



Dear SIG4 members,

We hope you had a good start into the new semester. In this newsletter we have:

1. Renew your SIG4 membership for 2019

Have you already renewed your SIG4 (EARLI) membership for 2019? If not, you will miss all the info about SIG4 (usually, newsletters are sent only to current members). You can renew your SIG4 membership in EARLI's system: <https://www.earli-eapril.org/login>

2. SIG4 invited symposium at EARLI 2019 on “students’ interest”

We are proud to announce the SIG4 invited symposium at EARLI 2019 (12-16 August; JURE 10-11 August, 2019) with the suggestion organized by Dr. Kathleen Quinlan (University of Kent, UK) on “What features of curriculum and instruction promote higher education students’ interest in their subject?”.

With presenters from Finland (Kirsti Lonka and Elina Ketonen, Helsinki), the UK (Kathleen M. Quinlan, Kent), Denmark (Neils Bonderup Dohn, Aarhus), and the US (K. Ann Renninger, Swarthmore College) as well as the discussion by Sari Lindblom (Helsinki) we are very much looking forward to the presentations and discussions at the symposium in Aachen in 2019!

Registrations for EARLI 2019 will open in January: <https://www.earli.org/EARLI2019>

3. SIG4 Conference 20-22 June 2020: Save the date

We already plan the organization of the next SIG4 conference in 2020. We welcome the opportunity brought by EARLI SIG1 and will most likely organize a joint conference with them. SIG1 concentrates on issues on assessment and evaluation in education, so we think the combination of our SIGs and topics can complement perspectives and foster the conversation on assessment and methodologies that we have in the higher education field.

The conference most likely will take place in Cádiz, Spain, and preliminary conference dates will be 20-22 June, 2020 (or, for the participants strongly interested in SIG1 issues, 20-24 June). We are currently working out the details on the conference and will keep you informed throughout the process. Of course we are hoping that many SIG4 members will value this opportunity and find the way to sunny Andalucía.

4. New SIG4 coordinator from 2019

In 2019, Robert will leave the coordinator position. Although there is still some time, we already want to raise this issue: If you are be interested in following him as a SIG4 coordinator, please contact us via email by January 2019!

5. Remember to follow us on Twitter or Facebook

We use these accounts to share important news and events in our community. If you want us to retweet something among our members, just tag us under @Earlisig4

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/earlisig4>

Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/202871616757905/>

6. A personal note by the SIG4 coordinators

2018 was a year of success as well as a year of loss for our community.

As for the success, most obviously, maybe, the conference in Giessen was, in our and to the participants' views, a success. More than 150 participants presented and discussed research topics related to higher education learning and teaching; the conference experimented with a new conference format intended to create more collaboration between researchers; the social events (including an already legendary conference dinner party) and many more aspects made the three days highly enjoyable to us. We like to see future meetings and conferences to further facilitate deep conversations on our research topics. A very big thank you goes to Edith Braun and Birgit Balsler from Giessen University for making the 2018 EARLI SIG4 conference such a success.

In general, as well, SIG4 is prospering. Currently, 127 members constitute our EARLI special interest group. This number as well as the activities that you are involved in prove that we are an active research community that is located in many different fields across Europe as well as on other continents: SIG4 has members from Africa, Australia, North and South America, Asia, and Europe. We are proud to coordinate a community that creates a constantly high visibility of higher education topics and projects in publications, the media, and in many cooperative projects among our members.

The loss side may be less obvious, though. As EARLI strives to reach and include colleagues from Eastern and Southern European institutions, we were very happy to welcome Helga from CEU in Budapest in the coordinator team in 2017. Although we already knew that Europe's political landscape was profoundly changing – a phenomenon known to almost all of this continent's countries – it affects you differently when you experience the loss of political freedom in your own institution. We are very sad and angry about the destruction of academic freedom imposed on CEU, as well as the other higher education institutions, by the Hungarian government. As we are doing research on higher education teaching and learning, let's not forget that we are also doing this **in** these institutions. How academic freedom and rights influence our institutions therefore also directly affects us, as members of EARLI SIG4. Maybe the events in Budapest can be a starting point for making our community more of a place for – scholarly as well as personal – conversations about these topics in the future.

Dear SIG4 members, we hope that you had a good year 2018; we wish you peaceful holidays and a good start into the New Year. May your academic and personal dreams and wishes come true.

Helga, Rachelle & Robert

Please do not hesitate to ask us in case you have any questions, comments, or critical remarks. We will be happy to get into contact with you.

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