ABSTRACT BOOK

GELYDA International Conference

The Science and Practice of Extended Learning, Youth Development and Wellbeing

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GELYDA

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Mind the Gap: Possibilities and Challenges in Cooperation between Extended Education and School

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Abstract

Transitions present both opportunities and challenges for children's development, impacting their well-being, learning, and social experiences. In examining the cooperation between Extended Education (EE) and schools, the metaphor of a bridge is often used to depict this transition. Both EE and schools must collaboratively build this "bridge" to provide a structured and supportive passage for children. The bridge's design—whether it allows one-way or two-way traffic, is temporary or permanent, or accommodates individual or group crossings—plays a critical role in the effectiveness of the transition. Bridging the gap to provide support to the children relays on establishing effective collaboration opportunities between EE and the school system. Thus, our research question is: *What are the possibilities and challenges in cooperation between EE and schools?* In Norway, EE is provided free to first and second graders for 12 hours weekly, with a national participation rate of 92%. This high attendance rate indicates that most young children transition daily between school and EE. EE programs are typically co-located with schools, sharing classrooms and facilities, and some EE staff also work in the schools during the day. However, despite this close physical proximity and overlapping personnel, there are no standardized guidelines for EE-school collaboration, and EE lacks a formal mandate to structure this cooperation effectively. To explore the research question, we used a mixed-methods approach, combining document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The document analysis focused on reports from EE leaders (N=40, nationwide) to identify the types of meetings held, time allocated, and topics covered. This approach offers insights into institutional priorities and cooperation patterns within EE. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with EE leaders provided deeper insights, capturing their perceptions and experiences of working with schools. Semi-structured interviews are effective in exploring complex themes, allowing for consistent questioning while maintaining flexibility to probe specific issues. This approach was particularly useful in addressing the multifaceted dynamics of EE-school cooperation, as participants could share both practical and relational aspects of their experiences. Data from both sources were analyzed using thematic content analysis, a qualitative method well-suited to identifying and interpreting patterns within textual data. Thematic analysis allowed us to categorize recurring themes related to the possibilities and challenges in EE-school collaboration. Due to the participant numbers and structured nature of some responses, we also conducted basic quantitative analysis to provide an overview of patterns and trends. Our analysis is

ongoing, and only preliminary findings are available at this stage. Two initial insights have emerged: (A) the critical role of leadership support from school administrators in fostering strong EE-school collaboration, and (B) significant variation in the time allocated for collaborative meetings across EE nationwide. Further findings addressing our research question will be presented in full at the upcoming conference.

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Reading Aloud as a Recreational Educational Measure: A Case Study on the Implementation of a Picture Book App in Institutionalized Extended Education

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Abstract

This study explores the use of a digital picture book app in a Swiss after-school program to boost language development and recreational reading of young children. The app allows children to read books just like they would with physical books. It's like having a tiny library available at their fingertips at all times. By examining caregivers' perspectives, it identifies the challenges, strategies, and benefits of using technology to enhance reading engagement and autonomy of children. The research contributes to the field of digital literacy in extended education, offering insights into how technology can support language skills and a reading culture beyond school hours. Early language skills are predictive of future academic and social outcomes. Reading aloud, a well-supported method for vocabulary and language development, serves as a pivotal activity within this study's framework, with a focus on digital adaptations through picture book apps. The use of such apps is positioned within the multimedia learning theory, which suggests that children learn more effectively with combined visual and verbal inputs, reinforcing the educational value of multimedia tools in language acquisition.

The study addresses a primary research question: *How do caregivers in an after-school program implement and perceive the integration of a picture book app in extended education to promote reading among young children?* It further explores the strategies caregivers employ, the challenges they encounter, and the benefits they observe when using digital tools for educational purposes. A qualitative case study approach was chosen, focusing on an after-school program in the canton of Bern, Switzerland. Data was collected through five semi-structured in-depth interviews with caregivers from two program groups, providing rich, detailed insights into their experiences with digital media. Thematic analysis was used to categorize and interpret the responses, with coding to identify themes such as prior media experience, reading practices, challenges, strategies, and perceived benefits. Furthermore, the children where being questioned on how they liked to read with the picture book app using a picture-based approach.

The study shows that picture book apps support children's autonomy and language development by allowing independent story engagement. The app's wide book selection boosted reading motivation by matching personal preferences, with 62.5% of children giving it the highest likeability rating. However, challenges include limited device access and the need for guidance to enhance educational benefits. Effective use depends on timing, environmental factors like energy levels, and group dynamics. Caregivers also emphasized the importance of

media literacy for adults, including training staff in dialogic reading, to maximize the app's educational impact. This study underscores the role of digital media as an effective support for language and literacy development in after-school programs. The study highlights the importance of integrating digital tools thoughtfully within educational frameworks. By providing insights into caregivers' experiences, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how extended education programs can leverage digital media to enhance children's learning and development, presenting implications for future research and practice in the field of extended education.

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Thriving youth need thriving ecosystems: Robust equity, public education, and community-based arts in the U.S.

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Abstract

This symposium will involve three presentations of papers that elevate research on the equity-centered thriving, learning ecosystems, and the role our public education system plays in supporting both. The authors, who have collaborated on several projects and papers, will offer 15-20 minute presentations, offering opportunities for clarifying questions after each and providing short explanations to connect the topics. They will then engage the audience in 30 minutes of discussion, taking questions and using guided questions to help the audience explore the connections.

The symposium includes the following papers:

- Equity-Centered Thriving (presented by Karen Pittman)
- Too Essential to Fail: Why Our Big Bet on Public Education Needs a Bold National Response (presented by Merita Irby)
- Youth development through arts and culture: Conceptualizing culture-centered community-based arts programs (presented by Tom Akiva)

Impact of an arts-and-philosophy based intervention on elementary school children's eco-anxiety: A randomized experimental cluster design

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Abstract

As the effects of climate change accelerate and the topic gains political and media attention, children are increasingly concerned about the implications for their future. As they learn about environmental risks in school, they also become more vulnerable to developing eco-anxiety, which encompasses the climate crisis' effects on psychological wellbeing and mental health. This has led researchers to develop and implement programs designed to help children cope with the effects of climate change and explore their eco-anxiety. One promising avenue to create brave and safe spaces for children to discuss their eco-anxiety and the climate crisis in schools resides in using the arts and philosophical inquiry as tools to allow for personal exploration and co-construction of meaning through group discussions.

The goal of this study was to assess the impact of an arts-based intervention (ABI), compared to an arts-and-philosophy based intervention (APBI), both centered on the theme of climate change, on elementary school students' eco-anxiety. A randomized experimental cluster design was implemented to compare the effects of the two interventions on elementary school students' eco-anxiety. 167 elementary school students from 7 classrooms of grades 3 to 6 from England took part in this study. Both interventions were delivered twice a week, for four weeks (total sessions = 8), during school time. All children completed the Hogg Eco-Anxiety Scale at pre-test and immediately at post-test.

Results of a mixed ANOVAs revealed significant differences across groups at post-test for behavioral symptoms of eco-anxiety, with students assigned to the APBI showing decreases in scores (M_{pre} =0.89 ; M_{post} =0.73) and students in the ABI showing increases in scores (M_{pre} =0.81 ; M_{post} =0.92). Students from both groups (combined: M_{pre} =1.13 ; M_{post} =1.84; arts only: M_{pre} =1.13 ; M_{post} =2.06) showed statistically significant increases in their eco-anxiety about their impact on the planet from pre-to-post test. Finally, results showed significant differences across groups at post-test for global eco-anxiety, with students in the ABI showing statistically significant increases in eco-anxiety (M_{pre} =0.98 ; M_{post} =1.27) and students in the APBI showing non-significant pre-to-post changes in scores (M_{pre} =0.99 ; M_{post} =1.02).

Results show that the APBI was useful in decreasing behavioral symptoms of eco-anxiety. The ABI, however, had a detrimental impact on children's behavioral symptoms of eco-anxiety and global eco-anxiety. These results suggest that philosophical inquiry had an added value in helping children further process their feelings related to climate change and may have served as a protective factor against some

manifestations of eco-anxiety. The ABI may not provide sufficient opportunities to deepen children's reflections on this topic. Both interventions had a detrimental impact on children's eco-anxiety related to their impact on the planet, suggesting a heightened awareness of anthropogenic effects on the environment. This awareness could lead to higher social engagement, just as it could leave children feeling overburdened with a sense of responsibility for the fate of the planet.

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National Academies Consensus Study Findings on Promoting Learning and Development In K-12 Out Of School Time Settings Children and Youth from Marginalized Backgrounds

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Committee on Promoting Learning and Development In K-12 Out Of School Time Settings For Low Income and Marginalized Children and Youth[1], Thomas Akiva[2], Helen Malone[3], Deborah Moroney[4]

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Abstract

Members of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's *Committee on Promoting Learning and Development In K-12 Out-of-School Time Settings for Low Income and Marginalized Children and Youth* will lead a symposium to discuss key findings from its consensus study report, a follow up to the 2002 NASEM report, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development.* The committee reviewed the evidence around out-of-school time programs and activities including scientific literature, gray literature, reports produced by organizations in the youth development field, and testimony from public sessions, to discuss and make recommendations around the following research questions:

1. How can OST programs specifically designed to serve youth from low- income households be characterized (e.g., program goals, audiences, governance structures/staffing, etc.)? How and why do these characteristics vary among OST programs?   Are there any patterns among these organizational dimensions related to community served, focus/purpose, geographic region, or other factors?
2. What is the evidence on the effectiveness and outcomes of OST programs for promoting learning, development, and wellbeing for children and youth from low-income households? How are these constructs defined and measured by programs and in the research literature? Do findings vary by sub-groups of low-income youth experiencing additional forms of structural inequality?
3. How can existing policies and regulations for OST programs be improved to ensure high-quality opportunities for children and youth from low-income households? How might these vary when low-income youth experience additional forms of structural inequality?
4. What are the existing gaps in the literature that can be addressed to produce more robust findings about how OST can support learning and development for children and youth from low-

income households? How might these vary when low-income youth experience additional forms of structural inequality?

The report will address all of these research questions, however tor the symposium we will focus on sharing findings pertaining to research questions #1 and #2, this will include discussion of the characteristics of programs, participation, and the workforce in the U.S., and a review of scholarship on program effects and outcomes. The report is slated for release in early 2025 at which time the findings and conclusions will be shared publicly.

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Children's camp - Additional education

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Abstract

Children's camps are very significant for extracurricular education, as they offer a wide array of possibilities. Located in natural settings, they provide a perfect environment for organizing various activities aimed at broadening intellectual, social, emotional and physical development while also benefiting children's health.

Children's camp "Baranda NESTvarno" (meaning "Baranda Incredible") is located approximately 40km from Belgrade, the capital of Serbia and it is intended for children aged 7-11. Through organized activities including sports, field trips, art and literature workshops, caring for animals and participation in traditional food preparation, children develop their physical and mental capabilities as well as practical skills in natural surroundings.

The camp curriculum is carefully developed to align with children's age and interests. After spending time at the camp in Baranda, children leave enriched with new experiences and knowledge, positive experiences and many new friendships.

The pedagogical concepts of children's camp Baranda are based on six aspects: 1) Expanding and deepening knowledge provided by the school curriculum. 2) Acquiring new knowledge, skills and habits not part of the school curriculum. 3) Socialization. 4) Encouraging sports and recreational activities. 5) Fostering appreciation for village life and nature. 6) Building environmental awareness.

Children directly and actively participate in organizing various activities. All the children are equally included according to their affinities, regardless of whether they have introverted or extroverted personality types.

The planned activities in the camp are realized through play method, research method and discovery method.

After the children's stay, we conducted a survey:

To objective was to gather feedback on children's experiences during their time in the camp and their favorite activities giving us insights for future curriculum development. There were 44 camp participants. The survey was anonymous to get more honest and complete data and consisted of two questions. Research was conducted in July/August 2024. Descriptive method was used for data processing

When asked "How did you feel during your stay at camp?" 100% of surveyed participants answered that it was a pleasant experience. Some of the answers were:

- I felt pleasant in the nice surroundings, and I enjoyed spending time in an environment that is different from where I live
- I felt good, it was entertaining and unusual; I experienced many wonderful things there
- I felt good and happy because I got to play with my friends
- I felt good, relaxed, happy, entertained and safe
- I felt excited because we had new challenges every day
- I felt so good it can't be put into words, all the adventures were amazing

To the second question "What did you like most during your camp stay?" Children replied by listing multiple activities, such as: Sports activities - Village exploration and rural life experience- Fishing- Food preparation- Outdoor activities- Horse carriage rides - Campfire. All the children expressed interest in attending the camp again. The survey results show that "Baranda NESTvarno" successfully achieves its main objectives.

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FREIDAY - a sustainable learning format for schools?! Insights into an ethnographic research and development project in Germany

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Abstract

Schools in Germany are currently facing a wide range of transformation expectations that result from developments in society as a whole (e.g. democracy education, climate crisis) as well as from the results of international school performance studies. In addition, international studies point to the importance of a positive school culture, the experience of self-efficacy and well-being at school for pupils' learning development. These aspects have so far received little systematic attention in the empirical and educational policy discourse in Germany. This also applies to the content area of education for sustainable development.

Against this backdrop, the FREIDAY learning format, which is being conceptualized by the German initiative "Schule im Aufbruch" as a response to these transformation expectations, is of interest to our research. The FREIDAY design envisages that pupils will spend one school day a week working on current social and ecological challenges that are aligned with the SDGs in interdisciplinary and cross-grade projects. The learning setting at FREIDAY should differ from traditional lessons, e.g. by designating it as a non-judgmental space in which pupils are empowered to develop future skills.

Schools that implement the FREIDAY learning format thus commit themselves to a demanding normative proclamation that challenges teachers to deviate from routine practices of conventional teaching. Against this background, the research project focuses on the actual school practice of FREIDAY and explores the following questions: How do schools establish the FREIDAY learning format into traditional school life? To what extent do other routines and practices become visible in FREIDAY?

As part of an ethnographic research design, we accompanied the FREIDAY learning format at three different schools over a period of 6-12 months. Observation protocols were created as part of participant observation, which were supplemented by in-depth focused interviews. These were reconstructed using the coding procedure of the Grounded Theory Methodology.

The results show that FREIDAY is recontextualized differently by the responsible teachers and thus prefigures divergent learning practices. Accordingly, on the one hand, there are forms of practice that are very reminiscent of traditional teaching,

for example in that the normative requirement for students to work on relevant future issues acts as an assessment framework. Here, the teachers control and allow little participation and self-efficacy experience of the students. On the other hand, there are also forms of practice in which a (conditionally) assessment-free learning space characterized by trust is established, which enables students to engage in interest-driven and self-determined learning.

Finally, we would like to discuss the extent to which FREIDAY has the potential to promote school development and which support systems are necessary.

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Youth development through arts and culture: Conceptualizing culture-centered community-based arts programs

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Abstract

(PART OF SYMPOSIUM - THRIVING YOUTH NEED THRIVING ECOSYSTEMS)

This paper presents an in-depth study of culture-centered community-based youth arts (CCYA) programs that intentionally serve communities of color through culturally sustaining arts programming. We define CCYA programs as (a) *community-based youth development* programs that offer (b) *high-quality arts learning* and (c) *center the racial/ethnic cultures* of youth-of-color participants. This study delves into the fundamental components of CCYA programs, their impact on participants, and how they may foster holistic development. The full study results will be presented in a Wallace-sponsored report to be released in early 2025. This report (which will be freely available) will serve as the foundation for the proposed presentation. School-based access to the arts in the U.S. has steadily declined over the past four decades, in an uneven way that disproportionately affects youth of color (Williams, 2008; Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). As noted by Akiva et al. (2021), this "trend of declining arts access for Black youth is antithetical to the significance of the arts as an aspect of community cultural wealth for Black people in the US" (p. 5). Cultural context is centered in the arts, as art reflects culture. Our CCYA conceptualization builds on inquiry about the experience of arts-involved youth from diverse cultures in the US to understand how communities use arts to support youth development.

A total of 35 youth arts programs across eight U.S. cities participated in the study. We conducted program leader interviews, youth surveys, site visits, and teaching artist online focus groups. But the heart of the study was 35 in-person, participatory, cross-age focus groups, with

a total of 230 youth participants and 73 adult teaching artists. These 90-minute sessions were based on the transformative evaluation protocols developed in the *Impact of Youth Work in Europe* study. Storytelling was a central methodological approach, allowing participants—as experts of their own experience—to unpack salient aspects of their participation. These activities produced a wealth of both quantitative and qualitative data, which we analyzed using a team-based approach over multiple months.

Our study identified seven ways that CCYA programs support youth: 1) Nurture artistic skill, 2) Cultivate creative restoration, 3) Establish artful sanctuaries, 4) Foster generative connections, 5) Highlight meaningful pathways, 6) Promote cultural visibility, 7) Emphasize equity intentionality. We also identified several community-level factors that may influence the development and operation of CCYA programs: 1) Social and cultural histories, including racism and marginalization, shape CCYA programs, 2) Support for teaching artists varies across communities, 3) Communities vary in how they address program access, 4) A health ecosystem is diverse, 5) Programs and communities are intertwined. The study presents a picture of CCYA, an understudied topic that benefits many youth in the U.S.

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Equity-Centered Thriving

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Abstract

Thriving and equity hold out promise for a better world, but they are stubbornly elusive goals. Efforts to achieve both have suffered from attempts to narrow, rather than expand, goals and standards. Thriving and equity are dynamically interdependent, cumulative, and culturally influenced. Our capacity to address one depends on our capacity to address the other. Interventions and decisions, however, often focus on one outcome, apply to one system, are timed for quick impact, and ignore cumulative effects. This is because conceptualizations, especially in the global North and in much of the global South, treat thriving and equity in a delimited, segmented, disciplinary-specific, ahistorical, culturally evasive, linear, individualist, and reductionist manner.

In this paper, we open a door to new thinking, research, and practice. We synthesize the scholarship across multiple disciplines and review work from indigenous scholars and community-responsive researchers and practitioners. We present expansive definitions of thriving and equity separately and in their context-dependent and dynamically interdependent

wholeness. We introduce robustness into our conceptualizations of both. We further address the collective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal processes and structures that contribute to or undermine thriving and equity, contrasting expansive and narrower definitions. We summarize key points that underlie both terms and use these definitions to examine the factors and conditions that promote or constrain thriving and equity.

Our application of these more expansive definitions leads us to propose four areas for further exploration:

- Aligning frameworks and developing consensus on defining and operationalizing thriving;
- Developing common indicators for thriving;
- Understanding different pathways to thriving that individuals and groups who experience adversity take;
- Examining how service systems and learning and development ecosystems can support robust equity and thriving.

These four areas have relevance for current efforts in the U.S. to anchor system indicators and system policies to more expansive, complex definitions of youth success that help blur the lines between education and extended learning/youth development systems to create dynamic learning ecosystems.

Thriving is being used to advance the idea of 360^0 | 365 | Up to 25 Learning Ecosystems for youth and young adults. We will offer for discussion:

- A research-based Community Action Framework for Youth Development (YDSI) that demonstrates the equal contributions youth's success at building competencies related to being productive, healthy, and connected have on young adult success and demonstrates the equal power that relationships, challenging experiences, and opportunities to contribute have on competency development and the roles all systems play.
- A competencies framework, developed by XQ Institute and validated by Pittman and Irby, that uses youth centered rubrics to help youth and educators co-create more powerful learning experiences to build competencies associated with 5 broad youth outcomes that link academic, cognitive, social and emotional competencies that are now being explored for use by summer and afterschool learning programs with the goal of having common rubrics for youth and youth organizations to get credit for competencies built.
- The Thriving Youth Framework developed for youth development practitioners by National 4-H that synthesizes the research done by 4H, Search Institute, SoLD Alliance and the authors.

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Too Essential to Fail: Why Our Big Bet on Public Education Needs a Bold National Response

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Abstract

This paper brings together a preponderance of evidence from disparate sources that combined gives us the confidence we need to create "a new education architecture that leverages the full complement of community resources needed to empower and support learners for life, work, and civic engagement." The presentation will include a summary of the paper followed by an overview of *Centering Youth Thriving,* the coalition of coalitions that has formed around amplifying and advancing this work. The paper has four sections:

- A Convergence of Perspectives documents the strong preferences among the public for movement toward the purpose, practice, and partner shifts revealed in recent polls. It includes differentiated polling of parents, students, employers, teachers, and after school educators. Multiple surveys indicate all stakeholders want bold changes in public education toward interest-driven, competency-based, place-based learning opportunities that prepare youth for work, family and civic life.
- Validation from Research reviews the foundational research from the fields of positive youth development and science of learning and development. We review four studies that take a developmental, learner-centered approach to understanding determinants of youth success and reinforce the importance of a strong, integrated learning and development ecosystem that supports multiple pathways.
- Identifying Levers for Change uses compelling framing from the Christensen Institute to explain why the public education system is so unresponsive to community demands for change. We also review popular models for bringing school and community learning systems together that offer incomplete but promising footholds from which to build new ecosystem architecture.
- A Potential Path Forward offers a formal model for assessing the likelihood that major change can be accomplished and profiles emerging partnerships that may have the power to disrupt the hegemony schools now have because of how learning is delivered, measured, and credentialed. We also review specific initiatives that, if successful, could accelerate the desired changes, including commitments from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to develop alternatives to the Carnegie Unit.

We conclude that increasing youth thriving is doable. Every young person has the potential to thrive under the right conditions and every community has an opportunity and obligation to improve those conditions. The charge to move from systems to ecosystems thinking is not a call to sideline schools. It is a call to have schools function as hubs for leveraging school and community resources to provide rich learning experiences that build real-world competencies, commitments, and connections that support youth thriving. **This paper has been a springboard to aligning efforts of more than a dozen coalitions and networks focused on developing a new education architecture that engages the innovative and alternative systems within public education and fully embraces the assets and abundance of the broader learning ecosystem. We will provide an update on how this effort --** *Centering Youth Thriving* **-- is building connections and cross-pollinating practical tools and resources to illuminate and support diverse learning pathways for youth and young adults.**

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Empowering NEET youth: Assessing the impact of self-directed learning skills intervention

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Abstract

A low level of education is a significant risk factor for young people with long-term NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) status. Currently, there is a lack of research focusing on supporting young people who have dropped out of school so they can continue their educational paths. In this quasi-experimental study, the effect of an intervention on the SDL skills of NEET youth was investigated. The study group consisted of 60 participants (experimental group N = 30, control group N = 26, and mentors N = 4) from Estonia, Malta, North Macedonia and Turkey. The intervention was applied to the experimental group in the form of four different activities over six months. The impact was assessed using interviews and the SDL-NEET scale in pre, post and follow-up tests. The Mann-Whitney U Test indicated a significant difference in SDL skills between the control and experimental group. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test confirmed a significant change in SDL skills within the experimental group when comparing pre-test and follow-up test results. The results of the post-tests testified to the positive effect of the intervention activities on the youth's SDL skills. The NEET youth pointed out mentorship's importance and noted the intervention pushed them out of their comfort zone, prompting goal-oriented thinking. Mentors valued the pre-intervention training course and emphasized professional skill development during the intervention. This study confirmed the six-month SDL-NEET intervention effectively improved the SDL skills of NEET youth in the experimental group.

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Exploring Parental Satisfaction with Schools for Syrian Refugee Children and Youth in Canada

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Abstract

The Syrian conflict, which began in 2011, has caused a major humanitarian crisis, displacing millions of civilians. In response, Canada has become a key host nation for Syrian refugees. Schools for refugee children and youth play a crucial role in their integration and well-being by providing stability and educational opportunities. These schools often offer after-school programs, initiatives focused on students' well-being (such as counseling, mentorship, or peer support), and encourage parental engagement through extended learning activities like family literacy programs, community events, or workshops. Understanding parents' overall satisfaction with these schools is important, as it reflects the effectiveness of support systems and influences the children's well-being and integration into Canadian society.

This study aims to assess the satisfaction of Syrian refugee parents in Canada with their children's schools and identify its associated factors. This cross-sectional study included Syrian refugee parents, with at least one child under 18 years of age, who resettled in Canada after 2015 and resided in Ontario, Canada. Participants were recruited between March 3, 2021, and March 31, 2022. A total of 505 parents with one or more children who attended schools were enrolled. The primary dependent variable, school satisfaction, was assessed through the question, "rate your overall satisfaction with your child(ren)'s school(s) in Canada" with responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very satisfied) to 5 (Very unsatisfied). Independent variables included a range of sociodemographic and migration related factors. Multiple linear regression was used to examine the independent relationship between each of these variables and school satisfaction.

Results showed that 31% of participants were very satisfied with their children's schools, 44% were satisfied, and 10% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Factors significantly associated with lower school satisfaction included parents' perceived discrimination at their children's schools (beta = 0.26, 95% CI [0.14, 0.36]), being Muslim (beta = 0.26, 95% CI [0.03, 0.49]), lower ability to speak English or French (beta = 0.12, 95% CI [0.03, 0.22]), and poor mental health rating (beta = 0.14, 95% CI [0.06, 0.21]).

Based on these findings, while the majority of Syrian refugee parents in Canada are satisfied with their children's schools, several factors contribute to lower satisfaction levels including perceived discrimination, religious identity, language barriers, and poor mental health. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address discrimination, improve language support, and provide mental health resources to enhance the overall school experience for refugee families.

The Impact of After-School and Holiday Activities on Youth Development in Japan: Effective Activities and Timing for Implementation

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Abstract

Introduction and Purpose:

After-school programs enhance children's academic, social, and emotional development, with broad benefits for all youth, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In Japan, these programs are promoted as key components of educational policy. Previous studies have highlighted the role of after-school and holiday experiential activities in fostering independence, initiative, and cooperation. However, significant gaps often exist between students' current participation and their desired involvement in these activities, which may limit their developmental benefits. Additionally, while various activity types are thought to contribute to youth development, the most effective types and timing of activities to promote these outcomes remain underexplored. This study systematically investigates both the discrepancies in participation and the activities and timing that most effectively contribute to youth development in Japan.

This study addresses the following research questions: 1) What gaps exist between students' current participation and their desired involvement in after-school and holiday activities? 2) What types of activities best foster independence, initiative, and cooperation at different schooling stages? To address these questions, the study reanalyzed survey data from the National Institution for Youth Education, which included responses from 27,964 students (grades 1–11) and 7,020 parents. Activities were categorized into five types: social, nature-based, cultural/artistic, interpersonal, and exploratory learning. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to determine the independent contribution of each activity type while accounting for parental income levels and school stages.

Main findings showed the following:

1. Activity Gaps: Significant discrepancies were identified between students' current participation levels and their desired involvement in after-school and holiday activities.
2. Effective Activities by School Stage:
    o Elementary School: A wide range of activities, including social, nature-based, cultural/artistic, and interpersonal activities, effectively fostered independence, initiative, and cooperation.
    o Junior High: The above activities remained effective, with exploratory learning contributing positively.

- High School: Social and interpersonal activities were particularly effective for older adolescents.

Income disparities significantly influenced participation, highlighting the need to address socioeconomic barriers to provide equitable developmental opportunities. The findings underscore the importance of tailoring after-school and holiday programs to align with developmental stages. Younger children benefit from diverse activities, while older students derive the most value from social and interpersonal interactions. Addressing the gaps between current and desired activities and overcoming socioeconomic barriers is critical for equitable developmental opportunities. These insights provide valuable guidance for policymakers and practioners in designing more effective programs to support youth development.

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The Influence of Power Dynamics in Educational Settings on Younger Children's Mental Health: Permission vs. Agency in Meeting Basic Needs.

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Abstract

This research explored the lived experiences of children aged 4 to 6 in English state educational settings, including preschools, schools, and extended education environments (e.g., after-school programs, wraparound care, and early years settings). The research explored the power imbalances in these settings and the impact on children's agency in meeting their basic needs—such as toileting, food, safety, and comfort.

The methodolgy used was Hermeneutic Phenomenology, with the Hermenetic Circle and the Mosaic Approach as method. The Mosaic Approach holds a child-centered participatory methods (observations, conversations, and visual methods) to capture how children perceive and navigate these power structures.

The findings showcased that children in both school and extended education settings experience restricted autonomy over their basic needs. Various English policies and practices in, after-school care and early years settings mirror restrictive school policies, reinforcing a system where children feel powerless. Children consistently identify home as a safe space, while structured educational environments—where access to basic needs is controlled by adults—are perceived as restrictive. These power dynamics directly influence children's mental health, well-being, and sense of security.

The research aligns with Article 28 of the UNCRC (1989), emphasising that children must be treated with dignity and respect in all education settings, formal and informal. The findings call for a re-evaluation of policies in both school and extended education environments, advocating for greater child autonomy in meeting their basicneeds. By shifting from adult-controlled policies to child-led approaches, educational settings can better support children's holistic development and mental well-being.

29

An Introduction to the Mosaic Approach

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Abstract

This workshop introduces the Mosaic Approach, a well-established participatory method and multifaceted pedagogical framework, which integrates various activities, such as interviews, drawings, photographs, and tours, to provide a comprehensive insight into lived perspectives. Children are active agents in constructing and interpreting their experiences, ensuring their voices shape the research through collaborative meaning-making and reflexive discussions.

The Mosaic Approach is not linked to specific mainstream formal educational settings; instead can be applied in any establishment, mainstream state, private, extended, outdoor, indoor, - all environments. The design of the approach supports enhanced communication between children, young people, practitioners, and researchers and aligns with the UNCRC 1989, specifically Articles 12 and 13. The approach's design allows this method to be used with any age group, regardless of background, culture, socioeconomic status, special needs/ disability and perceived vulnerability. The mosaic approach raises opportunities for children's voices (and othered groups) to be heard, along with understanding the topic being researched. In the case of the workshop leader, -how children's mental health is influenced by their lived experiences. The workshop leader, an experienced early years practitioner and university lecturer, used the Mosaic Approach in practice and extensively in their PhD research.

Participants will explore the theoretical underpinnings of the Mosaic Approach, including an emphasis on the adaptability of the approach to various settings across the educational and health landscapes and with multiple age ranges, from early years to adolescents to senior citizens.   Additionally, participants will gain knowledge of the bespoke uniqueness of the approach, a fluid movement flowing with the preferences of children (or the selected age group). Through interactive activities, attendees will learn how to implement the tools of the Mosaic Approach. The workshop will cover strategies for active listening and responding to the messages that young children (othered groups) are shouting to practitioners. This is a hands-on and fun workshop, having a go, experiencing the tools and engaging in the journey of the Mosaic Approach.

By the end of the workshop, educators, practitioners, and researchers will have gained practical tools and insights into using the Mosaic Approach in their own contexts. Additionally, the session will provide opportunities for networking and sharing best practices among professionals dedicated to advancing education and learning.

This workshop aligns with the theme of the conference, Education, Youth Work, and the Well-being of Children and Young People, offering attendees a clear understanding of how the Mosaic Approach can support educational practice and provide information to teachers, youth workers and early years and health practitioners about children's lived experiences of influencers and impacts on their mental

health. The workshop is suitable for all educators, researchers, and practitioners, regardless of experience and academic level.

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Prevalence and Factors Associated with Bullying of Syrian Refugee Children in Canadian Schools: Parental Perspectives

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Abstract

Syrian refugee children face unique challenges when resettling in a new country, particularly within the school environment. In Canada, these children may encounter social, cultural, and linguistic barriers that increase their vulnerability to bullying. While previous research has focused on the mental health and social outcomes of refugee children, less attention has been given to the prevalence of school bullying and factors contributing to this. By addressing these challenges, extended education programs can better tailor resources and support systems to foster refugee children's integration, well-being, and academic success, promoting a holistic approach to education. The objective of this research was to assess the prevalence of bullying among Syrian refugee children in Canadian schools, as reported by their parents, and to identify the sociodemographic and migration-related factors associated with these experiences.

This cross-sectional study included Syrian refugee parents with at least one child under 18 years old, enrolled in Canadian schools, who resettled in Canada after 2015 and were living in Ontario. Participants were recruited between March 3, 2021, and March 31, 2022. A total of 303 parents were included in the study. Parents provided information about the eldest child under 18 years old. The dependent variable was: "In general, to what extent do you think your child has been bullied by their peers at school in Canada?" Responses ranged from 1 (not at all) to 5 (an extreme amount). Independent variables included sociodemographic and migration-related factors. Multiple linear regression was used to assess the relationship between these variables and the children's bullying experiences, as perceived by their parents.

Among the participants, 19% of parents reported that their children experienced some kind of bullying at school. Several factors were significantly associated with increased bullying. Parents who reported facing discrimination in their children's schools were more likely to have children who experienced bullying (β = 0.28, SE = 0.07, 95% CI: 0.15-0.41). Similarly, being Muslim (β = 0.31, SE = 0.07, 95% CI: 0.06-0.57), having parents with lower education levels (β = 0.13, SE = 0.06, 95% CI: 0.01-0.25), worse parental mental health (β = 0.13, SE = 0.07, 95% CI: 0.04-0.23), and poorer family functioning (β = 0.27, SE = 0.06, 95% CI: 0.04-0.50) were associated with higher rates of bullying. On the other hand, greater parental satisfaction with friendships (β = -0.19, SE = 0.05, 95% CI: -0.28 to -0.09) and the perception that Canadians are welcoming (β = -0.15, SE = 0.08, 95% CI: -0.30 to -0.01) were associated with a reduction in bullying.

Bullying of Syrian refugee children in Canadian schools, as reported by parents, is prevalent, with multiple factors influencing these experiences. These findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions to reduce bullying and promote supportive environments for Syrian refugee children in schools. An extended education intervention could include cultural sensitivity workshops, peer mentorship programs, and parent support networks to promote inclusion and improve family functioning.

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Education Fever and Its Aftermath: Navigating the Rise of Private Tutoring and After-School Programs in South Korea

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Abstract

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an in-depth examination of the aspects and patterns of private tutoring, or "shadow education," in South Korea, and to explore the policy implications associated with after-school programs. Our analysis is grounded in the understanding that private tutoring is primarily driven by parents' educational aspirations—commonly referred to as "education fever"—and is influenced by the interaction between the formal school curriculum and supplementary after-school programs.

To investigate this phenomenon, we utilized data from the annually conducted "Private Education Expenditures Survey of Elementary, Middle, and High School Students," published by the National Statistics Office. The findings reveal that private tutoring participation peaked in 2009, followed by a slight decline until 2015, after which it has shown an upward trend, with a particularly sharp increase observed from 2020 onward. A notable concern is the rising prevalence of private tutoring despite a declining student population. While parental educational aspirations remain a dominant factor motivating private tutoring in South Korea, additional factors have emerged. These include the desire to prepare high school students for college admissions, the practice of pre-learning for elementary school students, and, more recently, the increasing need for child care, particularly in dual-income families. This diversification in motivations suggests that the rationale for private tutoring now extends beyond mere academic supplementation. Private tutoring is often viewed critically due to its potential to exacerbate educational inequalities across socioeconomic classes. While debates persist regarding its overall effectiveness, existing research indicates that its impact on academic achievement is, at best, marginal and, at worst, potentially harmful, as it may foster passive learning behaviors. Nevertheless, private tutoring is also recognized as a valuable educational resource, offering individualized learning opportunities tailored to students' specific needs. As a result, many parents regard it as an essential means of supporting their children's educational advancement.

In South Korea, after-school programs have been implemented as a policy measure to reduce the dependence on private tutoring. However, empirical studies indicate that the availability of after-school programs and participation in private tutoring tend to rise and fall in tandem, revealing a paradoxical relationship. This interdependence can be attributed to both private tutoring and after-school programs functioning as supplementary educational opportunities in response to the rigid and inflexible nature of the regular school curriculum, which is largely shaped by parental expectations. Since the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic, after-school programs in South Korea have entered a new phase, prompting ongoing discussions about how to structure students' after-school time more effectively. This

presentation offers insights into the functional differentiation of various sectors involved in students' growth and development, including public schools, after-school programs, and the private tutoring market. By analyzing these dynamics, we aim to facilitate a discussion on optimizing educational opportunities while addressing equity concerns within the South Korean education system.

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Rethinking teacher training: Insights on extended education in Japan

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Abstract

Despite national reforms to emphasize communicative approaches, traditional classroom environments in Japan often fail to meet English language learners' needs, leading to a rise in extended educational opportunities such as private conversation schools, online platforms, and community-based initiatives. For pre-service teachers, these spaces can serve not only as potential professional engagements but also as vital environments for understanding student learning behaviour beyond formal settings.

Since 2022, as part of a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) funded research study, a series of pre-service teacher-training workshops have been held at a private university in Japan. After each workshop, the participants' oral and written feedback were obtained via reflective circles, feedback forms, and online questionnaires. In total, over 80 students have attended these workshops. Data from the participants were analysed for emerging themes using a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014; Saldaña, 2013). These initial themes were broken down into primary and secondary themes, allowing the researchers to gain a more detailed understanding of the participants' needs.

This presentation explicates a recent teacher-training workshop which focussed on helping students at Japanese junior and senior high schools and in extended learning settings. The participants suggested ways teachers could assist students in traditional and non-traditional settings. They were also asked to consider how to support neurodiverse students. The data that emerged from this study provided valuable insights into the challenges which pre-service English teachers face when they start their teaching journeys. It also highlights the problems which in-service teachers face during the initial years of their teaching careers.

This presentation outlines research findings based on qualitative analysis conducted with pre-service teachers. It argues that the participation of pre-service teachers in out-of-school extended education (e.g., as teaching assistants, mentors, or coordinators) enhances their pedagogical competence. The findings reveal three critical dimensions: (1) Bridging theory and practice: Experiencing teaching in non-formal settings helps pre-service teachers implement theoretical principles from teacher education programmes in authentic and adaptive ways. Real-world interactions allow them to contextualize pedagogical methods, fostering flexibility and responsiveness to student needs; (2) Enhancing learner-centric pedagogy: Observing students in out-of-school programmes provides insights into their

motivation, challenges, and engagement levels, often contrasting starkly with classroom behaviour. This deepened understanding equips pre-service teachers to create more inclusive and effective strategies in traditional classroom settings; (3) Building teacher identity: Direct involvement in extended education aids pre-service teachers in developing their professional identities. Leading small groups, facilitating discussions, and managing personalized learning paths provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to cultivate confidence and leadership skills.

The presentation also addresses practical implementation strategies. For universities, integrating internships or collaborative projects with out-of-school education providers can create synergistic learning opportunities. Training modules tailored to these experiences—such as guiding teachers on scaffolding communicative tasks or supporting diverse proficiency levels—can enrich their developmental pathways. The significance of this research project lies in its timely nature to meet the practical needs of pre-service teachers who must work within parameters set by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT).

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Developing a peer-mentoring network to support the well-being of future graduates

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Abstract

Extended education should extend beyond instructors guiding and supporting learners. Former students mentoring current students can be just as valuable, providing both groups with a sense of well-being and enhancing the latter groups' employability. As such, integrating alumni with the higher education community has been the subject of growing research as the demand for graduates with practical skills increases. Although there are differing perspectives on the role of peer mentoring in higher education, many benefits can be obtained from promoting deeper alumni engagement. As Rae (2007) highlighted, there is an urgent need for higher education to better connect enterprise and graduate employability.

Japan already has a rich history of extended education, making it an ideal location in which to build and investigate the efficacy of a support network between alumni members and existing learners in higher education. This qualitative study was conducted at a university in Japan with the goal of establishing the groundwork for future mentoring programs involving alumni and senior higher education learners, allowing for a smoother transition from education to careers. The research question framing the study is: What benefits can peer mentoring provide for future higher education graduates? The theoretical framework used for analysis is based on a modified version of the work conducted by Dollinger, Arkoudis, and Marangell (2019). End-of-year surveys and one-on-one interviews were conducted with two groups of participants (mentors and mentees), who were asked questions pertaining to the three key benefits of the mentor program identified in the above research: increased mentee motivation, increased mentee awareness of employability skills, and increased likelihood of future engagement by the mentors. Due to the importance placed on learning English as a second language in the Japanese education system, questions were also posed relating to the use of English after graduation. In

particular, the use of English rhetorical strategies and techniques by the mentors in their daily work life was explored. The theoretical framework for analyzing the rhetorical strategies and techniques was based on an amalgamation of Aristotle's triad of persuasion (ethos, logos, and pathos), the University of Kentucky's official glossary of rhetorical terms (n.d.), and Fairhurst's message-framing approach guidelines (2011).

The initial surveys and interviews were conducted following the first year of the program, which featured workshops run by alumni participants. Areas covered in the workshops included mental health awareness during job hunting, reflections on the initial years of work, and providing support for pre-service high school English teachers. Additional one-to-one consultations were held by alumni members for current students with similar career paths interests. Initial findings from the analyzed responses indicate a successful outcome for the first year of the program. Both groups of participants perceived the mentoring program as being able to provide practical support and well-being support for the mentees. This poster presentation will cover the latest findings from this ongoing research project and discuss their implications.

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Australian Policy, Research and Practice for Extended Education

Jennifer Cartmel[1], Kylie Brannelly[2], Rarni Rothwell[2], Sarah Murray[3], Stella Pabon[4], Nathan Chu[4], Amanda Lowe[4], Pauline Verstraeten[4]

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Abstract

This symposium combines research from 3 projects that are examining initiatives associated with outside school hours care services, a form of extended education in Australia.

Outside school hours care (OSHC) services plays a significant role in the lives of large numbers of Australian children. In the June quarter of 2021, 566,600 children attended OSHC. The number of families using Outside School Hours Care increased by 2.4% (9,770 families). Outside School Hours Care had the lowest average hourly fee at $9.20 per hour. It is not just the number of children attending that is important. The amount of time children spend in OSHC increases its significance. In the September quarter of 2024, children spent an average of 12.4 hours per week in OSHC. However, this average figure masks the reality that many children spend much more time in OSHC. In the outer suburbs of the largest cities, children can spend more time in OSHC than they do in school classrooms. Each of the papers has a key focus associated with either policy, research or practice. Even though each one of them has a key focus they are underpinned by research projects that are deepening understandings of the OSHC sector (Hybrid Presentation - Papers 2 & 3 will be presented on line, also prerecorded)

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Policy – National reforms to OSHC policies (Paper 1/3)

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Abstract

In Australia there have been significant reforms to OSHC policies over the past few years. In this way, extended education is able to be spotlighted alongside its early childhood counterparts, where investment was previously inferior. This presentation examines the three (3) most recent policy reform initiatives – curriculum, service structure and workforce. It examines how a policy reform pathway can influence both research and practice using genealogical method and analysis. The research aim of genealogical analysis is to produce a "history of the present", a history which is essential critical with its focus on locating forms of power, the channels it takes and the discourses it permeates. This process helps to understand how the reforms have emerged and been prioritised or trapped. It examines what is taken for granted and gives attention to the range of perspectives that shape the production of policy reforms.

Reform 1: Curriculum reform - The *My Time Our Place Framework 2.0* provides an example of a comprehensive guideline for supporting school-aged children's wellbeing, learning and development (Australian Government Department of Education, [AGDE] (2022). This framework emphasises principles aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensuring that children have the right to relaxation, play, cultural engagement, and active participation in decision-making. In practical terms, this means creating environments and facilities conducive to play, leisure, and learning, while ensuring staff are equipped to support children's wellbeing and development effectively.

Reform 2: Service structure - The Australian Government undertook pivotal research across the sector through both the Productivity Commission and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. These 'inquiries' included surveys; submissions; sector analysis and consultation with children. The outcomes resulted in recommendations which will shape the future of all aspects of the OSHC sector including funding models.

 Reform 3: Workforce - In August 2024, the Australian Government announced a funded wage increase for the OSHC sector. This recognized that educators were currently underpaid for the level of work and responsible required of their roles. This is currently being rolled out within OSHC organisations and services.

This presentation will extend the record of the reforms beyond the technical details and the connections between them. It will focus on how the researchers attempted to include 'thinking otherwise' to provide unique and valuable insights to theorise about the heart of the power relations involved with the reforms. The use of the genealogy is an interpretative methodology suggests that researchers can consider how they are produced within the conditions of the outside school hours sector and illuminate the conditions within which reforms can be understood from multiple perspectives.

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Research - Educator capability to recognise and respond to children's mental health difficulties (Paper 2/3)

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Abstract

This presentation outlines the culmination of a doctoral project aiming to understand educators in extended education settings capability when it comes to supporting child mental health. Enrolments in extended education in Australia is growing as parental workforce participation increases and government policies subsidise childcare costs. In conjunction with this, child mental health problems are also increasing, not only in Australia but globally. While other educator populations have been subject to and benefitted from significant research, the extended educators in Australia have not, particularly in relation to their capability to recognize and respond to children's mental health difficulties. This research project was informed by middle childhood development theory which serves as a guide for educators to understand the unique needs of middle childhood and identify when problems might be surfacing. In light of the gaps in the existing literature, this program of research aimed to: 1) Understand what, if any, interventions have been implemented in extended education settings worldwide with the aim of improving educators' knowledge of and capability to support child mental health. 2) Determine Australian OSHC educators' knowledge of mental health and wellbeing in middle childhood through a qualitative study. 3) Consolidate the findings from the second study and determine educators' preferences for intervention/training targets. Mixed methodologies were used to answer these research questions. First, a systematic literature review was undertaken to investigate the literature. Second, a qualitative vignette survey study was employed to gather educator responses which were processed through inductive and deductive content analyses. Third, a quantitative survey study was employed using validated scales to measure self-efficacy and mental health literacy, along with study designed capability measurement. The first research study identified only 7 interventions had been developed previously, one of them Australian. The second study highlighted educator ability to recognize when children were struggling with their mental health, but this was offset by low mental health recognition and capability to offer supportive strategies. The final study validated the findings of study 2 and found that mental health literacy is a significant predictor of educator capability to recognize and respond to child mental health difficulties. Educator requests for training and support are still being analysed but indicate high levels of endorsement for mental health, behaviour support, and communication strategies.

Discussion: This program of research provides baseline knowledge for the Australian OSHC sector in relation to supporting child mental health. Considering very few empirically validated training and interventions have been developed for this specific cohort of educators, increasing mental health literacy should be a focus.

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Practice – Children's criteria for educators (Paper 3/3)

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Abstract

Children are significant stakeholders in the extended education setting. Their opinions and input in determining the desirable qualities of educators can be invaluable yet are rarely considered. This presentation discusses an action research project where the aim was to understand what the desirable qualities of OSHC educators as seen through the eyes of children. The project began with a review of literature about workforce qualities. The project then co-designed the research process to illuminate the qualities of educators that children thought were important. Data collected included children's drawings. A thematic analysis was conducted to provide an understanding of desirable OSHC educator qualities from multiple perspectives. The analysis combines deductive coding, based on themes from existing literature, with inductive coding to capture new, emerging insights from children and their caretakers. Preliminary observations from the children's drawings suggest that younger children place more emphasis on tangible and surface-level actions of educators, such as being helpful, rather than qualities related to deeper relational dynamics, which are more prominent within the older age groups. Vocabulary limitations has shown to be a challenge in this research as children often struggle to use a variety of more complex terms. To address this, strategies such as providing children with a list of appropriate synonyms and definitions were used to help uncover the deeper meaning behind their descriptions of educator qualities. The findings from the project will help the OSHC service to recruit and retain educators.

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Perceptions of the Concept of Learning in Extended Education: A Conundrum

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Abstract

Services for children operating outside regular school hours are known by various names, depending on the focus of the service. Internationally, terms like *Out of School Time*, *Extended Education*, *Outside School Hours Care*, *Educare*, *Free Time Centres*, and *Leisure Time Centres* are commonly used. These terms highlight the variety of approaches but also raise critical questions about the underlying purpose and responsibility of these services. Are they designed to complement the academic goals of schools, reinforcing skills during out-of-school hours? Or do they offer distinct programs aimed at promoting children's well-being and life skills beyond the traditional curriculum? At the heart of this debate is a central question: What does "learning" truly mean within Extended Education? This ambiguity and the tensions it creates can be described as a conundrum—difficult to define yet crucial to understanding the evolving role of these services in children's lives.

This paper explores the concept of learning in extended education services through a scoping review of literature and a systematic search of peer-reviewed and grey literature. The scoping review, together with the systematic search, was instrumental in mapping existing links to the concept of learning and identifying gaps in the research. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the field and highlighted areas requiring further exploration. The review was guided by the overarching question, along with several sub-questions: 1) How is learning defined in Extended Education? 2) How has research been conducted on the topic of learning in these services? 3) What research has been conducted with children regarding their perceptions of learning in afterschool services? This literature review examined the breadth and depth of research on the concept of learning as it relates to the delivery of services for primary school-age children outside of formal school hours. This may be a hybrid online session.

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From a learning community to the leisure field: Enhancing professionalism through students´ experience

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Abstract

Leisure studies is a relatively young discipline at the University of Iceland, educating professionals in a broad field of leisure, such as youth work, extended education, after school activities and leisure organizations. Most students entering the post-graduate leisure studies program (M.Ed) conduct their studies alongside demanding jobs in the field, resulting in a strive during the final step, the 30 credits (ECTS) master thesis or final project. A grant from the University of Iceland Teaching Development Fund in 2022, made the Leisure studies program possible to focus on developing a project to support those students and their supervisors. Building on the theoretical framework of learning communities and experiencial learning, the project is based on forming a collaborative learning community where the experience and resources of students and teachers are mobilized, aiming at increasing quality of their thesis or projects and enhancing students possibilities of graduation, benefitting the field in growing numbers of well educated professionals. The preface of the project started in fall 2022 and students entered the learning community through scheduled workshops, starting in January 2023. The project phase is drawing towards the end in spring 2025.

This presentation focuses on the students' experience in the project. How do participating students experience the learning community and how, if at all, do they benefit from participation as professionals in the field of extended education? A thematic analysis was conducted on data collected through focus group interviews and regular reflection and feedback from participating master´s students. Findings suggest that students benefit academically, professionally, and socially from participating in a learning community throughout the thesis process. Students describe multiple ways of support from both fellow students and the faculty team, boosting self-esteem and empowerment, not only as succeeding students but also as professionals in various settings. Results are in line with previous research at the School of Education at the University of Iceland on the importance of learning communities for academic growth and empowering processes of developing as professionals through dialogue, peer network and support and inner motivation.

Quality of education is not only established through writing a quality thesis. It also draws from the informal and non-formal learning opportunities through collaboration and connectedness in the academic field, enhancing professionalism through more joyful path in the formation of knowledge, skills and development of a young profession of leisure professionals.

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Maximizing Student Learning through Customized Instruction: A New Conceptual Four-Quadrant Model

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Abstract

This paper introduces the Environmental Learning Model (ELM), a conceptual framework designed to support practitioners by balancing learning environments and instructional processes. The ELM highlights the importance of integrating outdoor learning across all areas of education, ensuring that natural settings are not viewed as supplementary but as essential components of a well-rounded curriculum.

The model is structured around two intersecting axes: 1) Learning Environments – ranging from natural outdoor spaces to traditional classrooms and digital platforms, with an emphasis on seamlessly integrating outdoor experiences into all subjects rather than limiting them to specific disciplines such as science or physical education.2) Instructional Processes – spanning content-centered approaches (structured, teacher-led instruction) to learner-centered, process-driven methods (exploratory, experiential learning), ensuring that outdoor learning is not confined to free play but strategically incorporated into structured pedagogy.

The ELM challenges the traditional division between indoor and outdoor learning spaces by placing outdoor learning within the entire educational framework. The model provides a pedagogical and philosophical foundation for embedding experiential, place-based learning into all subjects, promoting deep engagement, interdisciplinary connections, and holistic development. Analysed through the lens of learning theory, ecological psychology, and curriculum design, the model explores how the inclusion of natural environments enhances cognitive flexibility, creativity, well-being, and problem-solving skills. There is an indication that educators who apply the ELM can develop authentic, context-rich learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom, enhancing student agency, resilience, and academic achievement. The model aims to highlight the critical role of outdoor learning in shaping adaptable, future-ready learners. By positioning the model as an integral element across all disciplines, the ELM offers a scalable framework for inclusive, evidence-based education and the advancement of innovative and transformative learning approaches.

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From Stumbling Blocks to Building Blocks: A History of Afterschool in New York City

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to document the strategies used, challenges encountered, and lessons learned in creating the largest municipal afterschool system in the United States.

It consists of a *s*ystematic review of official government documents, policy papers, newspaper accounts, and related artifacts over a 50-year period (1970-2022); review of key journal articles about youth development and afterschool programs and systems, including relevant histories of afterschool; structured interviews with 30 key informants (municipal and non-profit organization leaders, researchers, union officials, educators, and youth workers involved across the five decades). By all accounts, New York City has the largest citywide afterschool system in the United States. In the city's fiscal year 2024 adopted budget, this system received city funding of $420 million, which underwrote 900 afterschool programs serving about 104,000 students in school- and community-based settings. In addition, New York City public funding that same year supported 90 Beacons (school-based youth service centers) and 100 Cornerstone programs located in public housing sites. While access to afterschool programs is not yet universal in New York City, this research documents the increases in public expenditures for such programs over five decades. It also describes the development of a public-private partnership that relies on not-for-profit community-based organizations for out-of-school-time services that are delivered primarily through contracts with the city's Department of Youth and Community Development, supplemented by private foundation dollars. In addition to providing annual grant funding, the system supports capacity-building, research, evaluation, and innovation. The work of constructing this system required the planners and advocates to address five major stumbling blocks: (1) Shifting the paradigm about young people; (2) Opening the schools during the non-school hours; (3) Translating theory into practice; (4) Securing stable, adequate funding; and (5) Building a comprehensive citywide system. A particular challenge unique to New York City and documented in detail in the study's final report was the 20-year struggle (1975-95) between youth advocates and the school custodians' union, which controlled access to the city's public schools after 3 PM.

Conclusion: The 2025 Stumbling Blocks study drew several conclusions that, despite its local focus, offer important lessons for colleagues nationally and internationally. The first is that vulnerability is built into the entire system because it is not a mandated service (one that the city *must* provide). This vulnerability requires constant vigilance on the part of youth advocates, parents, and young people themselves. Their advocacy must be relentless, multi-faceted, courageous, and bold. Second, strong leadership—both internal and external—is essential to building a comprehensive OST system. Third, New York City's system has created significant employment pathways, particularly for people of color, and has contributed substantially to the city's pool of human capital. Another lesson: investments in research and evaluation offer dual value by providing the basis for continuous improvement and sustainability. Finally, equity lies at the heart of out-of-school-time systems building. New York City took

several concrete steps over the decades to ensure that program funds were directed toward the city's highest-need neighborhoods.

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After-School Arts Programs in Korea: Goals, Types, Achievements, and Challenges

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Abstract

Over the past three decades, after-school programs have been a pivotal component of national education reform in Korea. Instituted as part of the May 31 Education Reform in 1995, these initiatives were designed to transition the rigid, supplier-centered public education system toward a more flexible, demand-driven, and student-centered paradigm. These programs have played a crucial role in integrating external expertise and community resources into the educational landscape, thereby addressing a broad spectrum of learner needs that extend beyond the conventional public school framework. Additionally, after-school programs have significantly contributed to counterbalancing the pervasive influence of private tutoring by providing cost-effective, school-based alternatives that promote greater equity in educational opportunities, particularly for students in socioeconomically disadvantaged regions and low-income households.

Korea's after-school programs can be categorized into three distinct typologies. First, school-based edu-care programs are structured to deliver high-quality childcare while simultaneously addressing socio-cultural challenges, including declining birth rates and barriers to women's labor market participation. Second, after-school enrichment programs offer a diverse array of specialized, individualized learning opportunities aligned with students' individual interests and vocational aspirations, encompassing programs such as visual and performing arts, ceramics, woodworking, athletics, and STEM education. Lastly, supplementary learning programs are designed to provide targeted academic support for students requiring remedial instruction or those seeking advanced preparation in the highly competitive landscape of college entrance examinations. Collectively, these programs serve to reinforce public education, alleviate household expenditures on private tutoring, and enhance educational equity, particularly among marginalized student populations.

This study specifically examines after-school enrichment programs, with an emphasis on arts education. Given its frequent marginalization within Korea's assessment-driven educational milieu, arts education exemplifies the transformative potential of after-school programming by leveraging external educational resources, fostering partnerships between schools and community institutions, and most importantly broadening access to creative learning experiences for students, particularly from low income students. This presentation elucidates the objectives, instructional methodologies, student participation patterns,

key players, and outcomes of arts enrichment programs. Additionally, it presents cases that illustrate best practices in fostering collaborations among schools and between schools and the community.

Finally, this presentation introduces the Korea Afterschool Study Association, an academic body committed to advancing empirical research and facilitating scholarly discourse in the domain of extended education.

This presentatin aims to provide insights for international academics and policymakers aiming to develop and refine extended education frameworks in diverse educational contexts worldwide.

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Extended Education in Korea: The Development and Impact of After-School Programs, Private Tutoring, and All-Day Educare

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Abstract

Korean parents' intense commitment to their children's education, widely known as "education fever," is internationally recognized, particularly through the widespread participation in after-school programs, which are voluntary and fall outside the regular curriculum. Another notable aspect of this commitment is the expansion of all-day childcare programs for elementary students, which has become a key policy priority. These programs aim to enhance early childhood education while supporting work-family balance for dual-income households. Korean parents' education fervor is driven by two factors. First, parents seek personalized educational opportunities that the standardized national curriculum often fails to provide, typically through after-school enrichment programs. Second, to maintain academic competitiveness, parents increasingly invest in private tutoring, or "shadow education," which focuses on core academic subjects. As a result, after-school programs have gained significant popularity, with nearly half of Korean students participating in at least one. The South Korean government has prioritized these programs, allocating substantial financial resources for their development. In addition, the growing reliance on private tutoring raises concerns about its impact on public education and its role in exacerbating the learning gap between socio-economic groups. Consequently, reducing the financial burden of private tutoring has become a central policy objective.

This symposium seeks to share research insights, best practices, and policies regarding the current state of after-school programs, private tutoring, and the expanding all-day educare initiative in South Korea.

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Children's Perspectives on Play in Extended Education.

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Abstract

In Norway, children start school at age six. First and second graders receive 12 hours of free Extended Education (EE) weekly, resulting in a 92% participation rate (regjeringen.no, 2023). EE programs are usually co-located with schools, sharing classrooms and facilities, with some EE staff also working in schools during the day. While Norwegian schools are goal-oriented, EE resembles Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) with a process-oriented approach that highly values free play. The Rammeplan for SFO (Framework Plan for SFO) posits that play is central to children's development in Extended Education. It outlines the necessity of providing children with time and space for self-chosen play, fostering creativity, exploration, and social competencies. This conveys the idea that play is important and has intrinsic value. The framework emphasizes the importance of an inclusive environment where all children, including those with special needs, can actively engage in play. Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) concept of flow further reinforces the significance of play in children's development. Flow refers to the deep engagement and enjoyment individuals experience when fully immersed in an activity. By engaging children in meaningful and enjoyable activities, EE fosters creativity, problem-solving abilities, and social skills, all of which contribute to holistic development. Since play is central, gaining insight into children's views on play within the context of EE is important. The research question guiding this study is: How do children perceive and describe their experiences of play in Extended Education (EE)? This question is pivotal as it seeks to explore children's lived experiences, providing valuable insights into how play can be structured and utilized to enhance learning and well-being in EE contexts. This research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews with children attending EE. The data collection occurred during the first month of their participation in EE, providing a snapshot of their initial experiences. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, anonymized, and analyzed through thematic document analysis. This method allows for flexibility in exploring children's perceptions while maintaining consistency in how questions are posed. Analysis was conducted with the support of copilot software to ensure quality control and rigorous interpretation. Preliminary findings suggest that children place significant value on the freedom of choice during play, highlighting its role in forming peer relationships and fostering a sense of autonomy.

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Heterogeneity in Professional Training in Swiss Extended Education: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

In Switzerland, 36% of school-age children attend Extended Education (EE), a figure expected to grow in the future. However, due to the federal organization of the Swiss education system, there are no national regulations for SET beyond a "needs-based" provision mandate. Consequently, no standardized requirements exist regarding staff quality or qualifications. This has led to SET employing personnel with highly diverse backgrounds. A study in three Swiss cantons found that only half of SET staff held qualifications in fields like child and youth care, social pedagogy, or teaching. This diversity reflects the historical roots of these programs, which often began as parent-led initiatives responding to changing societal and workplace demands.

These challenges in staff professionalization are not unique to Switzerland. Internationally, EE faces similar issues, including the absence of clear curricula, varying levels of staff qualification, and the lack of an agreed-upon knowledge and skills framework for professional practice (Lilla et al., 2024). This results in inconsistent quality across programs and hinders the capacity of staff to fully support children's development. Research has shown that staff qualifications and training are critical to determining SET quality. Training and professional development for EE staff in Switzerland are characterized by fragmented and heterogeneous offerings. Various institutions, ranging from teacher training colleges to vocational schools and associations, provide training in an uncoordinated manner with differing content, scope, and outcomes. This study systematically investigated these diverse training and further education programs to address the lack of standardization and better understand the landscape. The main research questions were: Which institutions offer training and further education for staff in EE? What is the content and didactics of those offerings? And what are the quality indicators for these offerings?

The research employed document analysis to map training and professional development programs for EE staff. Using predefined search terms, relevant materials were collected, ensuring comprehensive coverage. MAXQDA software facilitated qualitative content analysis, following an inductive approach that allowed categories to emerge directly from the data. This methodology enabled a nuanced understanding of the heterogeneity within training offerings and addressed the absence of standardized structures and content across programs.

The findings show significant variation in the structure, content, and delivery of training programs for EE staff. A wide array of providers—including teacher training colleges, vocational schools, and associations—contribute to this diversity, resulting in fragmented responsibilities and objectives. The absence of standardized benchmarks emerged as a key issue, posing challenges to ensuring consistent quality and alignment with professional needs in extended education. By identifying these disparities,

and further examine the data the analysis will provide critical insights into current practices and highlight opportunities to harmonize approaches, enhance quality, and improve coherence in professional development offerings for EE staff.

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Play, Self-reflection, Learn: Gamification and Metacognitive Strategies in Higher Education

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Abstract

Higher education faces a persistent challenge in engaging first-year students, where a lack of prior experience hinders comprehension, motivation, and overall well-being. This study explores how gamification and metacognitive strategies can foster not only academic engagement but also personal development and emotional resilience in young learners. Implemented in the Fundamentals of Business Management course at the Universitat Politècnica de València for first-year engineering students, this pedagogical approach aims to create an interactive and supportive learning environment that enhances both cognitive and socio-emotional growth.

Rooted in active learning principles, constructivist theory, and self-regulated learning, this initiative integrates gamification through the business simulation game *Sim Companies*, providing students with a contextualized, immersive learning experience. Simultaneously, real-time interactive questioning using *Ahaslides* supports students in reflecting on their learning processes, identifying gaps, and developing autonomy in their educational journey. These methodologies extend learning beyond traditional classroom boundaries, fostering self-directed exploration and practical application of knowledge in real-world scenarios.

A mixed-methods approach was employed to assess the effectiveness of this innovation, incorporating pre- and post-intervention surveys, classroom observations, and focus groups. The study measured motivation, engagement, and perceived well-being, highlighting the role of gamification and metacognition in reducing academic stress and enhancing student confidence. Findings indicate a significant increase in motivation and participation, as well as improved teamwork, decision-making skills, and self-awareness in learning. Moreover, the real-time feedback mechanisms facilitated by interactive questioning tools created an adaptive and responsive educational environment, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and self-reflection.

By aligning with the principles of Extended Learning, this study demonstrates how gamification and metacognitive strategies empower students to take ownership of their learning beyond the classroom, supporting their transition into higher education and future professional environments. This approach fosters continuous learning by encouraging students to apply acquired knowledge and skills in new contexts, both within and outside academic settings. The integration of technology-driven

methodologies facilitates flexible, student-centered learning experiences that accommodate diverse learning paces and styles. Furthermore, these strategies contribute to youth development by enhancing key life skills such as resilience, critical thinking, and self-regulation—essential competencies for both academic success and long-term personal growth. The ability to engage in reflective and autonomous learning prepares students not only for their academic journey but also for professional and societal challenges.

The findings suggest that integrating these approaches not only enhances motivation and engagement but also promotes long-term knowledge retention and personal development. Future research will explore the scalability of this model across diverse disciplines and its long-term impact on student well-being and preparedness for lifelong learning. By embracing technology-driven pedagogies, higher education institutions can create more inclusive and effective learning ecosystems that nurture both academic success and holistic student development, bridging the gap between formal education and lifelong skills acquisition.

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Learning Sustainability or Sustaining Inequality? The interplay of informal learning, social inequality, and sustainability across the life course

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Abstract

Sustainability is one of the defining global challenges of our time, requiring not only technological and political transformations but also profound shifts in knowledge, values, and practices. Informal learning (IL) is discussed as a fundamental process shaping individuals' capacity to engage with sustainability challenges. It is considered to have the potential to foster critical reflection, knowledge, and agency through grassroots movements or activist networks. As self-directed learning processes IL is guided by subjective relevance rather than external regulation, making it not directly responsive to normative interventions. However, it is highlighted as opportunity for individuals to engage with subjectively meaningful sustainability issues. The key question that arises is: When and under what conditions do sustainability issues become meaningful for self-directed learning? This paper aims to focus on this question by exploring the interplay between IL, opportunities and sustainability-related knowledge, attitudes, and practices across the life span. Special attention is given to the role of extended education as spaces that facilitate IL beyond formal institutions, providing key opportunities for engagement while also reflecting broader social and structural inequalities. By analysing how sustainability learning unfolds in different life phases, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which IL is both enabled and constrained by educational structures. Despite a broad societal consensus on the importance of sustainability, fault lines emerge in how sustainability-related commitments translate into concrete action. Differences arise in which measures are supported, who is held responsible, and how sustainability-related values are enacted in practice. Examining IL potentially provides a lens to understand how these divisions develop and become entrenched over time.

Moreover, IL serves both as a driver of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and as a reinforcer of inequalities, since not all individuals have equal access to these opportunity structures or perceive them as meaningful. These inequalities are rooted in early childhood and continue to accumulate over the life. This dual nature underscores the need to critically examine how IL fosters inclusion and exclusion in sustainability-related engagement. This paper combines theoretical reflection with initial empirical insights. It synthesises studies on learning through activism in Fridays for Future highlighting IL during youth and their intersections with educational institutions with research on adults' informal engagement with sustainability from an inequality perspective. This approach aims to draw a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability learning across different life phases. Building on existing research, this work seeks to provide a more comprehensive perspective on IL in context of sustainability from early childhood to adulthood, with a specific focus on the mechanisms of inequality. To advance ESD from a life-course perspective, it seems crucial to develop a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between IL, opportunity structures, and inequalities. Doing so prevents an overestimation of education's transformative potential while acknowledging the structural conditions that shape access to sustainability learning.

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The UK Story - Critical reflections on international collaboration and friendship

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Abstract

The aim of this symposium is to share the results of a beautiful collaboration and friendship – both a professional academic one, as well as a personal one – and how this university teaching has impacted *extended education* in Iceland and the UK.The symposium tells a wonderful story about how a way of teaching *A Pedagogy of Place – Place based outdoor education* – became an experiential summer course at the University of Iceland that evolved into an international collaboration between two academics, two universities, two counties and has impacted many educators in Iceland and from the UK, as well as the two of us! In this symposium, we hear the stories of ex-students and their practice in "extended education" viewed through the theoretical geographical lens of *place-based* education. This is an opportunity to hear our stories, and those of participants, and to find resonance with your own practice through a discussion about the "what, why, how, and when" of collaboration.

The background

Dr Leather presented his action research (Leather & Nicholls, 2016) at conference. Dr Thorsteinsson was in the audience and the presentation about theory, pedagogy, and practice in the UK resonated. A friendship formed and eventually in 2017, this was consolidated with a visit to Reykjavik. This was the planning for a new summer course *Place based outdoor education.* Led by Dr Thorsteinsson and started in 2018, it included a memorable visit to The President's Residence arriving by water in sailing boats. The

course has been running ever since. The teaching, thinking, and a, has continued to evolve, and improve, and the friendship has grown stronger.

The value and power of útimenntun resides in the richness – the breadth and depth – of time spent with humans on fieldwork – forming relationships with each other as well as the 'more-than-human' world (Abram, 2012). This contributes to *extended education* because of how our experiential fieldwork (grounded in experiential learning theory), as our signature pedagogy, brings more than the traditional subject taught solely in the classroom.

The development of útimenntun in Iceland has been fundamentally influenced by Dr Thorsteinsson. He is the leading Icelandic academic and practitioner of útimenntun. Útimenntun is a synthesis, a crossover and hybrid of both subject and process. Additionally, we argue that útimenntun is more than the sum of both of those. In our teaching, there are spaces for informal, unplanned, teachable moments that we argue are a feature of extended education – covering issues of politics, power, policy, social justice, personal identity, culture, and so much more.

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Empowering Students Through AI-Enhanced Academic Advising: Supporting Youth Development and Personalized Learning Pathways

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Abstract

Academic advising plays a critical role in supporting students' academic success and personal development. However, traditional advising models often face challenges related to accessibility, consistency, and scalability, limiting their ability to provide personalized support. This study presents EDUC8EU, an AI-driven academic advising system designed to enhance student well-being, engagement, and informed decision-making.

By integrating career alignment theories, personality-based reasoning, and self-exploration principles, EDUC8EU provides students with personalized recommendations that align with their interests, strengths, and career aspirations. The system dynamically adapts to evolving student needs, offering tailored support that fosters self-efficacy, motivation, and long-term academic success.

This research explores how AI-driven academic advising contributes to youth development, addressing key research questions: 1) How does personalized advising impact students' academic confidence and decision-making? 2) What role does AI-driven guidance play in reducing stress and uncertainty in academic planning? 3) How can digital academic support systems promote inclusion and equity in education?

The study includes an empirical evaluation involving students and academic advisors from multiple institutions. Findings indicate that students using EDUC8EU experience greater clarity in academic

choices, improved motivation, and reduced anxiety about decision-making. Additionally, academic advisors benefit from streamlined advising processes, allowing for more meaningful student engagement.

To assess EDUC8EU's impact on lifelong learning and self-directed educational pathways, a case study was conducted between 2022 and 2024 at the University of Thessaly, a member of the INVEST European University alliance, in Greece. The study involved 127 adult learners enrolled in lifelong learning programs focused on professional development, upskilling, and reskilling. Participants used EDUC8EU to create personalized learning pathways tailored to their evolving career goals and skill development needs. The alignment between participants' initial preferences and EDUC8EU's recommendations was evaluated based on survey responses. Results showed that 73.8% of learners found the system's recommendations aligned with their initial learning intentions, while 14.2% reconsidered their approach after using EDUC8EU. Another key finding was the extent to which the system boosted learners' confidence in managing their educational journeys—78.5% reported increased confidence in planning their future learning paths, and 69.1% indicated a stronger alignment between their learning goals and long-term career aspirations. Participants also reported reduced anxiety regarding professional transitions and emphasized the value of AI-driven guidance in navigating complex educational landscapes. By positioning AI-powered advising as a supportive tool for student success and well-being, this research contributes to the discourse on Extended Education and Youth Development, showcasing how AI-driven academic advising can empower students, enhance lifelong learning, and foster holistic personal growth.

This research work has been conducted under the INVEST European University alliance in the context of the European University Initiative.

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Educators' Adoption of Generative AI: Enhancing Student Learning, Engagement, and Well-being in Higher Education

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Abstract

The rapid integration of Generative AI tools in education presents new opportunities and challenges for educators. While AI-powered platforms such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Bing AI are increasingly used for course planning, assessment, and student guidance, their impact on student learning, well-being, and engagement remains underexplored. This study examines how educators perceive and integrate Generative AI in academic settings, focusing on its role in Extended Education and Youth Development. Through a survey and qualitative analysis of faculty members across a European university alliance, this research investigates: 1) How do educators perceive AI's role in student learning and academic support? 2) What are the benefits and challenges of AI integration for student well-being and engagement? 3) How can institutions develop responsible policies and training to support AI adoption in education? Findings reveal that a significant percentage of educators use Generative AI to enhance learning accessibility, provide personalized feedback, and streamline administrative tasks. Many acknowledge its

potential to reduce workload stress and improve student engagement, yet concerns persist regarding data privacy, academic integrity, and AI-generated misinformation. To provide a data-driven understanding of these trends, this study surveyed 139 faculty members from multiple institutions within the INVEST European University alliance during the second half of 2024, capturing AI adoption across diverse educational contexts, including both higher education and lifelong learning programs. Results show that 68% of respondents have integrated AI tools into their teaching practices, with 72% recognizing their positive impact on student engagement and 61% acknowledging reduced workload stress. However, 47% expressed concerns over AI's influence on academic integrity, while 54% emphasized the need for institutional policies and faculty training to ensure responsible AI adoption. Qualitative insights further highlight the dual nature of AI in education - while many educators view AI as a tool for enhancing learning accessibility and fostering self-directed learning, others caution against its potential to undermine critical thinking, mentorship, and students' ability to make informed academic and career decisions. By highlighting educators' perspectives, this study provides valuable insights into the responsible and ethical integration of AI in higher education. It contributes to discussions on Extended Education and Youth Well-being, emphasizing the importance of AI as a supportive tool for personalized learning, academic equity, and student empowerment. This research work has been conducted under the INVEST European University alliance in the context of the European University Initiative.

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The Icelandic story. Extended Education as a part of university degree: Challenges in Designing a new degree in the field of Outdoor Studies

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Abstract

Since the first curriculum for Leisure Studies was created in 2000, outdoor activities have been essential in the program. This component has evolved and is reflected in the offerings of mandatory and elective courses in undergraduate and graduate studies, with an emphasis on utilizing field trips to support positive group development throughout the program. Various terms have been used to explore this aspect of education, such as outdoor recreation, outdoor education, travel, friluftsliv, field trips, and place-based outdoor education. This component of the curriculum has been viewed both as a method and a subject, and efforts have been made to integrate this experiential and reflective aspect as one of the common threads throughout the program.

The collaboration in developing this new course (Place-based outdoor education) and researching our practices laid the foundation for the program development in outdoor studies. In recent years, we have seen significant interest from some colleagues in the university community, former students from place-based courses and our partners. A draft of a new study is now in place within the School of Education, aiming at professionals working in education and tourism to work effectively "under the open sky" with a purpose. The arguments for the need to offer this type of study include people's changing relationship with nature, people's reduced outdoor activities, the need for a slow pedagogy and reflective emphasis on learning, and the value of an interdisciplinary approach when working with the relationship between

people and nature. In developing such a program, we had to confront various challenges. 1) Is it possible to teach outdoor education within the School of Education if it is not a subject in preschool, primary, or secondary school? 2) Is it sufficient to define outdoor education as a field of study in order to create a pathway for learning in the School of Education? 3) Would it perhaps be more sensible to have the emphasis on friluftsliv (outdoor recreation) as a distinction instead of outdoor education? 4) How can we approach teaching in the university culture, where the traditional methods are indoors, with lectures and seminars? And as always when developing something "new", 5) How do we bring our colleagues with us on this journey and create interest in students to attend the program? These questions will be discussed in the presentation. Most of the questions share a common theme that is related to *how extended education is utilized in university studies.* We will also introduce the status of a proposed new program (currently under construction) called: Under the Open Sky: International Outdoor Practice and Leadership.

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Participant Stories

Ása Helga Proppé Ragnarsdóttir[1], Jakob F. Thorsteinsson[1], Mark Leather[2]

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Abstract

Participant Stories

Hosted by Ása Helga Proppé Ragnarsdóttir

How has útimenntun influenced the participants and collaborators? Since the first iteration of the summer course, there have been over 150 students participating. Some of these experiences have been discussed elsewhere (see Thorsteinsson et al, 2024). In this symposium we hear the voices of participants – both students and other educators – to understand a more detailed story of the extended educational impact and influence on their own professional practice, after the passing of time. We are interested in presenting the meaning that these experiences have for the participants now. We cover how the participants have reframed their own practices and engaged with matters of social and environmental justice, in their specific contexts.

The symposium allows time (approximately 30 minutes) for a discussion (question and answer session) between the participants of the summer course, the educators involved, and the audience present in the room. It is hoped that new ideas and understanding will result from this dialogue. Ref: Thorsteinsson, J., Leather, M., Nicholls, F. & Jóhannesson, G. (2024). Exploring a pedagogy of place in Iceland: Students understanding of a sense of place and emerging meanings. Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42322-023-00150-4

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Previous school experience and expectations to education

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore how people's previous experience in the education system shapes their expectations to their studies when they re-enter school.

The research consists of 22 biographical interviews with people who were admitted to upper secondary school following a period of unemployment. This specific program was run as a collaboration between the government in Iceland and labour market partners. The focus in the interviews was on the participants' experience of upper secondary school and individual school-stories.

Biographical theoretical framework is used to explore how people's experience of education structure people 's sense of identity and self-confidence to re-enter upper secondary school. Preliminary results show that this experience had a crucial effect on whether they dare to try again, even though they long for it and are prepared to it otherwise. When they are finally at school, they do not seek any help within the schools' support system.

The originality of the study rests in that it gives insight into the school narratives of a group that has not been studied before in Iceland. The participants give a clear idea of how their previous school experience affects their prospects for education. Their experience is often combined with their social and economic class or learning disabilities. Thus, it has important implications for educational policies and shows the importance of extended learning within the school system.

Iceland provides a particularly interesting setting to study people´s re-entry to school. On the one hand Iceland has a high rate of dropout from secondary school. On the other hand, the Icelandic education system is very open and avenues to return to education are numerous, a fact that may explain high dropout rate to some extent. The Nordic education system is rooted in a social democratic welfare society giving equal access to comparable education from pre-school and onward. How is it that some people are afraid of re-entering school when they are ready for it, long for it and have the opportunity to do it?

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Building Inclusive Practices to Support Children and Young People's Wellbeing in Australian Outside School Hours Care

Emily McKenna, Rarni Rothwell

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Abstract

The Australian approved learning framework for school age care *My Time, Our Place* is underpinned by the principle of equity, inclusion and high expectations to ensure all children and young people's right to participate in inclusive education and care. It requires educators to commit to creating inclusive learning environments and adopting flexible and informed practices; including making reasonable adjustments to optimise access, participation and engagement in the learning program (AGDE, 2022). Educators also draw on the additional principles of critical reflection and collaborative leadership and teamwork, requiring "attention to shared practice built on a sense of shared responsibility and professional accountability for children and young people's wellbeing, learning and development" (AGDE, 2022:19). Despite this, a growing number of educators struggle to support the complex behaviour challenges of children in OSHC, compromising the wellbeing of children and educators alike. Exclusion rates continue to over represent already disadvantaged children and young people (QAI, 2023; Graham et al. 2021).

In response to this, the NOSHSA Inclusive Practices Project was funded by the Australian Government to build the capacity of the OSHC sector through drawing on more contemporary understandings of behaviour across three key areas:

- Complex behaviour support
- Neurodivergent affirming practice
- Trauma informed practice

It sought to build the skills and knowledge of educators by up skilling educational leaders and equipping them with a suite of resources, including a Delivery Guide with three Training Addendum, Educator Workbooks and Recorded Webinars, that they could use with their teams to re-evaluate their practice.

This workshop will briefly introduce the project, the contemporary understandings that underpin it and its resources, before it allows participants the opportunity to undertake some of the guided activities necessary for the important paradigm shift.

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Examining Practitioner Action Research in Australian OSHC

Rarni Rothwell[1], Kylie Brannelly[2], Emily McKenna[1]

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Abstract

Action Research has long been recognised as a useful methodological approach in early childhood education and care (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2008), simultaneously investigating and solving an issue in the pursuit of continuous improvement. The Australian Framework for School Age Care (My Time, Our Place V2.0) and the National Quality Standards, describes the cycle of planning that educators follow in recording, responding to and supporting children and young people's experiences in school age care settings (ADGE, 2022).

When used as a mechanism to actualise the planning cycle, Action Research allows Educators to take an inquiry-based approach to inform their thinking about children and young people's experiences. It supports ongoing reflection on practice that facilitates the development and implementation of a curriculum that is inclusive of all children and young people.

In 2013 the National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA) was funded to offer services the opportunity to engage in action research as a means of professional development grounded in pursuing evidence-based practice. The outcome of this project demonstrated some profound practice change, not only to the participating organisations and professionals but across the sector more broadly as the evidence created new momentum and aspiration for change. As a result, the Queensland Children's Activities Network (QCAN) have continued to facilitate action research opportunities for its members and the outcomes continue to be significant ten years on. In the emerging field of extended education that has very limited published research in the Australian school age care context, these projects have become an especially important undertaking.

The session will allow participants to foray into the role of action researcher, collaboratively working through the different phases of the cycle including;

- Generating a research question
- Considering stakeholder involvement
- Discussing the evidence base
- Using theoretical frameworks

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The OSHC Educator Microcredential as an Example of the Knowledges Required in Extended Education

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Abstract

Outside school hours care environments have a major impact on children's earliest experiences of belonging, being and becoming (Cartmel et al., 2024). The work of early childhood education and care (ECEC) professionals is the major driver of the quality of an ECEC system (OECD, 2020). In Queensland (Australia), Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services employ educators with a range of qualifications, professional backgrounds and experiences.

The OSHC educator role is diverse in nature and informed by many legal, ethical and professional responsibilities. OSHC Services and the sector more broadly needed to identify and embed a way to equip educators with a solid understanding of their role and its varied responsibilities, to empower them to be confident and intentional in the important work that they do in extending education.

In response to the changing educational landscape that sees a growing demand for shorter-form courses that enable workers to rapidly upskill and evidence this newly acquired knowledge, the Queensland Children's Activities Network (QCAN) was funded to develop an OSHC Educator Microcredential, using the National Microcredential Framework. A microcredential is a short certification course that allows educators to learn and evidence new professional skills quickly.

As an industry partnership, educators skills, knowledge and behaviours were required to be demonstrated on-the-job, in the OSHC workplace. Grounded in their important day to day work, this microcredential covered 6 key content areas:

1. Legal and Professional Responsibilities of Educators Working Within the National Quality Framework
2. Child Protection and Duty of Care Responsibilities for OSHC Educators
3. Work Health and Safety and Managing Risks in OSHC
4. Relationships with Children including Behaviour Guidance and Support
5. Effective Supervision and Safe OSHC Environments
6. Designing and Delivering Experiences in OSHC (in a manner that accords with the ALF)

During this workshop, participants will be involved in collaboratively discussing the explicit, implicit and tacit knowledge required to do the important work of educators. Examples of the different types of knowledge will be shared from the microcredential and methods of translating this knowledge into a "skill set" discussed.

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Effects of teacher-student relationship on student´s school commitment, perceived class characteristics, and social behaviours

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Abstract

One aim of the study presented here was to further our understanding of the significance of teacher-student and teacher-staff relationships in extracurricular activities at all-day schools concerning the development of student´s school motivation and school commitment, self-concept and self-esteem, social behaviors and social skills from grade 5 to grade 10.

The student-teacher relationship is highly relevant for sustainable learning of students at school (Fischer & Richey 2021). John Hattie (2009) found in his synthesis of meta-analyses that student-teacher relationship has a strong influence on achievement in school-aged students. Moreover, the student-teacher relationship plays a significant role in developing *future skills* in students, especially social and emotional skills (OECD 2005; 2019; 2021). Positive relationships provide *social capital* for students, they foster commitment and wellbeing of students in school, and this is an important prerequisite for developing and maintaining motivation and self-regulated learning, as well as social and emotional skills. However, how student-staff relationships in all-day schools contribute to student´s positive development as well, is not much investigated yet.

The research question focuses on the – supposed positive – effects of student-teacher and student-staff relationships on student´s wellbeing and school commitment, self-esteem, and social behaviors. Moreover, we assume that the effects of student-teacher relationships on social behaviors are mediated by school commitment and classroom characteristics.

Analyses are based on the data of a seven-wave-multicohort-longitudinal study, which attends students school careers from grade 5 to 10. The data was conducted at a large German comprehensive all-day school. We used three sub-samples of (n=811) students for cross-sectional and (n=337) for longitudinal analyses regarding student-teacher relationship, as well as (n=141) students, who participated in extracurricular activities, assessing the student-staff relationship. Student-teacher and student-staff relationships are measured by an adapted scale of PISA 2000 (Radisch et al. 2007, S. 243). Reliability of the scales are good (Cronbach´s α > .83).

Our hypotheses are tested using hierarchical linear regression and structural equation modeling. We find mid-to-strong positive correlations between student-teacher relationships and school commitment, self-esteem, social behaviors, and classroom characteristics. The positive effects of student-teacher relationships on school commitment, self-esteem as well as social behavior (e.g. supporting classmates, deviant behavior) are – at least partially – mediated by the student´s perceived classroom characteristics (e.g. autonomy). Moreover, we found in the subsample of (n=141) students – in addition to the effects of the student-teacher relationship – effects of the perceived student-staff relationship on social behavior, most strongly regarding deviant behavior.

The present findings provide new insights concerning the meaning of student-teacher and student-staff relationships for positive development of students at all-day schools. Whereas student-teacher relationships are shown to be highly significant for all examined variables, the student-staff relationships showed additional effects on some aspects of social behavior. Implications for future research as well as for educational practice in schools are discussed.

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The future that has already been written - young people´s future visions and future orientations

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Abstract

According to the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), young people should be empowered to be able to shape a sustainable future. This raises the question of how young people view the future. In two different studies (1) visions for the future and (2) future orientations were reconstructed.

1. In a class project (grade 10 and 11), young people were asked to design an „everyday museum" in the year 2080. They should photograph objects, draft exhibition texts and write a dialog about how they walk through the exhibition with their grandchildren. The texts were analyzed using Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin). The results show that the destruction of nature will increase, but at the same time the future will be more optimized due to technology. As a side effect of this technical development, solitude increases and the future is described as a place with little contact and original experience. The results show that the range of ideas about the future should always be taken into account in the context of ESD. Simply focusing on the (negative) ecological images is not enough. Only with the image of technological development, it becomes understandable what can prevent sustainability: The basic orientation of young people is that of a modern understanding of the world, in that humans will inevitably exploit nature and solve problems via technology. The grandchildren's dialogues show that every younger generation assumes that they live better lifes because they are more progressive. There seems to be no alternative to this development, even if the young people mention negative aspects.
2. In the second study, group discussions were held with young people (4-5 people, aged 16-19). The initial question was what the young people think about when they think about the future. The Documentary Method (Bohnsack) was used to work out the implicit knowledge structures which, according to the theoretical background, indicate shared experiences. It turns out that young people with a higher educational background see themselves as capable of taking action with regard to their personal future, but not with regard to the future of the world. They show a high level of awareness of sustainability issues and state that change must occur. Young people in a precarious situation do not see themselves as taking action with regard to their personal future. In contrast, engaged young people describe experiences in which they see themselves as

having an impact on the future of the world. With regard to ESD, this means that it seems necessary to promote self-efficacy (or action competency) and not to assume that awareness and attitudes are sufficient.

The results can be discussed both formally and informally in the light of ESD but also in the light of general pedagogy: If the future cannot be shaped on the one hand, then an important precondition for education, disappears. It therefore seems necessary for pedagogy to concentrate more on promoting self-efficacy. On the other hand, a more explicit reference to the future in formal and informal learning opportunities seems necessary.

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Self-study and Professional Learning Communities: Disrupting Methodological Legitimacy for Cultivating Evolving Knowledge Base for Leisure Studies

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Abstract

The profession of leisure studies is relatively young in Iceland, underscoring the need to establish a evolving knowledge base that both accounts for practitioners' experiences and supports ongoing knowledge generation. To address this need, we draw on the methodology of self-study research and professional learning communities (PLCs) within the context of leisure studies, emphasizing the importance to challenge traditional methodological legitimacy. By expanding the boundaries of what counts as valid research, we advocate for a generative methodlogical approach to knowledge creation that allows professional practitioners to clarify their underlying beliefs and values in the research process and reflects the dynamic nature of leisure as a field of inquiry.

Self-study allows practioners to step back to critically and creativiey examine their experiences and pedagogical approaches, fostering personal and professional growth. When integrated with PLCs, which promote collaborative inquiry and shared learning, this combination catalyzes the transformation of both individual and collective knowledge bases. In this presentation we discuss how self-study can be used as a mean to step back and explore the ways in which the dynamic relationships developed within of PLC can lead to deeper theoretical insights in leisure studies. Ultimately, we contend that by disrupting conventional methodologies, researchers and practitioners can cultivate a richer, more generative understanding of leisure's multifaceted dimensions, positioning the field for ongoing evolution and relevance in Iceland and beyond.

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Exploring collaborative supervision of masters´projects: Navigating a new role in a learning community with students

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Abstract

Leisure studies is a relatively young academic field in Iceland, both as a subject of study and as a professional discipline. Diverse master´s projects play a crucial role in knowledge creation, and the field´s rapid development. A key challenge for master's students has been managing the demands of a 30-credit final thesis. To address this, the Leisure and Social Studies program secured funding from the Teaching Fund in 2022 to establish a structured learning community for collaborative thesis supervision. This initiative was carried out in collaboration with the University of Iceland Teaching Center and faculty from two departments within the School of Education, both of which have a longstanding tradition of collaborative supervision. The project, launched in fall 2022, is grounded in the principles of learning communities and self-study research, emphasizing the mobilization of student and faculty resources to enhance support structures. The research question guiding one part of the initiative is: How did university teachers step into their emerging roles as supervisors, in a learning community of peers and students? Data collection included reflection meetings with supervisors, focus group interviews and regular reflection and feedback from participating master students. Findings indicate that participation in the learning community benefits students academically, professionally, and socially throughout the thesis process. It has also strengthened supervisors' confidence in their own abilities, reduced feelings of inadequacy and anxiety regarding their supervisory role, and broadened their repertoire of strategies for supporting students. As a result, supervisors feel more capable of navigating the complexities of supervision. They report increased self-assurance in their supervisory role, greater trust within the team, and a more distributed and shared responsibility for students' progress and well-being throughout the thesis-writing process. The findings suggest that supervisors have stepped into their roles in the learning community by demonstrating vulnerability and humility, setting clear expectations for both students and the supervisory team, acting with care for students, and showing enthusiasm for the emerging professional field of Leisure and Social Studies in Iceland. The study highlights the strengths of learning communities in enhancing the quality of master's theses, particularly in emerging academic fields. It draws attention to the value of a small academic program leveraging the experience of peers from other disciplines to build a strong community of students and supervisors. Learning communities like this provide a foundation for more focused and reflective supervision, which can lead to higher-quality master's theses. This is particularly significant for the university community, as under the new funding allocation model, completed credits (i.e., thesis completions) are of critical importance. The study clearly indicates that university teachers' experience with collaborative supervision of master's theses can be beneficial to other disciplines, depending on the specific context and circumstances. It is essential to build on this experience and retain the knowledge generated by the project.

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Symposium: Measuring Quality in Extended Learning Provisions (Part I + II)

Ludwig Stecher[1], Sang Hoon Bae[2], Sabine Maschke[3]

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Abstract

Today, public education systems worldwide are working to fulfill their educational accountability by improving the quality of regular classes and educational activities, with the aim of enhancing and supporting students' learning outcomes and holistic development. In addition to this, many are implementing extended education programs to address needs that regular classes cannot meet or to respond to emerging demands posed on the one hand by

diverse student populations, including those from foreign backgrounds, students with special needs and caregiving responsibilities, and gifted students with exceptional talents in various domains,

or posed on the other hand by new societal topics like outdoor education, climate change or disaster control and protection, respecitvely.

Until recently, extensive academic research and professional discourse have focused on strategies and measures to improve the quality of educational activities within the regular schooling context. These efforts have resulted in significant advancements, including the formulation of theoretical frameworks, evidence-based models, and practical interventions aimed at enhancing educational practices and student outcomes.

The expanding field of extended education and learning is marked by a variety of pedagogical innovations. These include the integration of new professional groups, the implementation of experimental and cutting-edge teaching and learning methodologies, and the active involvement of non-traditional educational institutions outside the formal school system.

This evolution calls for a critical evaluation within the extended education community to determine whether existing theories and frameworks for educational effectiveness and quality assurance in regular education are adaptable to extended education settings, or whether new, bespoke strategies are necessary specifically for extended education.

This symposium will address these challenges by exploring robust methodologies for assessing the quality of extended education programs. It will offer participants the opportunity to explore policy alternatives and practices at both the school and out-of-schooltime education at governmental levels in other countries, aimed at enhancing program quality and fostering the professionalization of extended education practitioners.

With it's five presentations (devided into two 90-minute-parts) the session will among other things introduce a tool designed to measure the general quality of extended education programs, grounded in

established theories of learning and educational effectiveness. Additionally, it will present policies, strategies, and practices for quality management in extended education, focusing on successful approaches currently employed in various international contexts. Discussions will center on advancing these initiatives to meet the evolving demands of extended education.

Discussants: Sang Hoon Bae, Gil Noam, Ludwig Stecher, Fuyuko Kanefuji, Kylie Brannelly

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General Educational Theories and Their Potential for Measuring Quality in Extended Learning Provisions

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Abstract

In classroom teaching the answer on the question how extended learning provisions and offerings have to be designed to reach the intended learning goals, can be based on curricular goals and objectives, and on measuring whether these goals are reached or not (outcome perspective). Usually that is not that easy with regard to extracurricular and out-of-school time provisions. That is due to the fact that on the one hand their are no curricular standards well defined as they are for classroom teaching – that holds true in particular for outcomes like social and emotional learning – and on the other hand on the fact that there are no adequat measuring tools.

The core idea of the presentation is to present a way of measuring the quality of extended learning provisions independently of curricular or non-curricular standards, that means measuring the quality of extended learning provisions not based on an outcome oriented perspective but on a perspecitve of *general educational quality*.

In this presentation we will discuss three general pedagocial/psychological theories of effective learning which can be used as pillars to create tools for a content independent measurment of the educational quality of extended learning provisions: the theory of effective teaching (based on the work of Ekhard Klieme, see for example Klieme & Rakoczy, 2003), the theory of acknowledgement (based on the work of Hans Rudi Leu, 1997), and the motivation theory (base on the work of Deci & Ryan, see for example Deci & Ryan, 1993).

In the first part of the presentation we will describe the basic ideas of the three educational theories. In the second part of the presentation we will present instruments derived from the three basic theories to assess the general educational quality of extended learning provisions. Additonally we will discuss how these instruments can be used in practice.

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Standards and Evaluation Tools for Quality Assurance of Extended Education in Japan

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Abstract

This presentation explores the standards, guidelines, and evaluation tools developed for quality assurance in Japan's extended education programs, with a primary focus on publicly funded after-school programs.

First, the presentation outlines the quality assurance framework for after-school children's clubs in Japan, which are supported by public funding. This includes the establishment of specific standards, detailed guidelines, and the implementation of tools used for both self-assessment and third-party evaluation. As of 2024, more than 1.51 million children are enrolled in after-school clubs, representing the highest enrollment in history. The presenter, who served as a member of the Expert Committee on After-School Childcare under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) from November 2017 to March 2023, was actively involved in deliberations on the challenges and policy directions aimed at ensuring the quality of these programs (MHLW, 2023a). Drawing from this experience, the presenter will introduce the quality assurance standards, guidelines, and evaluation tools specifically designed for after-school children's clubs.

Second, the presentation will address the methodologies developed by the National Institution for Youth Education (NIYE) to assess the effectiveness of after-school programs. Over the years, NIYE has conducted extensive longitudinal surveys to examine the impact of after-school activities on elementary, junior high, and high school students. The surveys cover a wide range of programs, including those that are supported by public funding and those that operate without such financial assistance. These studies have resulted in the development of various scales and indicators designed to measure the effectiveness of both funded and non-funded after-school programs. The empirical data obtained from these studies provides critical insights into the changing participation patterns in after-school activities, as well as the overall effectiveness of these programs in fostering positive outcomes for youth. These findings have significantly contributed to shaping policy decisions regarding the enhancement and expansion of after-school initiatives. The presenter has been actively involved in this longitudinal research since 2009. The presentation will reference the following materials:

1.   Guidelines, standards, and evaluation tools: Developed by the MHLW for after-school children's clubs, which were transferred to the Agency for Children and Families in April 2023 (MHLW, 2023a, 2023b).

2.   Evaluation tools: Scales and indicators derived from NIYE's longitudinal studies on the impact of after-school programs, which include both government-funded and non-funded initiatives (NIYE, 2024).

Finally, the presentation will explore the unresolved challenges in the development and implementation of quality assurance frameworks and evaluation tools. Emphasis will be placed on the implications of these challenges for future research, policy development, and practical application in the field of extended education.

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Enhancing the Quality of All-Day Educare Programs: Core Competencies and Training Innovations for Caregivers in Korea

Sang Hoon Bae

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Abstract

Since the May 31st Education Reform of 1995, which emphasized demand-centered education as the core focus of reform, after-school programs in Korea have expanded significantly. Every administration has prioritized the growth of these programs as a key presidential initiative, providing substantial financial support. By 2025, nearly all schools nationwide operate at least one after-school program.

In 2024, the Korean government introduced all-day educare programs for first- and second-year elementary school students. This initiative aims to address the national challenge of low birth rates and promote work-life balance by offering high-quality care and education for children. Recognizing that the quality of educare programs is just as important as their availability, the Korean government and provincial education offices have taken significant steps to enhance program quality.

A key focus of these efforts is improving the professional expertise of caregivers, many of whom have not received sufficient formal training, unlike certified teachers. To address this gap, provincial education offices nationwide have begun offering mandatory education and training programs for caregivers. These programs emphasize developing the core competencies necessary to deliver high-quality educare. The government regards caregiver expertise as fundamental to improving the quality of all-day educare programs in elementary schools.

This presentation outlines the results of an analysis of official training programs for caregivers implemented by 17 provincial education offices. It examines the content of these training programs to identify the core competencies required for practitioners operating all-day educare programs in schools. Additionally, it provides insights for developing training programs to further enhance the quality of these initiatives.

By shifting the discourse on quality from abstract and theoretical concepts to practical, actionable measures, this presentation offers significant insights and directions for advancing after-school and educare programs in Korea.

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Dimensions of Success

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Abstract

The Dimensions of Success (DoS) observation tool, developed by the PEAR Institute at Harvard University with funding from the National Science Foundation, is a comprehensive framework designed to assess and enhance the quality of STEM learning experiences in extended education settings. DoS identifies twelve key indicators of STEM program quality, organized into four broad domains: 1) Features of the Learning Environment, 2) Activity Engagement, 3) STEM Knowledge and Practices, 4) Youth Development in STEM. Each dimension is accompanied by a detailed explanation and a four-level rubric that defines a range of quality associated with that dimension. Certified observers utilize these rubrics to conduct site visits, take detailed field notes, and assign ratings supported by evidence from their observations. These scores can be aggregated to identify trends across various settings or used to provide targeted feedback and coaching at specific sites. To maintain the tool's reliability and validity, all observers must complete rigorous training and certification processes.(see pearinc.org)

Since its inception, over 700 individuals have been trained to use the DoS tool, and more than 12 state networks have adopted it to measure the quality of their afterschool STEM programming. Collectively, over 1,000 extended education settings have been observed using DoS, providing a substantial dataset for understanding program quality trends. This extensive application has facilitated the identification of common strengths and areas for improvement, enabling targeted strategies to enhance program quality

The primary goal of DoS is to drive change by improving the quality of STEM learning environments. After conducting observations and deriving both numeric and descriptive assessments, the focus shifts to implementing strategies for quality improvement. This process involves providing feedback to educators, facilitating professional development, and making informed adjustments to program design and delivery. By systematically applying these strategies, programs can create more engaging and effective STEM learning experiences for students.Building on its success in STEM, the DoS framework is being expanded to encompass all areas of learning, recognizing the value of its structured approach in diverse educational contexts. Additionally, a parallel tool is being developed for use in traditional school settings, aiming to bring the benefits of the DoS framework into the classroom and observing across settings and system in so called educational ecosystems. Research has demonstrated a positive correlation between the quality of the learning environment, as measured by DoS, and student outcomes. Higher DoS ratings are associated with increased student engagement, improved STEM identity, and a greater interest in STEM careers. These findings underscore the importance of providing high-quality learning environments to foster positive student outcomes.

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Assessing quality of Extended Education Services in Australia

Kylie Brannelly

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Abstract

This presentation explores the application of the National Quality Framework (NQF) across the field of Extended Education, which is referred to as Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) in Australia.

In 2012, the State, Territory and Federal governments across Australia united to establish a new framework, the NQF, for regulation and quality assessment with the intention to improve education and care services.

This decision was underpinned by evidence and research affirming that the quality of extended education for children leads to better health, education and employment outcomes later in life. Of significance it is recognized that major benefits for families and children are observed when educator to child ratios, qualifications, application of learning frameworks and consistent and transparent sources of information are prioritized.

The NQF includes: 1) National laws and regulations, 2) A National Quality Standard (NQS), 3) Assessment and rating process, 4) Approved Learning Frameworks.

In 2024, there were 5,077 OSHC services In Australia employing 27,491 educators. These services were attended by 566,600 children who, on average, attended for 12.4 hours per week. Attendances varied depending on whether the care type accessed was before school, after school, vacation care or a combination.

All Australian OSHC services are required to go through the assessment and rating process which awards services one of 4 possible ratings, including: Significant Improvement Required-Working Towards-Meeting, or Exceeding. This presentation discusses the impact of the National Quality Framework on the quality of OSHC in Australia with a specific focus on the National Quality Standard (NQS) and its complementary assessment and rating process. Further to this, the presentation analyses the methodology underpinning the assessment and rating process with a spotlight on high quality practices which lead to services being rated as 'exceeding' the National Quality Standard. The presentation will reference the following materials: Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Regulations 2011- The Guide to the National Quality Standards and The Quality Improvement Plan.

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What Just Happened? Combining Literacy, Epidemiology, and Data in Afterschool

Pendred Noyce[1,2], Jacob Sagrans[1], Janice Mokros[1]

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Abstract

Aim

The Data Detectives project aimed to introduce 400 youth age 10-14 to the fields of epidemiology and data science through a 12-hour program based around a novel and data tools.

Theoretical Approach

We began our project in the spring of 2020 with the hypothesis that reading fiction can motivate STEM learning and vice-versa. Moreover, we hypothesized that youth's sense of anxiety and disconnection during COVID could be assuaged by introducing them to fictional characters who could voice their concerns and curiosity, as well as basic knowledge and data tools that would allow them to explore data on infections and their spread.

Methodology

For our project, supported by NSF, we designed eleven 60-minute sessions that combined reading and discussion with active games and data activities. We used the free online tool CODAP to allow youth to explore the real-time course of COVID infections in the US and world, as well as historical data on the 1918 flu and smallpox. Our adventure novel, *The Case of the Covid Crisis* (later revised as *Pandemics!)* follows two middle schoolers as they travel through space and time to visit past and present disease outbreaks. A comprehensive facilitator's guide gives background and directions.

Training consists of two 2-hour sessions briefly covering virus science, strategies to encourage reading, and hands-on work with CODAP and the curated datasets. All youth are asked to participate in a retrospective pre-post survey of changes in attitudes toward science, data and reading.

We made adjustments as we expanded our reach. Afterschool providers liked the way the novel unified the program activities and introduced diverse scientists around the world. Although many children enjoyed reading the novel, others struggled. For them, we provided audio and Spanish language versions of the book. We continued to revise and update the book to address vaccination, variants, and emotional impacts of the pandemic. We enhanced the data tool by building a sonification feature that allows users to "play" a graph with higher musical tones representing higher points on a time-series graph.

Outcomes

Over three years, Data Detectives clubs reached over 1000 youth. The clubs were popular. Even as political division led to skepticism about mask-wearing and vaccination, we learned of no parents pulling their children from the program, although it addressed both these interventions positively.

We administered the Common Instrument Suite (CIS) (Noam et al., 2020), to over 500 participating youth in grades 4-8. Youth reported statistically significant positive changes on all three of the survey's standardized scales—STEM engagement, STEM identity and STEM career interest. Youth also showed significant positive changes on the two customized questions asking about science story engagement and the extent to which reading science stories prompted curiosity about science (p-values of < 0.05 for each). The customized items about data science identity, epidemiology career interest, and perceptions of community impact of science showed similarly significant increases.

These results have inspired us to pilot a shorter version of Data Detectives while developing more curricula that combine reading and STEM.

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Enhancing professionalism – A need for a critical leisure perspective?

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Abstract

In the case of Iceland, the number of educated professionals has increased rapidly for the past two decades in the field of organized leisure activities for children and youth. Participation in after-school activities, youth clubs and other organized youth activities is substantial and participation in sport is relatively high among children and youth. At the same time few researches have been conducted in Iceland focusing on the leisure field with the lens of inequality and marginalization. The Prosperous Act in Iceland from 2021 has targeted well-being as a main theme in the field of organized leisure, shaping the agenda for organizations and municipalities on sport, leisure and after-school activities. Critical leisure perspective focuses on how social, political and cultural aspects influence leisure, leisure activities and leisure choices of individuals and groups.

This presentation aims at discussing if, and then why, there is a growing need to enhance the focus of critical leisure perspective in the education of leisure professionals in Iceland and how this perspective can be applied in the leisure studies program in higher education as in the professional field through life-long learning opportunities. The presentation is based on a literature review, focusing on recent publications on critical leisure and intertwining the main challenges facing professionals in the leisure field in Iceland. The main findings suggest that the field of organized leisure activities and the education of leisure professionals would benefit from increasing critical leisure perspectives for enhancing awareness of social injustice and empowerment towards empathy and progressive processes for inclusion in the leisure field, increasing opportunities towards wellbeing of all participating children and youth.

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The 'Chat-buddy' project: Strengthening peer Support, inclusion and children´s wellbeing in Schools

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Abstract

The Chat-Buddy Project is a peer-support initiative that fosters relationships between older and younger children through play, conversation, and companionship. Developed in response to children's need for accessible support, it aims to enhance well-being, inclusion, and belonging. The project aligns with Iceland's Education Policy 2030 and the UNICEF Child-Friendly City initiative, emphasising student participation and proactive support systems. It has received funding from the Icelandic Ministry of Education and Children's Affairs.

The project provides an informal, accessible support system, where youth workers serve as Chat-Buddies for teenage students, who, in turn, mentor younger children. The initiative originated from the student council at a comprehensive school in Iceland. It sought to strengthen connections with younger children, advocate for their needs, and create solutions to support their well-being. The goal was to offer early intervention for children experiencing distress, loneliness, or a lack of belonging in school.

This study examines the implementation and impact of the Chat-Buddy Project and the role of peer mentors in providing early support for children experiencing distress, social isolation, or disengagement. Using a participatory action research approach, the project was collaboratively developed by the student council, the school, and the local youth centre. The research collected qualitative data, including participant observations, student reflections, and interviews with students, educators, and youth workers.

Findings indicate that the project has had a positive and empowering impact. Participants had the opportunity to use their strengths, take on responsibility, and become more engaged in school life. Teenagers who previously struggled in school were able to prove themselves through the project, turn their situation around, and reintegrate into school life.

Relationships between younger and older students strengthened, with younger children trusting the teenagers, who became positive role models and leaders. Youth workers play a crucial role, as children and teenagers confide in them about personal issues. They have also contacted socially isolated students, increasing participation in youth centre activities. The project has highlighted the importance of youth workers being visible during school hours, monitoring social interactions, and providing proactive outreach. Teenagers are more likely to seek their support than that of teachers.

The study underscores peer mentorship as a powerful tool for fostering inclusive education and student well-being. As an evolving initiative, it is continuously refined through reflective practice and research, offering valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and youth workers interested in innovative, student-centred support models.

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Adolescents' Perceptions of Safety in Natural Disasters: A Q-Methodological Workshop

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Abstract

Q-method (Q) is a research approach used to collect and systematically analyze subjective opinions, attitudes, or perspectives. Unlike traditional quantitative methods - which emphasize statistical distributions - a Q-study focuses on how individuals organize and prioritize their views on a particular topic. In a Q-study, participants are presented with a set of statements (Q-set) related to a specific subject and are asked to rank these statements in relation to a specific question (Q prompt) according to their level of importance using a predetermined distribution (Q grid). The resulting arrangements (Q-sorts) are then statistically analyzed to identify patterns and distinct opinion groups. Q is especially well suited for capturing complex, nuanced perspectives that are often difficult to identify in standardized surveys (Brown, 1993; Stenner & Stainton Rogers, 2004; Ramlo, 2015).

In the workshop, we will provide a brief overview of the core assumptions of Q and its underlying statistical procedures. Workshop participants will then take the role of experts in youth development by engaging in a Q-study that examines adolescents' feelings of safety during times of increasing natural disasters. In a guided process, each participant will individually sort 24 statements addressing cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of coping with potential natural threats. This Q-sort was developed as part of an interdisciplinary fellowship in education and medical research focused on social, institutional, and individual resilience, with an emphasis on strengthening young people in the event of natural disasters (Buhl & Ries 2024; https://www.marsilius-kolleg.uni-heidelberg.de/de/forschung/fellows/fellow-klasse-202324/prof-dr-monika-buhl).

Using a free web-based tool, the individual Q-sorts and the workshop participants' explanations for their selection of the most and least important will be (factor) analyzed immediately. Participants will be grouped for a brief reflection on their group characteristics. As a next step, the results of the workshop group will be compared with those from other samples using the same Q-sort (e.g., interdisciplinary experts, PhD students in school psychology, university teacher candidates, and 9th graders from secondary school). So far, our data indicate that, regardless of expertise level, four to five distinct groups

can be identified in each sample, ranging from individuals who are optimistic and take self-effective action in their personal environment to those who rely on expert assistance and public institutions.

The discussion will focus on the workshop participants' experiences in relation to the data we collected previously, as well as on the background of adolescent resilience development in challenging times. Additionally, free web-based Q tools (e.g., Q-Perspectives, Ken-Q) will be presented.

The workshop's goal is to provide insight into the Q method and its possibilities through practical application. The unique features and advantages of this interactive method will be highlighted, and we will demonstrate how Q can be used both in research and in practical work with young people and experts.

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Claiming our moment: How the field of leisure enacts a new legislation on children's well-being

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Abstract

In recent years, there has globally been a growing recognition of the vital role inter-professional collaboration plays in enhancing children's education and well-being. With the implementation of the *Legislation on the integration of services for children's well-being* in 2021, the Icelandic government has taken significant steps in securing that practitioners and institutions coordinate their efforts to support children—both at the systemic level and in practice.

The emerging field of leisure is a key player in this integration, firmly positioned among frontline staff who operate at the intersection of multiple practices to support the well-being of children and youth. As part of the implementation process, inter-professional teams focusing on children's informal learning, well-being, and agency have been established in municipalities of varying sizes.

This study is part of a broader study examining the implementation and enactment of Iceland's new *Legislation on the integration of services for children's well-being* from a broad perspective; at the policy, municipal, and individual levels, within schools, leisure, and welfare institutions.

In this part we conducted interviews with leaders in the field of leisure, as well as focus groups interviews, involving members of inter-professional teams engaged in prevention work and support of vulnerable children and youth in two municipalities. **Main findings indicate that the new legislation has paved the way for a more holistic approach and increasing opportunities to collaborate more effectively with municipal partners to promote children´s well-being. Interviewees report an increased trust in them to lead innovative projects, where the expertise and strengths of leisure**

studies are recognized and valued. The findings also revealed that through the implementation process, municipalities have adopted different strategies to drive systemic change, shaping the extent to which the field of leisure can actively contribute to implement the new legislation.

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World Café: Work Force and Wellbeing Issues in Extended Education

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Abstract

The aim of this interactive workshop is to explore and discuss workforce issues in extended education, such as training and retention of extended educators, their professional development as well as their workplace wellbeing. A skilled and supported workforce is critical to the professional growth and development of out- of- school-care services. Drawing from experiences from Australia, US and the Nordic countries, this workshop will highlight some of the challenges that face the extended education workforce, but also focus on bringing to the front successful practices and cases of workforce development.

A world-café format will engage workshop partcipants to discuss three main themes relating to the workforce:

1. Professional development and leadership
2. Engagement and wellbeing of staff
3. Resources and effective strategies in daily practices

This workshop is a platform for professional development and networking for exended educators, leaders, policy makers and academics. It provides a unique opportunity for knowledge exchange and collaboration between participants from all around the globe. Participants will connect, discuss and collaborate with like-minded educators who share some of their experiences and face similar challenges.

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A Holistic Approach to Extended Education: Advancing Academic, Social, and Emotional Development for Career and Life Readiness

Gil Noam[1], Patricia Allen[2], Kristin Lewis-Warner[3]

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Abstract

Extended education serves as a bridge where key community sectors - including the home, schools, youth-serving nonprofits, workforce development organizations and beyond - come together to build innovative, engaging programs for youth and their families. Join GELYDA Chair Dr. Gil Noam and staff of the Harvard Medical School-affiliated *Institute for the Study of Resilience in Youth (ISRY)* and *Partnerships in Education and Resilience (PEAR)* to learn how they apply the *Clover Model*, a research-based developmental process theory of social-emotional development (SED), to design out-of-school time (OST) programs that enrich learning, support healthy development, and prepare youth for life beyond the classroom.

In this symposium, participants will engage in discussions focused on three areas of ISRY/PEAR's work that support continuous improvement in out-of-school time (OST) programs:

1. A systematic review of the integration of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and SED in OST programs;
2. Family engagement strategies that promote stronger STEM programming and youth outcomes in OST settings; and
3. A new career-readiness assessment designed to explore youth's 21st-century skills, workforce competencies, and future readiness in OST settings.

First, we will discuss findings from a systematic review, funded by the US National Science Foundation, in which ISRY examined 709 references spanning twenty years of research, evaluation, and practice at the interface of STEM and SED in OST programs for youth. We will show how the *Clover Model* can serve as a lens to organize the hundreds of constructs and theories identified, helping to build greater coherence in how STEM+SED is conceptualized, implemented, and assessed in youth programming. Next ISRY will introduce the *STEM Family Engagement Planning Tool*, which adapts the *Clover Model* into a structured framework for families known as *CARE—Connect, Act, Reflect, and Empower.* Recognizing the essential role families play in children's social, emotional, and academic development and success, ISRY has developed and studied a model for scaling a holistic approach. Finally, PEAR will present its new career readiness assessment, anchored in the Clover Model of youth development, designed for OST settings to explore youths' attitudes towards their competencies in 21st century, workforce and future skills. The tool, designed to complement PEAR's other SED and STEM assessments or as a stand-alone measure, will provide a fuller picture of youth development across academic, social-emotional, and career domains.

Join ISRY and PEAR to explore how research, practice, and assessment come together in extended education to lift up youth's academic, social, emotional, and career success—through the lens of the Clover Model and new tools designed for impact.

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Community-Driven Innovation in Education: Implementing the STEM Learning Ecosystems Model in Húsavík, North Iceland

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Abstract

This presentation reflects on the implementation and ongoing development of a community-based STEM Learning Ecosystem in Húsavík, a small town in North Iceland. Initiated in 2022, the project is part of a growing international movement that seeks to bridge formal, non-formal, and informal education by fostering cross-sector collaboration between schools, families, local government, cultural institutions, and businesses. The primary goal is to strengthen educational opportunities, innovation capacity, and youth development at the local level through a place-based, inclusive STEM ecosystem. The initiative aims to create meaningful learning experiences that promote academic achievement, equity, wellbeing, and future readiness among young people.
While not a formal research study, the project is grounded in practice-based theory drawing from the science of extended learning, youth development, and ecosystem approaches to education (Traphagen & Traill, 2014; STEM Next). It aligns with theories of connected learning and whole-child education, emphasizing learner agency, collaboration, and relevance.
The project uses a reflective, practitioner-based approach informed by community feedback, program documentation, and participation in European networks (Horizon Europe and Interreg NPA). Continuous learning and adaptation are core to the model, and local insights are contextualized through peer exchange with other regional ecosystems.

Since its launch, the Húsavík ecosystem has engaged diverse stakeholders in co-creating STEM learning opportunities for youth and families, including STEM tool lending libraries, pop-up labs, inclusive STEM play, and climate education. Key enabling factors include strong community trust and committed local leadership that provides vision, continuity, and coordination. Challenges include sustainability without core funding, balancing volunteerism with long-term goals, and navigating fragmentation across education and policy systems. Early outcomes point to increased youth engagement, greater visibility of STEM in the community, and enhanced opportunities for inclusive participation. The Húsavík experience demonstrates how the STEM Learning Ecosystems model can serve as an educational and social innovation framework in rural Iceland. It offers valuable insights for other communities aiming to strengthen local learning infrastructures and youth wellbeing. The next steps include formalizing ecosystem governance, securing sustainable support, and expanding collaborations nationally and internationally.