS

Proposals can only be submitted via the conference system at https://www.earli-eapril.org/login from 15th October. Submissions via e-mail will not be processed. The conference formats are Symposia, Roundtable, Poster and Paper sessions.

Symposia (90 minutes)

Symposia will consist of three papers and a discussant. Symposia-submitters are encouraged to mind the three-country rule which requires that at least three different countries are represented among the active participants. Each paper will be allocated 20 minutes for presentation (including discussion) and the same for the discussant. We are open to innovative ideas – please contact us if you wish to organise your symposium in a different way.

Requirements:

- An abstract of 200-350 words (ref. not incl.) words providing information regarding the aims, the scientific and educational relevance of the symposium.
- 3 keywords
- The title of the symposium, the title of the three presentations with the name and affiliation of each author, and how the symposium is to be structured.
- The name of the chair and the name of the discussant.
- In addition, each presenter must meet the criteria of an individual presentation.

- All your active participants (i.e. presenting author, chair and discussant) need an EARLI account. Co-authors do not need an EARLI account, and their names, contact details and affiliations can be entered manually by the submitter.

Criteria:

1) Relevance to the EARLI domain of SIG13 and/or SIG19
2) Significance for theory, practice and policy
3) Relevant background information (theoretical/empirical/other)
4) Organisation and coherence of the entire symposium
5) Reflection of how this symposium will contribute to the research field
6) The overall quality and scientific originality

Each paper in a symposium will also be reviewed as an individual paper using the criteria outlined below.

Roundtable/paper/poster presentations

Each paper and roundtable session will comprise three contributions, which will be thematically grouped by the organising committee. Each paper will be allocated 20 minutes for presentation and 10 minutes for discussion following each paper.

If you are a JURE member and aim to be considered for the JURE Keynote, please tick the appropriate box during the submission process of your paper. If you are awarded the JURE Keynote, the organising committee will contact you in advance. You will, regardless of the JURE Keynote be considered for a regular paper session.

The posters will be thematically grouped by the organising committee. We kindly ask the authors to be present in the poster session slot and to prepare a 2-3-minute presentation of their poster. We recommend preparing A4 handouts and/or a QR code for downloads of posters and other materials.

A poster and a roundtable session can show «work in progress» if no data is available yet. Paper sessions and symposia must include research findings.

Requirements:

- An abstract of 450-600 words (ref. not incl.) outlining the aims, methodology, findings (Roundtable and posters allow for presenting expected outcome, if no data is available yet), and theoretical and educational significance of the research.
- 3 keywords
- Presenting authors need an EARLI account. Co-authors do not. Their names, contact details and affiliations can be entered manually by the submitter.

Criteria for empirical contributions:

1) Relevance to the EARLI domains of religious and worldview education and/or of moral and democratic education
2) Significance for theory, policy and practice
3) Relevant background information (theoretical/empirical/other)
4) Aims and research questions
5) Research design & methods

6) Clarity of results and conclusions (Roundtable and poster only: expected results, if no data available)
7) The overall quality and scientific originality

Criteria for theoretical/conceptual contributions

1) Relevance to the EARLI domains of religious and worldview and/or of moral and democratic education
2) Significance for academic debate
3) Relevant background information (theoretical/empirical/other)
4) Embeddedness in the relevant literature
5) Clarity and robustness of theoretical argument
6) The overall quality and scientific originality

Important dates

30th of September - **Call for papers**

15th of October 2025 - **Submission opens**

5th of January 2025 - **Submission deadline**

January / February 2026 - **Review process**

15th of February 2026 - **Letter of Acceptance**

15th of March 2026 - **Early bird and presenter registration deadline**

Conference details

The conference program will avoid timetable conflicts for presenting authors, chairpersons and discussants but not for co-authors.

Proposals can only be submitted through the EARLI conference system. Submissions via email will not be processed. We require experts for the review process and encourage participants to sign up for this important task in the submission process.

We warmly invite you to submit proposals for Roundtables, Posters, Symposia and Paper sessions and are very much looking forward to your contributions.

For further information, please visit the conference website:
https://www.earli.org/events/sig-13-19-conference-2026

SPRINGER NATURE

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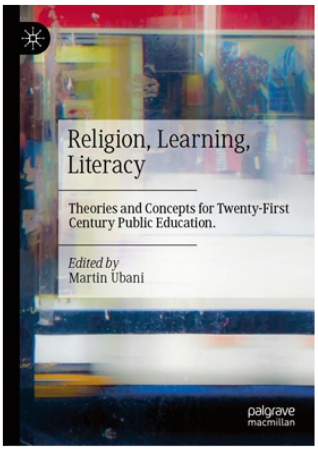
Martin Ubani

Religion, Learning, Literacy



Theories and Concepts for Twenty-First Century Public Education

Includes chapters from internationally well-known scholars

Provides theoretical and empirical insights

Examines the question of aquiring religious literacy in the 21st century

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A REMINDER TO SUBSCRIBE EARLI MEMBERSHIP

Dear friends of SIG 19,

As you know, we are one of the smaller SIGs within EARLI and need every year a minimum of 30 members to continue our work. The Religions and Worldviews in Education SIG brings together researchers from various backgrounds, such as theology, religious studies, psychology, pedagogy, educational studies and philosophy. The SIG 19 is advocating empirical and theoretical research that includes cognitive, social and emotional components.

If you have not subscribed yet, please consider renewing your membership in our SIG for 2025.

Please note, when you purchase an EARLI membership, you can join up to two SIGs free of charge!

Become a member now!

NEW MEMBERS IN EARLI SIG 19

- Jun. Prof., Dr. Georg Bucher, University of Bielefeld, Germany

We are very happy to be able to welcome new members to SIG 19!

We hope our new members will enjoy being a part of Earli SIG 19.

For any questions, please contact the SIG 19 coordinators or Newsletter editors who will be happy to help you.

We want to encourage a wide participation in SIG 19 and in the Newsletter. If you intend to contribute to the Newsletter, please take into account the following issues. You can make suggestions concerning to content of the SIG 19 and the Newsletter. However, the editors retain the rights to alter and modify the contributions.

Interviews:

In each Newsletter we will focus on one or two researchers connected to the SIG 19. One of the covered researchers is preferably a junior researcher. Please do not hesitate to make suggestions concerning the interviewees.

Reviews:

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

Special feature:

This section we feature some interesting and inspirational aspect concerning the SIG 19 areas of interest. The author is invited by the editors with regards to the suggestions by the members. The contributions should not exceed 500 words.

Announcements:

If you feel that there is something relevant happening in the interest areas of SIG 19, please use this section. Such things are up-coming conferences and projects. This section can also include propositions for shared projects. The announcements should be 100 words at maximum.

New members:

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

Publication & Contact:

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Sanna Väisänen, University of Eastern Finland, Finland
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APPENDIX: PUBLICATIONS

Altmeyer, S., & Schöttke, P. (2025). Language awareness in religious education. In M. Ubani (Ed.), *Religion, learning, literacy: Theories and concepts for twenty-first century public education* (pp. 149–165). Cham: Springer.

Aukland, K. (2025). 360-video as ethnographic material in the classroom: student teachers' reflection on representations with 360-videos from Mecca. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2025.2575393

Bakker, C. (2025). *Teaching in the school as a 'pedagogical interspace': An interesting challenge for a professional teacher*. Utrecht: HU University of Applied Sciences (https://www.hu.nl/onderzoek/publicaties/teaching-in-the-school-as-a-pedagogical-interspace).

Delling, S. (2025). Körpersprache im Religionsunterricht. Eine qualitative Studie zur nonverbalen Kommunikation der Lehrperson [Body language in religious education. A qualitative study on nonverbal communication by teachers], Münster: Waxmann.

Engel, D., Penthin M., Pirner M. L. & Riegel U. (2025). Perceived discrimination and religiosity among young refugees in Germany. Insights from a longitudinal study. *Journal of Empirical Theology, 38(*2025), 112-140 (https://doi.org.10.1163/15709256-20240025).

Fancourt, N., Ipgrave, J., & Parker, S. (2025). Localities and regions in religions and worldviews education: introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Beliefs & Values, 46*(3), 423–431. https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2025.2538348

Flanagan, R. (2025). Addressing the challenges of understanding self through a Personal worldviews framework', *Journal of Religious Education*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40839-025-00271-6

Riegel, U., & Rothgangel, M. (2025). Beyond fragmentation in subject didactics and curriculum studies: Consensus and contention in research designs. *Journal for Curriculum Studies* (http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2025.2562531)

Riegel, U., & Ubani, M. (2025). Organized and personal worldviews revisited. Advancing a concept for religious and worldview education. *British Journal of Religious Education* (https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2025.2539503)

Unstad, L., & Jørgensen, C.S. (2025). Critical disciplinary literacy and positioning in religious education. M. Ubani (eds) *Religion, Learning, Literacy. Palgrave Macmillan*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-96829-7_12

Unser A., & Riegel U. (2025): Fortgeschrittene Verfahren der quantitativ-empirischen Religionspädagogik. Eine anwendungsorientierte Einführung, Münster: Waxmann.