

Dear SIG 9 members and friends,

Welcome to the Third issue of our Newsletter!

After a nice EARLI conference in August in Aachen, we have started planning towards next year's conference and activities in the SIG9 community. The conference in Aachen was well organized, offered nice summer weather and many interesting seminars and conversations. Two major events in relation to SIG9 were the business meeting and the invited symposium, both of which you will be able to read about in this newsletter.

Another change was that Peter Davies stepped down as SIG9 coordinator - thank you Peter for great work and collaboration! Instead, most welcome to Guy Durden, joining JURE coordinator Jaana Kettunen and myself on the coordinator team.

Next year, we have now started planning for the SIG9 conference in Göteborg, Sweden, August 17-19, and making it into an exiting event. More details and call for abstracts will come with the next newsletter, later this year.

Now is the time to sign up for next year's PhD course 'Phenomenographic horizons: the internal horizon', please encourage new researchers in the field to take this opportunity.

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THE COORDINATORS OF SIG 9 - *A hello from Guy Durden*

After nearly 20 years teaching economics and business in schools and 10 years leading university courses in teacher education, I am now the Programme Leader for the MA Education at the UCL Institute of Education in London (a programme with over 300 students). I got the phenomenography/variation theory bug in 2008 and have been a member of EARLI and of SIG 9 since then. I was also JURE Coordinator between 2014 and 2016. Phenomenography/variation theory has always excited me and got me thinking. Its appeal lies somewhere in its unique blend of theory, research methodology and closeness to practice and it represents an extremely powerful and important way of thinking about learning. More people should know about it! SIG 9 has a vital role to play in bringing researchers together as a community of practice, allowing them to build relationships, share their thinking and discuss emerging issues. I am aiming to help build on the excellent work of previous SIG 9 Coordinators to maintain the vibrancy of phenomenography and variation theory, push it forward, and take its central messages to a wider audience. If you have any suggestions or comments about the SIG, then please do feel free to get in touch. I would really welcome your input.



EARLI CONFERENCE 2019 - Aachen, Germany.

The 18th EARLI Biennial Conference was held at the Aachen University, on August 12th -16th 2019. The theme of the conference was Thinking Tomorrow's Education: Learning from the past, in the present and for the future.

The conference keynotes available to watch in full: <https://www.earli.org/EARLI2019>

SIG9 Symposium

The SIG9 symposium attracted a steady group of interested participants. The symposium drew together presentation on two topics: educating teachers and analysis of teaching and learning giving specific attention to representations. Educating teachers was tackled with a theoretical argument by Wood & Rovio Johansson, relying on an analysis of published lesson and learning studies. They argued for turning variation theory towards what teachers' knowledge, and what must vary and remain invariant for successfully developing as a teacher, basing this on teacher learning through participating in lesson and learning studies. They conclude that teacher cannot learn to teach by induction, but more explicit means of discerning how and what to teach is warranted for. Durden turned attention more specifically to what beginning teachers learned from working in a learning study format in their teacher practice, and compared this to the more traditional format with individual coaching. There turned out to be considerable advantages for their learning in working in line with learning study, which is consistent with studies of how experienced teachers develop from similar work.



The two contributions Jägerskog, Davies & Lundholm and Ingerman, Linder, Linder & Wikman attended in similar ways but in different contexts representations as a key component in teaching and learning situations. The key argument in both cases is that representations their own complexity in relation to the object of learning, and that it is important and worthwhile to unpack in studies using variation theory. Ingerman et al put forward a case study in the context of higher education chemistry of how students experience of relevant variation aligned with transformations within and between different representations, and how this manifested in student action and discussion. Jägerskog et al distinctly compared two different representations of price with respect to their usefulness for facilitating learning, showing a large difference that did not favor using the supply-demand diagram, at least not solely, if you have the ambition to support the students.

The discussant (Angelika Kullberg) drew attention to that all contributions presented results that moved the border of what has previously been considered in the tradition, and that there was potential to developing these strands further. She also raised some issues for caution and discussion. Specifically, this concerned the framing and stability of the quantitative measures used by Durden and Jägerskog et al in their respective studies to determine which of two alternative design that gave better results with respect to the purpose. It also concerned the theoretical implications of using elements of social semiotics to describe representations, which both Jägerskog et al and Ingerman et al did, and commensurable this was with the phenomenography and variation theory tradition, and specifically a learner perspective. For further information contact the individual presenters.

SIG9 Meeting

There was an extremely positive atmosphere at the productive SIG9 meeting in Aachen. It was great to welcome new members and for old hands to reconnect. The meeting began by expressing its thanks to the outgoing Coordinator, Peter Davies, for all that he had done for the SIG and sent its very best wishes from him in the future. Guy Durden was welcomed as the new Coordinator and said that he was very much looking forward to the role. It was confirmed that the next SIG9 conference in 2020 would be in Göteborg (August 17-19). The group then discussed a number of ideas to develop the SIG and boost its membership. These included, increasing the involvement of SIG members in EARLI (for example by nominating an editor and reviewers for the FLR), offering the online PhD level course in phenomenography and variation theory and setting up collaborations with other SIGs. A range of other ideas was offered by the members of the meeting and then discussed. The Coordinators agreed to carefully review and decide which to take forward.



SIG 9 Dinner at EARLI Conference in Aachen, Germany 2019

ONLINE COURSE ON PHENOMENOGRAPHY AND VARIATION THEORY

The phenomenography and variation theory community has members in many different academic contexts and geographical locations. But even so, opportunities to learn about the framework in formal courses are scarce. We are happy to be able to announce such an opportunity during 2020, as we did 2018.

The course, *Phenomenographic horizons: the internal horizon*, will be provided by University of Gothenburg using an online format. Completion of the course will merit the award of 7,5 ECTS. The course includes one physical meeting at the SIG9 conference in August 2020. Course leaders are Angelika Kullberg and Åke Ingerman. Course certificates can be issued. The course is open and free of charge for participants, but membership in SIG9 is encouraged.

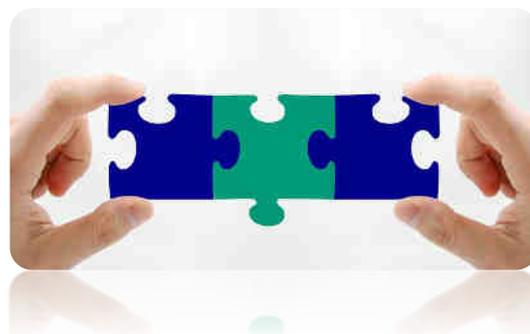
The course will study phenomenography as it has emerged as an empirical research approach to issues involving student learning and understanding, looking at both its origins and its evolution. Variation theory, building as it does on phenomenographic studies, will be studied through the literature, anchored in the empirical research and other contributing theoretical groundings.

The course literature includes major publications in the history of phenomenography and variation theory, as well as ample examples of studies. The course participants will be expected to use their research interest as starting point for writing about a phenomenography/variation theory study design, as well as engage in joint sample analysis of empirical data.

Lectures by Ference Marton, Shirley Booth, Ulla Runesson, Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson and Åke Ingerman have been confirmed. Further lecturers may be announced later, in accordance with discussions with the course participants. The lectures will be available as video recordings, and will be complemented with online seminars with the course leaders, in some cases including also the lecturers.

The first meeting online is planned to Friday April 17th 9-12 (Swedish time), unless time coordination with participants necessitates rescheduling. Further online seminars are planned to May/June, September, November and December, and a physical meeting at the SIG9 conference in August.

Sign-up and information can be found at <https://fubasdoc.gu.se/fubasextern/info?kurs=FOU1810> and further inquiries can be made through email to ake.ingerman@gu.se. Sign up at your earliest convenience before November 10th!



RECENT DOCTORAL THESIS

Malin Tväråna, University of Stockholm, Sweden

Critical judgement in social science education. Education developmental studies of civic reasoning in fairness and justice issues

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-169833>

The study aims to expand the knowledge base of social science education by exploring the meaning of, and teaching for, the ability to critically analyse essentially contested value issues, specifically fairness and justice issues, in social science. The project concludes results from three studies containing five Learning Study on social science teaching, conducted in collaboration with practicing teachers at upper secondary, middle and lower primary school level. For the teaching intervention design and the analysis of empirical data, combinations of phenomenography, variation theory and practice theory were used.

The results comprise descriptions of what it means to know how to reason critically about fairness and justice issues in social science, what the critical aspects for learning how to do this are, how this knowing can be related to different teaching practices and design principles, and what indications of an emerging ability to critically analyse these issues can be. The critical aspects found and used relate both to justice as a phenomenon and to the activity of reasoning about issues of justice and fairness in the social science classroom.

In the project, critical aspects identified among students at upper secondary level were successfully used for designing teaching aimed at students at primary level. This has implications for how progression can be viewed in the social science subject. The results can be used as tools when designing, implementing and evaluating teaching and as empirically grounded additions to a theoretical description of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge. Based on the results, the progression of the ability is discussed and a model for social science analytical reasoning (sambällsanalytiskt tänkande) is proposed.



MEMEBERSHIP OF THE SIG 9 - HOW TO JOIN US?

If you are not yet a member of the SIG you can make a big difference to the well-being of the SIG by becoming a member. If you are already an EARLI member you can sign up for the SIG at any time. It only costs €8. Becoming a member gets you to an €80 discount on the conference fee and membership of EARLI cost €95 – so membership of EARLI will only cost you an additional €15.

By showing your support for the SIG through becoming a SIG member you increase the profile of the SIG within EARLI. EARLI regularly reviews membership numbers for the SIGs and the more members we have, the more the future of the SIG is safeguarded. Go to <https://earli.org/join> to sign up!

We wish new members warmly welcome to our SIG 9!

KEY DATES IN 2019-2020

December 2019	Call for abstracts to SIG 9 conference
17 February	Submission of abstracts
3 April	Notification of acceptance
17-19 August	SIG 9 conference: Phenomenography and variation theory – continuity and change, Göteborg, Sweden