

Existential questions in research and education - Människors livsfrågor i forskning och undervisning

Oct 27.- 29. 2016 at Sigtunastiftelsen conference centre, Sigtuna, Sweden

Abstract form

Deadline for abstracts: May 1. 2016

Abstracts are submitted to geir.skeie@hds.su.se

Name of presenter(s)	Airi Bigsten
Title of paper	Det blir rättvist fast det är orättvist
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>Med utgångspunkt i livsvärldsteorin, framförallt Merleau-Pontys (1962) och Schütz (1966) teorier har fostran i förskolan studerats (Bigsten, 2015). Syftet med studien var att synliggöra förskollärares bevekelsegrunder för det egna handlandet då de fostrar barn i förskolan samt hur de erfara det egna handlandet i mötet med barnen. Metoden som valdes till studien var stimulated-recall (Calderhead, 1981). Anledningen till metodvalet var att genererad data skulle ligga till grund för samtal med förskollärarna om bevekelsegrunderna för deras arbete med barns fostran. Utifrån förskollärarnas resonemang kan fostran förstås utifrån tre teman (Bigsten, 2015); Förskollärare respekterar barns unicitet, Förskollärare vill uppnå ordning samt Existens - Förskollärare vill lägga grunden för det framtida livet. I föreliggande paper är fokus riktat mot värdet rättvisa. I förskollärarnas resonemang synliggörs att rättvisa är av vikt för både barn och vuxna. På vilka grunder som rättvisa ska ta sin utgångspunkt skiljer sig åt mellan barn och vuxna. Rättvisa för barn utgår ifrån likhetsprincipen medan förskollärarnas syn på rättvisa utgår från likhets- och/eller behovsprincipen. Förskollärarna motiverar sitt handlandet oftast utifrån behovsprincipen då de menar att lika för lika principen inte är genomförbar.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Thérèse Halvarson Britton
Title of paper	Elevers egen livstolkning i samband med studiebesök
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>Ett sätt att inom religionskunskapsundervisningen närma sig ett mer kulturvetenskapligt paradigm med fokus på levd religion kan vara att göra studiebesök. Detta är en metod som förefaller vara uppskattad av såväl elever som lärare. Jag har i min licentiatstudie undersökt en klass gymnasieelevers tal och islam före, under och efter ett moskébesök. Elevyttranden har bland annat analyserats med hjälp av Bachtins dialogteori om talgenrer. Elevyttranden som relaterar till elevernas egen livstolkning faller in under det som jag benämner som självrefererande talgenre. Utifrån dessa yttranden aktualiseras ett antal religionsdidaktiska utmaningar och möjligheter utmaningar. Det framträder bland annat att elevers egen livstolkning triggas igång av besöket genom att de jämför det de möter med sin egen livstolkning. Vidare förefaller besöket sätta igång existentiella reflektioner om vad som är sanning, gudstro och religiöst engagemang. Elevyttranden visar också att den egna livstolkningen och erfarenheter påverkar hur de tolkar det de möter. Elever som själva socialiserats in i en religiös tradition ger t ex uttryck för att representanten som är konvertit, inte är trovärdig medan elever som själva inte positionerar sig som tillhörande någon religiös tradition ger uttryck för att konvertitens egna val ger trovärdighet. Det visar sig också att elever som själva har erfarenheter av islam som inte stämmer överens med den representation de möter under besöket ger uttryck för att representanten inte är trovärdig.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Oddrun Marie Hovde Bråten, NTNU
Title of paper	And Worldviews? (Og Livssyn?)
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p><i>In the Signposts, one issue discussed is the inclusion of worldviews in RE. This may refer to secular worldviews, but the concept is ambiguous. Secular worldviews is often not included in existing models for RE in Europe (and beyond). In Norway this has been an integrated part of RE since 1997 when the government introduced inclusive RE, and before that as an alternative subject to Christian RE. The concepts is ambiguous within Norwegian academic discourse, and yet distinctive from the Swedish tradition of “life questions”.</i></p> <p><i>In the current National Curriculum and textbooks used in schools, it sometimes refers to a secular alternative, often secular humanism, but at other times, used in the meaning “we all have a worldview, some are religious, and some not”. This is echoed in observations in a project where I am looking at the understanding and use of the concept in a case study of two year 8 classes. Here I want to present some preliminary analysis of this material, and raise issues of strategies to develop teaching of worldviews in practice. .</i></p> <p><i>In the school subject Christianity, Religions, Lifeviews (Worldviews) and Ethics (KRLE from 2015), What does “Worldviews” represent, and how can it be developed?</i></p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Dr Judith Everington
Title of paper	Should <i>religious</i> education include the exploration of existential questions through non-religious worldviews?: the views and experiences of English secondary school teachers
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>In England, existential questions have been at the heart of religious education since the 1960s but it was not until 2004 that the inclusion of non-religious worldviews became an option for regional syllabus makers. A 2013 non-statutory national framework for RE (RE Council of England and Wales) promoting the teaching of non-religious worldviews to all pupils has given rise to fierce debate within academic communities; a legal battle between government officials and members of the British Humanist Association and government opposition to the development of an RE curriculum giving equal weight to religious and non-religious worldviews. However, arguments for and against the inclusion of non-religious worldviews have referred to what teachers think, want and do without research-based evidence to support the claims. This paper draws on a qualitative study which is investigating RE teachers' views on and experiences of the inclusion and teaching of non-religious worldviews and contextualises these with reference to national and international research, debates and policy. Issues and questions raised by participants, together with classroom approaches will be used to consider possibilities for developing the place of existential questions in religious education and the challenges that these pose for teachers, teacher educators and policy makers.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Olof Franck, Associate Professor, Dep. Of Pedagogical, Curricular and Professional Studies, University of Gothenburg. Annika Lilja, Senior Lecturer, Dep. Of Pedagogical, Curricular and Professional Studies, University of Gothenburg.
Title of paper	Being <i>and</i> becoming: Challenging dichotomous conceptions of ethical competence within deliberative ethics education in compulsory school.
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>What abilities are to be developed within ethics education? Such abilities are sometimes described in terms of <i>ethical competence</i>. The concept of ethical competence is not unproblematic, but it can be used instrumentally to identify abilities that in the framework of the teaching of ethics is thought to be developed.</p> <p>This presentation focuses on dichotomous conceptions of ethical competence according to which subjects either have or lack relevant abilities, and where “ethically competent grown-ups” are distinguished from “ethically not competent”, or “ignorant, children”.</p> <p>With reference to Jacques Rancière's philosophical approach where teachers and students, as collaborative equals, engage in teaching-learning processes, and John Wall's critical "childist approach" in which hierarchic ageist relations are highlighted, a dichotomous, developmentalist conception of ethical competence is analyzed. An examination of conceptions of ethical competence in Nordic RE syllabuses, and an interpretative analysis of interviews with pupils in grade six, performed within a research project financed by the Swedish Research Council, are used as bases for the analysis.</p> <p>Finally, a non-dichotomous conception of ethical competence is elaborated with regard to teachers' contribution to the transmission of democratic values, and with reference to conceptions of children as moral subjects, being and becoming ethically competent practitioners.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Gunnar J Gunnarsson, University of Iceland
Title of paper	Is a "life question approach" appropriate when RE has become a part of Social Studies?
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>In 2013 the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture issued a new National Curriculum Guide for the Compulsory school in Iceland. In the new curricula drastic changes were made and curricula of individual subjects were merged into larger entities. Religious education (RE) thus became a part of so-called Social Studies. That entails, among other things, that the role of religious education is primarily described in the context of the subjects that are included there.</p> <p>The aim of this paper is to explore and discuss these changes of the curriculum for Compulsory School in Iceland and what approaches might be appropriate when facing this new situation, with special focus on the students life questions or existential questions. The new Curriculum Guide in Iceland gives numerous reasons for focusing on the pupil perspective. The Social studies learning outcomes are classified into three main categories. The Curriculum Guide talks about the experiential world and ability of students to understand reality, the mental world and ability of students to understand themselves, and the social world and ability of students to form and develop their relationships with others. That entails that the approaches in RE should focus on the student perspective and create conditions for students to work on and clarify their own life questions, understandings and positions.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Caroline Gustavsson, lecturer at Stockholm School of Theology
Title of paper	Life issues among young adults – an empirical and methodological example
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>The paper presents an empirical and methodological example how to interpret and understand central existential issues among young adults. The method is exemplified by a research study that has focused young adults' life issues and meaning-making. In the study young adults were interviewed with the primary aim to interpret how they describe and understand their lives, with a specific focus on existential themes, and secondly, to develop useful concepts that can help to understand individual meaning-making in a given social and cultural context. The research material consists of deep-interviews with 21 young adults between 19 and 29 years of age. Eight of the interviewees describe themselves as Christian believers and the rest talk about themselves as non-believers in relation to a Christian tradition. The paper argues that existential issues are often less reflected on a personal level and only indirect apparent through peoples life stories. Existential issues are example of a content in peoples meaning-making but at the same time they can be understood as issues that drives the interpretation process.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Elisabet Haakedal
Title of paper	Spor av livsspørsmål i elevtekster om bibelske kvinneskikkelser
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>Tekstbidraget skal inngå i et bokprosjekt om norske elevers bibeltekstarbeid, dvs. tekster laget av elever på barnetrinnet i forbindelse med religions- og livssynsundervisning (etter 1997 og innføringen av et tradisjonsmangfoldig religionsfag) om Bibelen og dens fortellingsstoff. Elevtekstene er valgt ut og skannet fra innlånte arbeidsbøker, dvs. tegne- og skrivehefter brukt i skolen. I tekstbidraget fokuserer jeg på elevtekster om bibelske kvinneskikkelser og analyserer spor av elevers livsspørsmål og mulige tilløp til livstolking. I deskriptive tekstanalyser anvender jeg bl.a. sosialsemiotisk multimodalitetsteori. I en kortere drøftingsdel hvor også normative refleksjoner og vurderinger inngår, anvender jeg nordisk livstolkningsteori og relevante fagdidaktiske teoripoeng. Motivasjonen bak bokprosjektet dreier seg om å dokumentere ulike tiders (før og etter 1997) elevarbeid med Bibelens fortellingsstoff, dessuten å løfte fram det fagdidaktisk utfordrende forholdet mellom formidling av det bibelske fortellingsuniverset (Bibelen som glemselstruet kulturarv) og det å ta på alvor livsspørsmål som dagens tradisjonsmangfoldige elever sitter med. Jeg ønsker bl.a. å reflektere over eksistensielle gjenkjennelsesmuligheter hos elever med ulik kultur- og tradisjonsbakgrunn når de for eksempel arbeider med fortellingene om Abraham, Sara og Hagar.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Camilla Stabel Jørgensen
Title of paper	Ethical excursions and philosophical dialogues in teacher education - a waste of time or a wise way to necessary knowledge?
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>White papers related to RE-teacher education in Norway have - since the introduction of KRL in 1997 - both required students to acquire the expected knowledge and skills, but also "something extra" (Andreassen 2014). The quality of the "something extra" has changed from a focus on developing the individual pupils' existential meaningmaking to a focus on building bridges in a multicultural and multireligious society.</p> <p>In this paper data related to teacher students' ethical excursion ("voluntary" work for an organisation and preparation and management of a philosophical dialogue with co-students, based on experiences acquired through that work) is investigated, in search of an answer to the question in the title.</p> <p>The task (set to the students) is analysed according to writing assignment theory (Otnes 2015, Smith 2011). The students answers (the data produced by the students) is analysed based on a community of practice-approach (Lave and Wenger 1991). The results are discussed in relation to an understanding of teaching as a phronetic profession (Flyvbjerg 2012, 2009, Biesta 2014).</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Ole Andreas Kvamme
Title of paper	Emergence and Transformation of Sustainability Norms in the Norwegian school subject KRLE (christianity, religion, philosophies of life and moral education)
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p><i>How are the norms of respect for intergenerational responsibility and respect and care for the environment expressed in KRLE?</i></p> <p>This is the central question in the PhD project which this paper is a part of. The two norms are pivotal in UNESCO's strategy of education for sustainable development (ESD) (2006) and are here brought into the center, making the Norwegian school project KRLE the concrete foothold. The PhD project is stretching from considerations on the contextualization of universal norms, via document analysis of selected parts of Norwegian curriculum with emphasis on ESD strategy documents and syllabus, to class room observations and student interviews.</p> <p>In this paper it is the second part which is presented and discussed, i. e. the document analysis with an emphasis on the syllabus of KRLE, studied within the interdisciplinary scope of sustainable education.</p> <p>The paper is entrenched within critical hermeneutics with reference to Paul Ricoeur, further qualified by Seyla Benhabib. Her <i>democratic iterations</i> (2006) is conceptualizing the contextualization of universal norms, see Karin Sporre (2015) for a suggestion of the use of Benhabib within an educational frame. Benhabib's interactive universalism opens for the emergence of universal norms from below, exposing a dynamic perspective on the UNESCO strategy.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Katarina Kärnebro Institutionen för tillämpad utbildningsvetenskap, Umeå universitet
Title of paper	<i>Förskolebarns meningsskapande i livsfrågor</i>
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>I ett pilotprojekt om förskolebarns livsfrågor undersöks vilka förståelser om människan, världen, rättvisa, och framtiden, som skapas i samtal dem emellan. Frågor som studien vill besvara är: <i>Vilka tankar kommer till uttryck när förskolebarn samtalar om livsfrågor som rör människan, världen, rättvisa och framtiden? Hur samarbetar barnen för att skapa förståelse i dessa livsfrågeområden? Vilka rekommendationer kan formuleras till de som arbetar i barnverksamheter vad gäller förhållningssätt till yngre barns meningsskapande i livsfrågor?</i></p> <p>Studien utgår från en postmodern syn på kunskap och lärande som innebär att kunskap inte ses som något absolut eller universellt utan snarare något som är mångperspektivistiskt och kontextualiserat; detta för att möjliggöra en beskrivning av barns perspektiv. Studiens huvudsakliga insamlingsmetod är intervjusamtal med förskolebarn i grupp som videofilmas, för att senare analyseras via etnografiskt orienterad samtalsanalys. På konferensen presenteras studiens upplägg samt några preliminära resultat.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Bodil Liljefors Persson Malmö University Faculty of Education and Society Institution Individual and Society Nordenskiöldsgatan 10 205 06 MALMÖ phone: +46-40-665 8609, e-mail: bodil.liljefors@mah.se
Title of paper	TO BE OR NOT TO BE - the position of Existential Questions and the Example of Sexuality Education in RE - in schools and in Teacher Education in Sweden. (Jag har skrivit abstract på engelska, men kan mycket gärna presentera på svenska också, om mitt bidrag blir accepterat.)
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>There seems to be an ongoing debate within the academic study of RE about the position of Existential Questions in the context of the Swedish subject RE as a school subject with its own Syllabus. Should these existential questions be part of the RE subject – or not?</p> <p>Does these existential questions automatically lead towards a personal development of students? There has been a critique directed towards these questions and particularly if they do lead to, or seem to lead to, a personal development of the students. Can we capture this kind of knowledge – is it what we call in Sweden färdighet or förmåga in RE? And is this then a not wanted result of the RE in schools? I would like to discuss these questions within a context of Existential questions that is connected to Sex- och samlevnadsundervisning / Sexuality Education that is a knowledge area that in the latest National curricula in 2011 is supposed to be an integrated part of most of the school subjects.</p> <p>In the paper I would like to present some thoughts around these questions as well as some results of a research project about Sexuality Education that I am currently engaged in.</p> <p>End.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Annika Manni, Umeå university
Title of paper	Young thoughts about a sustainable future – knowledge, skills and agency
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>With an interest in the perspectives of children and youth regarding possible future scenarios, and their part in that, this paper presents preliminary results from an empirical study in Sweden. In times of an individual knowledge-based focus in schools, focus is here put on other (contrasting) global demands of education for a sustainable future now to the fore in Global action program, GAP (UNESCO, 2014)</p> <p>Questions about agency and participation in education for sustainable development have been raised in previous research (c.f.Caiman & Lundegård, 2013) showing the importance of agency in learning. Furthermore, action competence (c.f.Jensen & Schnack, 2006) is named as an important aspect of ESD. In a comprehensive study investigating 209 young students' experiences of environmental and sustainable education in Swedish compulsory school, open-ended questions regarding their thoughts about the future were also asked. The results show different ideas of valuable knowledge and skills for the future; traditional school-subject knowledge, environmental knowledge, social knowledge, and environmental action competence. A majority of the students think that they have a possibility to act and affect the future also expressing how this could be done through co-operation with others.</p> <p>The results indicate that young students have a somewhat different view on what is valuable knowledge and skills for a sustainable future than many mainstream politicians and policy makers.</p> <p>References Caiman, C., & Lundegård, I. (2013). Pre-school children's agency in learning for sustainable development. <i>Environmental Education Research</i>. doi:10.1080/13504622.2013.812722 Jensen, B. B., & Schnack, K. (2006). The Action Competence Approach in Environmental Education. <i>Environmental Education Research</i>, 12(3-4), 471-486. UNESCO. (2014). Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.</p>

ABSTRACT

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Teenagers' Perspectives on Religion and Science

After being excluded for forty years, the topic Religion and Science was reintroduced in the Swedish Upper Secondary school curriculum in 2011. This event raises issues on motives for and implications of such a school reform. The actual research is based on interviews with two curriculum officers, ten RE teachers and thirty students.

The interviews focused on the teenagers' attitudes towards the combination of religion and science in the same topic, their thoughts on possibilities of being a successful scientist and at the same time a true believer, and finally their views on timing of this curriculum reform. The teenagers' answers illuminate the first issue of this presentation.

However, the teenagers presented also their own religious beliefs, which is the second issue. The last, third one, focuses on hermeneutical qualities added by critical close reading of transcriptions.

Antagonism as well as coexistence between religion and science were observed in the interviews. Seven different religious attitudes emerged in the data: faithful, sceptical, neutral, related, interested, longing and philosophical. This empirical variation seems richer than the usual classification: theist, atheist and agnostic. Close reading made it possible to discover *intra*-individual variation in religious attitudes, significant history of effects, as well as interesting links and contrasts between texts and contexts.

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Name of presenter(s)	Staffan Nilsson
Title of paper	<i>Tonåringen och livsfrågorna</i> revisited
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>Skolöverstyrelsens undersökning <i>Tonåringen och livsfrågorna. Elevattityder och undervisningen i livsåskådning och etik på grundskolans högstadium</i> från 1969 är av historiskt intresse som bakgrund till framväxten av livsfrågor som en del av religionskunskapsämnet. I detta paper drivs tesen att <i>Tonåringen och livsfrågorna</i> med fördel kan tjäna som referenspunkt i didaktisk reflektion kring livsfrågeundervisningens problem, utmaningar och möjligheter 2016.</p> <p>Min argumentation för tesen kommer huvudsakligen följa två linjer: en positiv och en mer negativ. I den positiva argumentationslinjen tänker jag uppmärksamma ett antal ansatser och teoretiska perspektiv som jag menar fortsatt har relevans och kritisk potential, samtidigt som de förefaller tämligen marginaliserade eller bortglömda i dagens didaktiska diskussion om livsfrågeinriktad. I den mer negativa argumentationslinjen kommer jag å andra sidan hävda att flera problematiska antaganden och premisser som har varit återkommande (och märkligt obearbetade) i den svenska livsfrågetraditionen fram till idag, finns redan i <i>Tonåringen och livsfrågorna</i>.</p> <p>Materialunderlaget för den nutida didaktiska livsfrågediskussionen kommer i huvudsak att begränsas till gällande kurs- och ämnesplaner, samt kommentarmaterialet och didaktiska texter som relaterar till dessa.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Carola Nordbäck
Title of paper	Rum för livsfrågor: perspektiv på pedagogiska praktiker med existentiella inslag utanför skolan - museer och kyrkor.
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>I fokus för denna presentation finns institutioner och verksamheter som, trots att de är fristående från skolan, ändå relaterar sin verksamhet till skolans arbete med livsfrågor, värdegrund och etik. Jag kommer att dels föra en övergripande diskussion kring utvecklingen av sådana arenor och praktiker, dels göra empiriska nedslag i konkreta rum och verksamheter. Jag har valt sådana rum som regelbundet tar emot skolklasser och som har en pedagogiskt anpassad verksamhet för detta. Det handlar om en domkyrka och ett par museer. Dessa rum tillhör institutioner som har ett intresse av att både gå i dialog med barnen och att på olika sätt påverka deras förhållningssätt till olika livsfrågor, såväl kognitivt som emotionellt. Det är samtidigt visningsverksamheter som i allt högre utsträckning är pedagogiserade. Inom ramen för skolans besök möts lärarens, församlingspedagogens, konstpedagogens och museipedagogens olika praktikfält utifrån delvis olika målsättningar och didaktiska strategier men i ömsesidigt fokus på att skapa ett lärande möte med skolbarnen. I presentation kommer jag att diskutera vad för slags lärmiljöer domkyrkan respektive museet kan utgöra utifrån ett livsfrågepedagogiskt perspektiv genom att bland annat peka på likheter respektive skillnader mellan dessa praktiker.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Iris Ridder Högskolan Dalarna iri@du.se
Title of paper	The ethical aspects of using jokes for learning purposes seen from a historical perspective
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>It is generally known that the Byzantine monastery school used texts that are characterized by a strong emotionality. The Latin Dialogus Salomonis et Marcolfi is a Byzantine school text that most likely originates from the 13th century. This text uses strong emotionally charged stories and functionalizes them in a learning purpose. The Dialogus Salomonis et Marcolfi is a playful and humorous story about the biblical King Solomon who gets in an altercation with an eloquent peasant and fool named Marcolfus. The purpose of the text was to practice 12-year-old boys in rhetorical essay writing and Latin grammar, such as Latin syntactic structures. In my paper, I will present examples from this text that show how misogynistic and ugly bodily jokes were used in the purpose of learning. In my didactic analysis of the jokes, I will illustrate their function in regard to didactic instructions of grammar and writing (Progymnasmata). The possibilities and limitations of such a didactic approach to successful learning are discussed, particularly when it comes to the ethical issues related with this method. What might the consequences be when using misogynistic and crude jokes in connection to learning? Finally I will briefly discuss if there are any corresponding situations in today's schools and teaching practices and what role feelings in general and jokes in particular could have in learning.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Signild Risenfors
Title of paper	Liberal muslim and atheist hindu - Two young people discuss religion and philosophy
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>This study discusses a philosophical aspect of transnational identity with the focus on young people who describe themselves with concepts relating to religion and philosophy. <i>The aim of the study is to gain a deeper understanding about how identifications among young global citizens with experiences from migration are constructed in relation to religion and life philosophy.</i></p> <p>The study is based on individual interviews, viewed as conversations with the purpose to catch life philosophy among young people. The study is analysed from a discourse theoretical approach as well as theories of transnational identities, which underpin discussions on urbanization, globalization and diaspora.</p> <p>Religion as well as a multicultural background is something the young people say they have to relate to through their upbringing and something that has added dimensions of life on an intellectual as well as on an emotional level. Although they speak of themselves as global, a picture of Swedishness appears with articulations about freedom of choice, individualism and rational thinking, key words appearing in the school's fundamental values as well as in international studies (http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp). The young people in the study have a rich set of experiences of religion, beliefs and traditions and have opportunities to make active choices.</p>

Jari Ristiniemi

Children's relationality in late-modernity; the significance of the relational view for didactics of religion

The aim of the planned session is to present a pre-study done within the major project of "Children's relationality in late-modernity; the significance of the relational view for didactics of religion". A pre-study about children's thought about life was done in four kindergartens during 2013-2014 both in Sweden and in Germany. The session presents the pre-study, how it was done and what the results were. The design of the project has two main areas: firstly it studies children's perceptions of themselves and others and their understanding of meaning, life goals and content of life in the multicultural, commercialized and the technology-dominated society and secondly the role and place of children's own ideas and thoughts in religious education. The pre-study posed the following questions: How do children perceive themselves and others? How does the social and cultural context influence children's thoughts about life? These questions lead to the didactic follow-up question: What role might children's own questions and thoughts about life get in religious education? The session presents some of the thoughts and ideas children at the age of 3-5 have about life, themselves, others and about the society around them and it discusses what place children's own thoughts about life might get in religious education.

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Name of presenter(s)	Sturla Sagberg
Title of paper	The significance of choosing concepts of religious education
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>Education has throughout history been considered in terms of formation towards maturity as well as preparation for specific tasks and positions in society, but this has changed, parallel to society becoming more culturally and religiously diverse. For many decades there has been an accepted distinction between 'education' and 'nurture', the former denoting the subject of religion in school and the latter the subject of religion in faith communities. 'Life interpretation' has developed as a Scandinavian, holistic approach to issues of religion and philosophy, and is claimed also to include the notion of 'spirituality'.</p> <p>In this paper I ask three questions. First, what is the significance of recognising education as a spiritual process? Second, how does religion relate to education as such? These questions are discussed with reference to John M. Hull's views on spirituality and education. Third, how can conceptual frameworks for politics of religion support religious education in terms of formation without subscribing to religious instruction? This question is discussed on the background of John Rawls' understanding of the role of religion in a liberal democracy.</p> <p>The paper is an elaboration of main points from one chapter of my book <i>Holistic Religious Education – is it possible?</i> (Waxmann, 2015).</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Olga Schihalejev
Title of paper	What makes you happy? Drawings of 10-years old children in Estonia and Sweden
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>In the research project "Cultural and religious diversity in primary school" 3rd graders were asked to fill a questionnaire about cultural and religious diversity in their everyday experience and at school. Also they were asked to draw picture about what makes them happy.</p> <p>In pilot study of the questionnaire it became evident that students answer the questionnaire with a very different speed. Usually teachers provided an alternative task for faster students. But in one class a teacher did not and researcher improvised and asked faster students to draw a picture about what makes them happy. Initially this task was meant as a „fill up time“. But children enjoyed the task and thus in the main study the task was added to questionnaire.</p> <p>The drawings have been used in research to measure children's intelligence (Goodenough, Harris, Cohen), assessment of personality traits (Buck, Machover, Hammer) or values of a sociological group (Dennis). I use drawings as symbolic projections of preferences, attitudes, cognitive preoccupations and emotional investments what are in dialogue with culture young people live in. The paper looks at what values can be found in drawings of boys and girls from different religious and ethnic backgrounds in two different countries.</p>

Haiku som didaktiskt verktyg i arbete med clown, drama och lärande

En hermeneutisk fenomenologisk studie vars *övergripande syfte är att bidra till förståelse av elevers och studenters möte med konstdidaktik*. Studien består av flera mindre delstudier med utgångspunkt i avhandlingen ”Karneval i klassrum- kunskap på hjul. En studie av elevers möten med clown analyserade med narrativ metod och poetisk etnografi”. Avhandlingen visade att arbetet i konstformen motiverar och inspirerar. Clownen lockar fram skratt och god atmosfär vilket bäddar för lärande, reflektionen blir djup och personlig, väcker frågor om identitet, existentiella teman stiger fram. Resultatet redovisades i en rad haiku som porträtterar eleverna och visar betydelsefulla vändpunkter i lärandet. I fortsatt forskning samlades studenters berättelser om vändpunkter i lärande under clownarbetet. Resultatet redovisades i en kollektiv dikt och korta berättelser. Ett fokussamtal kring frågor som väckts efter arbete med clown i undervisning redovisades i form av en fokusberättelse under rubriken ”Allra käraste syster”. Studien inriktas för närvarande mot begreppet estetiska lärprocesser i syfte att undersöka studenternas syn på betydelsen av arbetet med estetiska lärprocesser, samt att undersöka haikuformen som ett språk för lärande.

Birgitta Silfver,

Fil.dr, lektor Högskolan i Gävle

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Abstract:

Name of presenter:	Caroline Sims, lecturer Department of Humanities Högskolan i Gävle
Title of paper:	Building Multicultural Understanding through Children's Literature
Abstract:	<p>The aim of this research project is to explore how multicultural understanding can be taught to young learners through the use of children's literature as a way of constructing meaning and understanding of the world, as well as values of diversity, empathy and acceptance.</p> <p>Furthermore the text explores questions of epistemology and hermeneutics and the complexity of describing and understanding descriptions of characters from a culture other than the familiar. The fundamental paradigm behind the project is that multicultural understanding is made possible through identification with the other - if what is unknown is described in terms of similarities rather than differences.</p> <p>The study covers descriptions of a selection of example texts describing Sub-Saharan Africa which are opening up for identification in the way it is based on features of childhood in common between cultures. Contrasting counter examples are also given.</p> <p>Through creating and understanding of people in a multicultural world a sense of the world as one unity where we belong together against 'toxicities' such as stereotypes, prejudice and racism. If manifested in childhood this could give the opportunity a life-long perspective for children to grow up in a multicultural world, in happiness together.</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Maximilian Broberg, Malin Löfstedt, Anders Sjöborg, Uppsala University
Title of paper	Religion and/or existential issues? Dealing with personal matters in school through the eyes of Swedish RE teachers
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>Increasingly both secularized and religiously diverse, many Western European countries are facing challenges for RE. Recent studies in Sweden have pointed out that many teachers of RE avoid what is seen as sensitive or controversial issues in RE and rather give priority to so called facts. This implies that expected learning outcomes which are central to the national curricula are being relinquished. Discussions and the possibility to connect teaching of RE with the existential questions of the pupils are thereby put on hold. In an ongoing study, teachers of RE in compulsory and upper secondary schools in Sweden are interviewed and surveyed regarding their teaching. Special attention is given to whether they experience tensions or challenges in their teaching and how they deal with these challenges. Of central interest is if religious diversity, existential questions and personal experiences on the part of pupils and teachers are seen to create controversial issues, and if so, what teachers do about such tensions (Ljunggren 2015, Englund 2015, Hess 2009). Interviews and survey results are also discussed in relation to theory stating that religion is moving between a private matter which sometimes also is addressed in a public sphere (Weintraub 1997, Taylor 2007).</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Geir Skeie, Stockholm University
Title of paper	Why should religious education include exploration of existential questions and personal values?
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	Against the backdrop of earlier confessional religious education as well as more recent forms of objective and pluralistic approaches, the paper discusses reasons for a focus on both individual and collective representations of existential positioning and values identification as part of religious education. It is argued that this is needed in an increasingly diverse society in order for groups and individuals to learn to know about differences and to develop strategies for living together as equals. The teaching about religious and worldview diversity should both explore collective and individual representations as internally complex and not play them out against each other as 'world religions' and 'personal beliefs'. Learning outcomes should be seen in a dialectical relationship with teaching approaches in order to support the relational and processual character of religious education. Following this, a potential privatisation of religion and belief as an answer to power inequalities in classroom and society should be challenged by developing skills in relational behaviour and democratic citizenship as part of religious education teaching and learning. This calls for keeping subject area content and pedagogy in teacher education together and should be an impulse for increased collaborative research among religious education scholars and teachers.

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Abstracts are submitted to geir.skeie@hds.su.se

Name of presenter(s)	Karin Sporre
Title of paper	Pupils' understanding of ethical concepts of relevance for the public domain
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p><i>Pupils' understanding of ethical concepts of relevance for the public domain</i></p> <p>In the Swedish National Test pupils are tested regarding their knowledge of ethics. 12-13 years old were in 2013 asked to combine four different statements with an ethical concept chosen out of three alternatives, and argue for their choice. Out of the four statements, two dealt with equality between boys and girls, one: friendship at school, and one: same-sex marriages. The concepts provided were: justice, equality, solidarity and empathy.</p> <p>The empirical material of the study is one hundred randomly collected written pupils' responses to the task. Three questions guided the analysis: a) Which concepts were chosen in response to the statements? b) What conceptual understandings come to the fore in the explanations of the concepts justice, equality, solidarity and empathy? c) What kind of moral issues do the pupils themselves raise in answering the questions?</p> <p>Seyla Benhabib has theorized issues of rights and equality in the public domain, not least in relation to gender, migration and citizenship (2013; 2006; 1992). As the issues studied refer to the public domain the question is in which way the work of Benhabib and the responses of the pupils mutually shed light on one another. The project is part of the research environment <i>EthiCo</i>.</p> <p>References:</p> <p>Benhabib, Seyla (1992). <i>Situating the Self. Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics</i>, New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Benhabib, Seyla (2006). <i>Another Cosmopolitanism</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press</p> <p>Benhabib, Seyla (2013). Birthright Citizenship, Immigration, and Global Poverty, in <i>University of Toronto Law Journal</i>, 63:3, p. 496-510.</p> <p><i>EthiCo</i>. What may be learnt in ethics? Varieties of conceptions of ethical competence to be taught in compulsory school.</p> <p>http://idpp.gu.se/english/Research/research_projects/what-may-be-learnt-in-ethics/?languageId=100001&disableRedirect=true&returnUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fidpp.gu.se%2Fforskning%2Fforskningsprojekt%2Fethico%2F%3FlanguageId%3D100000</p>

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Name of presenter(s)	Julian Stern
Title of paper	Children's Voice or Children's Voices: How Educational Research can be at the Heart of Schooling
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	There are problems with considering children and young people in schools as quite separate individuals, and with considering them as members of a single collectivity. The tension is represented in the use of 'voice' and 'voices' in educational debates. Voices in dialogue, in contrast to 'children's voice', are important and are of more value than can be described in the term 'democracy'. The voices of children and young people are presented, from a study of aloneness in schools. Analysis of the voices suggests they were involved in distinctively hermeneutic work, and an approach to research that generates such hermeneutics might be called a form of 'action philosophy'. This approach to research is surprising, and it can put voicing at the very heart of schooling, within classes.

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Name of presenter(s)	Eva Hallgren (doktorand Dramapedagogik, Stockholms universitet), Birgitta Silvfer, (fil. dr. i dramapedagogik, Högskolan i Gävle), Elsa Szatek, (adjunkt i dramapedagogik, Högskolan i Gävle).
Title of paper	Blå tråd
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	Genom en gestaltande workshop utforskar vi vad det innebär att vara människa samt mellanmänniska relationer. Vi kommer att lotsa deltagarna genom en dramaworkshop där vi utforskar frågor som tillhörighet, norm och makt. Med hjälp av processdrama; dramapedagogiska övningar, rollspel samt berättande, vill vi hitta en mångfald av perspektiv och röster för att skapa en fördjupad reflektion tillsammans. I denna workshop utgår vi från den skönlitterära boken Blå tråd av Louis Lowry. Dock är deltagarnas kreativitet, sinnen och fantasi viktiga faktorer när vi låter ett värdegrundsarbete fysiskt gestaltas i och genom våra kroppar. Vi kommer under workshopen även diskutera hur vi genom gestaltande metoder kan skapa utrymme för livsåskådningsfrågor i olika undervisningssammanhang. Vi som leder denna workshop har flera års erfarenhet av att arbeta med värdegrundsfrågor och ledarskap inom olika kontexter.

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Name of presenter(s)	Maria Szczepska-Pustkowska
Title of paper	THE IMAGES OF GOD IN A CHILD EPISTOLOGRAPHY
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>Watching the development of children William Stern noticed how soon they inflicted a question of the origin of everything that exists, including the existence of God. They discovered, that everything around had ever arise, and that God also is no exception to this rule. An example of this was the statement of 5-year old Günter Stern: "How strange that a good God is able to create himself!"¹. Some researchers suggest that God and essential questions about it are one of favorite themes of children's (philosophical) investigations. For a long time I am interested in what the image(s) of God is/ are formed by children of early education age. Their image(s) of God I decided to investigate using the epistolography. This text presents the preliminary results of the analyses which included the content and form of letters written by Polish children to God.</p>

¹W. Stern, *Psychologie der frühen Kindheit bis zum sechsten Lebensjahr*, Mit Benutzung ungedruckter Tagebücher von Clara Stern, Quelle&Meyer, Leipzig 1927; E. Stern, *Kind, Krankheit und Tod*, E. Reinhardt, München 1957.

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Name of presenter(s)	Tomas Widholm, doktorand i pedagogiskt arbete med inriktning mot samhällsämnenas didaktik, Linköpings universitet
Title of paper	När alla har en dator - avhandlingsplan för en studie om läromedelsbruk i religionskunskap
Abstract (maximum 200 words)	<p>Idag är de flesta gymnasieskolor 1:1-skolor där varje elev har en egen dator. I Skolverkets IT-uppföljning för 2015 anges att 80 % av eleverna i kommunala gymnasieskolor och 74 % i fristående har egen dator. Det finns tidigare forskning som pekar mot att skolämnen kan förändras och kanon utmanas när skolan digitaliseras. Hur ser då undervisning och läromedelsbruk ut i ett ämnet religionskunskap, när varje elev har en egen dator?</p> <p>I en pilotstudie till föreliggande avhandlingsprojekt pekade resultatet mot att datorer verkligen fått en central plats i undervisningen och därmed påverkat läromedelsbruket. Tidningsartiklar liksom andra fria Internet-resurser användes i stor utsträckning tillsammans med läromedel som lärarna själva producerat. Även läroböcker användes, men hade inte någon framträdande plats.</p> <p>Det här avhandlingsprojektet har som syfte att undersöka läromedelsbruket i religionskunskap på gymnasieskolor där elever har egna datorer. Vad vet vi om vilka läromedel som används i religionskunskap och hur lärare väljer dem? Vilken roll spelar lärarnas ämnesdidaktiska överväganden? I vilken utsträckning påverkar olika ramfaktorer valet av läromedel? Genom observationer i klassrum och intervjuer med lärare kommer det här avhandlingsprojektet kunna lämna ett bidrag till religionsdidaktisk lärarforskning om undervisning och läromedelsbruk i dagens gymnasieskola.</p>