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### Main Topic

#### **Schuepbach (Ed.) • Extended Education: Professionalization and Professionalism of Staff**

**Jutzi/Schuepbach/Frei/Nieuwenboom/von Allmen** • Pursuing  
a Common Goal: How School Principals and After-school  
Directors Perceive Professional Culture of Collaboration

**Böhm-Kasper/Dizinger/Gausling** • Multiprofessional Collaboration  
Between Teachers and Other Educational Staff at German All-day  
Schools as a Characteristic of Today's Professionalism

**Vandell/Lao** • Building and Retaining High Quality Professional  
Staff for Extended Education Programs

**Berry/Sloper/Pickar/Talbot** • Aligning Professional Development  
to Continuous Quality Improvement: A Case Study of Los Angeles  
Unified School District's Beyond the Bell Branch

### General Contributions

**Underwood/Mahmood/Pranzetti/Toloza de O. Costa** • Animating  
Mastery: Navigational play as Integrative Learning

**Sauerwein/Theis/Fischer** • How Youths' Profiles of Extracurricular  
and Leisure Activity Affect Their Social Development and  
Academic Achievement

**Boström/Augustsson** • Learning Environments in Swedish Leisure-time  
Centres: (In)equality, 'Schooling', and Lack of Independence

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## Editors' Preface

The International Journal for Research on Extended Education starts its fourth volume. Marianne Schüpbach is the editor of the main topic. Under the umbrella “Extended Education: Professionalization and Professionalism of Staff” four papers are presented: “Pursuing a common goal: How school principals and after-school directors perceive professional culture of collaboration” (Jutzi, Schuepbach, Frei, Nieuwenboom & von Allmen), “Multiprofessional collaboration between teachers and other educational staff at German all-day schools as a characteristic of today’s professionalism” (Böhm-Kasper, Dizinger & Gausling), “Building and retaining high quality professional staff for extended education programs” (Vandell & Lao), and “Aligning professional development to continuous quality improvement: A case study of Los Angeles unified school district’s beyond the bell branch” (Berry, Sloper, Pickar & Talbot).

In addition there are also three general contributions outside this main topic: “Animating mastery: Navigational play as integrative learning” (Underwood, Mahmood, Pranzetti, Toloza de O. Costa), “How youths’ profiles of extracurricular and leisure activity affect their social development and academic achievement” (Sauerwein, Theis & Fischer), and “Learning environments in Swedish leisure-time centres: (In) equality, ‘schooling’, and lack of independence” (Boström & Augutsson).

Within the section “Developments in the field of extended education” Perselli, Augustsson and Boström report on “a web survey on learning environments and staff in Swedish leisure-time centres as a starting point for a nordic research network and international cooperation”. And Mustain reviews the book “Documenting and assessing learning in media-rich informal environments” authored by Lemke, Lecusay, Cole and Michalchik.

Though there is a high number of submissions we would like to encourage researchers within the field of extended education to submit papers, and also suggestions for book reviews and proposals for short research reports for the section Developments in the Field of Extended Education.

*Sabine Maschke, Ludwig Stecher and Stephan Kielblock*



## Extended Education: Professionalization and Professionalism of Staff

*Marianne Schuepbach*

Extended education or out-of-school time programs, such as afterschool programs in the United States or South Korea or *Ganztagschulen* [all-day schools] in Germany or *Tagesschulen* [all-day schools] in Switzerland, have grown steadily in recent years. An increasing number of programs are on offer, and more and more children and young people are utilizing them. At the same time there has been a great focus on the educational quality of these programs. This is noticeable in practice in the quality concepts of *Ganztagschulen* or afterschool programs, for example, and in research in the increasing number of studies on the educational quality of extended education. In a meta-analysis of 68 U.S. studies, Durlak, Weissberg, and Pachan (2010) found that especially programs that are sequential, active (training process), focused, and explicit lead to positive effects on school achievement. The U.S. studies have identified some general and consistent factors in educational quality, indicators for educational quality (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010). Factors are group size, student-to-staff person ratio, a broad range of stimulating and clearly structured activities, and well-planned organization. A central factor is the qualifications, education, training, and further training of the educators/staff persons. For programs for school-age children, this has been shown to be the most important structural factor determining quality. Based on the available U.S. findings, it can be supposed that features of educational quality have a direct effect on students' school achievement and on their social-emotional development.

Accordingly, there is a growing discourse on professionalization and professionalism of staff working in extended education. The two terms 'professionalization' and 'professionalism' usually accompany each other in scholarly discourses. Professionalization is related to "promoting the material and ideal interests of an occupational group" (Goodson, 2000, p. 182), so it includes "the attempt to gain the characteristics associated with professions" (Whitty, 2000, p. 282), whereas professionalism is more about the qualifications, capacities, and competences that are required for successful practice within a profession (Englund, 1996).

The two aspects are relevant in the current discourse on extended education. The issue discussed is whether there should be a move towards professionalization. The path of professionalization involves acquiring the characteristics of higher-status occupations; this includes certifications and accreditations and the existence of

professional associations. In addition, it means dealing with teachers who often work within the same institution and who differ from the extended education staff with regard to qualifications, employment conditions, and “professional cultures” (Speck, 2010; Speck, Olk, & Stimpel, 2011). The extended education staff’s understandings of education and their orientations often differ from those of the teachers.

In the teacher professionalism debate there are various perspectives (see, for example, Demirkasimoğlu, 2010). According to Sachs (2003), the characteristics of new transformative professionalism are: (a) inclusive membership, (b) public ethical code of practice, (c) collaborative and collegial, (d) activist orientation, (e) flexible and progressive, (f) responsive to change, (g) self-regulating, (h) policy-active, (i) enquiry-oriented, and (j) knowledge building. Collaboration with groups and institutions beyond the school is thus an important aspect, and in reverse, collaboration with the school is probably also important to these institutions. Collaboration between teachers and staff as a characteristic of today’s professionalism!

A key component towards professionalization and towards meeting higher standards of professionalism is professional development. Different programs have shown the importance of staff development for higher quality programs and for better youth outcomes (Harvard Family Research Project, 2004). Further research results demonstrated the importance of positive staff-child relationships for youth outcomes (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Several researchers even view staff knowledge and expertise as the most important aspect of good-quality implementation of afterschool programs (see, for example, Cross, Gottfredson, Wilson, Rorie, & Connell, 2010). Professional development is a broad term that can refer to a variety of education, training, and development opportunities. This is currently the subject of a big debate for example in the United States.

The four contributions in this special issue, from Switzerland, Germany, and the United States focus on different aspects of the topics just described. The first two contributions focus on collaboration between teachers and staff as a characteristic of today’s professionalism. The two contributions from the United States deal with professional development as a key component towards meeting higher standards of professionalism and professionalization.

In the first contribution, Michelle Jutzi, Marianne Schuepbach, Lukas Frei, Wim Nieuwenboom, and Benjamin von Allmen investigate school principals’ and after-school program directors’ perceived professional culture of collaboration (PPCoC) as an aspect of school culture and professionalism of educational staff in 38 primary schools and after-school programs in Switzerland. Based on Connell and Kubisch’s (1998) theory of change the researchers assume that if the goals of the school principals and after-school directors are well-matched, it is more likely that positive PPCoC will develop. Tests of four hypotheses on the development of a professional culture of collaboration between school and after-school programs reveal that organizational aspects as well as individual goals influence the development of a shared attitude towards collaboration.

In the second contribution, Oliver Boehm-Kasper, Vanessa Dizinger, and Pia Gausling focus on collaboration between teachers and other educational staff as a characteristic of today’s professionalism in Germany’s *Ganztagschulen* [all-day schools]. The focus is on multiprofessional collaboration between teachers and other



educational staff, which the authors define as “a collaborative act of two or more professionals from different professional groups who work in the education sector.” The researchers examine this from different perspectives in two studies: a quantitative study on multiprofessional collaboration seen from the teachers’ perspective, and a qualitative study on multiprofessional collaboration and professional differences seen from the perspective of teachers and educators. The sobering result of both studies is that multiprofessional collaboration is little developed at all-day schools in Germany.

In the third contribution, “Building and Retaining a High Quality Professional Staff for Extended Education,” Deborah Lowe Vandell and Jenel Lao in the United States focus on *staff professional development*. The authors have worked out four factors that characterize the professional competencies of staff in high quality programs. Current research in the United States shows that the success of after-school programs is linked closely to the skills and competencies of program staff. In this contribution Vandell and Lao also develop various strategies for implementing a comprehensive approach to professional development for staff. The strategies – site-level efforts, educational partnerships with universities, partnerships with host schools, and partnerships with community-based organizations – have been tested empirically only partially.

The fourth and final contribution deals with staff professional development. Tiffany Berry, Michelle Sloper, Hannah Pickar, and Harry Talbot present a case study of Los Angeles Unified School District’s Beyond the Bell Branch with a focus on professional development to promote program quality. Beyond the Bell (BTB) Branch is one of the largest afterschool providers in California. This provider has begun to initiate continuous quality improvement (CQI). For afterschool programs this is a relatively new approach for training staff in an effort to improve the quality of programs. Important in CQI is a clear understanding of the key underlying processes and systems necessary for program improvement. This contribution discusses different components of a CQI system, such as strategic planning, development of tools, and data use, and reflects on important organizational factors that promote CQI.

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# Pursuing a Common Goal: How School Principals and After-school Directors Perceive Professional Culture of Collaboration

*Michelle Jutzi, Marianne Schuepbach, Lukas Frei,  
Wim Nieuwenboom & Benjamin von Allmen*

**Abstract:** Using quantitative data from school principals (SPs) and after-school program directors (ASDs) in 37 primary schools and after-school programs (ASPs) in Switzerland, this study examines the Perceived Professional Culture of Collaboration (PPCoC) as an aspect of school culture and professionalism of educational staff. The group comparisons confirm that the ASDs and SPs significantly differ on how they rate the PPCoC, even if they belong to the same school context. However, this study did not find significant group differences on the goals which the two leaders associate with the development of the ASP. Regression analyses indicate that having written guidelines focused on collaboration is the strongest predictor of a positive rating of the PPCoC for both leaders. PPCoC ratings for ASDs were additionally linked to their individual goals towards ASPs. Finally, this study points out that organizational attributes and individual goals are connected to the development of a shared attitude towards collaboration (PPCoC) as an important aspect of the quantity and quality of ASP development, as a means to define the goals and professionalize ASP practice.

**Keywords:** Professionalism, After-School Programs, Collaboration, Collective Attitudes, Organizational Development, School Culture

## Introduction

Together with an orientation towards innovation, planning and goals, strong leadership and a positive working climate, collaboration is an important aspect of an institution's organizational culture and professionalism (Bonsen, 2005; Kamski, 2011; Rollett & Holtappels, 2010; Sachs, 2003). For extended learning and after-school programs (ASPs), collaboration with the school is crucial for two main reasons: First, to ensure the quantity of the ASP, since schools are an important actor for promoting the benefit of ASPs. Second, collaboration is considered an aspect of ASP quality (Holtappels, Lossen, Spillebeen, & Tillmann, 2011; Holtappels & Rollett, 2009; Maag Merki, 2015; Speck, Olk, & Stimpel, 2011).

Collaboration between teachers is a characteristic of the "new transformative professionalism" (Sachs, 2003), a basis for school development and a result of continuous reflection and exchange between educational professionals (Berkenmeyer,

Järvinen, Otto, & Bos, 2011; Maag Merki, 2015). The notion of a “professional culture” is not only directed towards individual improvement of staff members’ competences, but also toward jointly and collaboratively designing a mutual practice within an institution where professional exchange and reflection may take place. From a multi-professional perspective, collaboration between ASP staff and teachers is influenced by their respective professional background and socialization (Breuer & Reh, 2010; Maag Merki, 2015; Speck, Olk, & Stimpel, 2011).

To date, many studies have focused on the content, frequency and intensity of the mutual exchange in the educational context from an individual point of view (Steinert & Maag Merki, 2009). The findings suggest that the benefit of collaboration for educational professionals that comes from extending their professional knowledge and building a professional identity largely depends on individual perceptions and attitudes (Berkenmeyer et al., 2011; Holtappels et al., 2011; Speck, Olk, & Stimpel 2011).

Contrary to this approach, we focus in the following paper on the perceived professional culture of collaboration (PPCoC) between the school and the ASP as jointly shared norms of daily work (Maag Merki, 2015). Similar to the study by Speck et al. (2011) we look at *professional culture*, referring to a shared practice which is to some extent detached from individual perceptions. On the basis of recent research we assume that three main aspects influence the PPCoC: The school context (1), shared norms and values in the school organization (2) and individual attitudes of leaders towards collaboration (3). Collaboration is influenced by common goals for both the school and ASP as expressed in school’s written guidelines as well as factors of the school context (Holtappels et al., 2011; Holtappels & Rollett, 2009; Maag Merki, 2015).

In the last decade, there has been a surge in the development of ASPs in Switzerland in the aftermath of a federal law passed in 2008 (EDK & SODK, 2008). In many cases, the ASPs are organized as separate institutions with an after-school program director (ASD) and a team of after-school staff with diverse educational backgrounds and training (Jutzi, Schüpbach, & Thomann, 2013; Maag Merki, 2015). Even though the school and the ASP are two distinctive institutions, they share the same population (the students and parents), the same structure of the school context, and have to collaborate with the same local educational board (ERZBE, 2009). In Swiss ASPs, the staff is responsible for a heterogeneous group of students who spend their lunch breaks and afternoons in the setting. Since the time the students spend in the ASP is divided up into short modules (about 1-1.5 hours), and the participation is voluntary with parents liable to pay costs and fees on a sliding scale, the ASP often bridges school and home (learning) culture (Schüpbach, Jutzi, & Thomann, 2012).

Even though ASPs are an increasing phenomenon in the Swiss school context, their organizational role in the educational system has neither yet been clearly defined nor studied. Whereas research points out the importance of enriching afternoon care for school-aged students (Schüpbach, 2010), in practice, ASPs are often implemented as a reaction to social needs for reliable institutionalized care in the community (Aeberli & Binder, 2005). This is why the current nationwide study “Educare-TaSe”, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, aims at investigat-

ing the practices, goals, guidelines and forms of collaboration between the schools and ASPs in 53 Swiss school settings.

To summarize, we assume that the PPCoC can be influenced by aspects of the school culture and climate, particularly those aspects which enhance or develop individual competences and daily practices directed towards reaching common goals. We argue that the realized level of PPCoC represents the matching of professional cultures between school and ASP leaders and may therefore be an important basis for further development of collaborative practices and ASPs in general.

## Review of Literature

### *Professional Culture of Collaboration*

In educational contexts, collaboration is often considered a means to improve instructional quality and promote school improvement (Gräsel, Fussangel, & Pröbstel, 2006). Nevertheless, recent research points out that in many schools, collaboration between teachers can be seen as guiding idea, but seldom as an important part of daily practice (Speck et al., 2011). In teacher collaboration research in German-speaking countries, several different approaches to measure and operationalize collaboration have been tested, such as hierarchical models accounting for different *contents, frequencies and levels of collaboration* (Bonsen, 2005; Maag Merki, 2009; Maag Merki, Kunz, Werner, & Luder, 2010; Steinert et al., 2006). Studies on teacher collaboration furthermore find that collaboration is mainly developed on a case- or student-specific level and less often for common planning purposes (Bonsen, 2005; Maag Merki et al., 2010; Roos & Wandeler, 2012; Steinert et al., 2006). Other research emphasizes that the *intensity of* (Dizinger, Fussangel, & Böhm-Kasper, 2011; Tillmann & Rollett, 2011) as well as the *attitudes* towards collaboration are important for the realized collaborative practice (Maag Merki et al., 2010). For example, Roos and Wandeler (2012) point out that in Swiss schools, the perceived *effectiveness of collaboration* depends on clear role distribution and task development, and on a positive team culture.

Therefore, several studies highlight that collaboration should be measured as a multidimensional, complex construct which is influenced by structures and processes of the school context (Maag Merki, 2009; Steinert & Maag Merki, 2009). In this article, we argue that collaborative practice can only be successful if the *professional culture of collaboration* is based on a common theory of change (Connell & Kubisch, 1998) for the ASP. This implies consensus between the school and the ASP on aspects of program evaluation, quality and effectiveness such as: the intended outcome of the activities; strategies on how those might be achieved; and which contextual factors have to be considered to establish effective programs. We argue that if goals are well-matched, as are guidelines and orientations towards the development of ASPs between the school and after-school leaders, it is more likely that the professional culture of collaboration will be perceived more positively.

## *Goals of Effective Professional Collaboration*

The qualitative studies by Schüpbach et al. (2012) and Jutzi et al. (2013) in 10 ASPs in Switzerland found that even though there are differences between the ASPs considering the attitudes towards collaboration, the school principals (SPs) and ASDs mostly agree on the conditions that promote positive collaborative practices. Conditions on the structural-, and interpersonal levels and aspects concerning the team itself emerged from the systematic analysis of the qualitative data. On the structural level, setting clear goals, having written guidelines and providing opportunities for collaboration in formal or informal settings play an important role. Written concepts help to entrench a positive attitude and culture of collaboration in the school and clarify the institutional role of the ASP (Böttcher, Maykus, Altermann, & Liesegang, 2011; Kamski, 2011; Maag Merki, 2015; Tillmann & Rollett, 2011). Nevertheless, the analysis of school and ASP guidelines, qualitative materials and observations by Speck et al. (2011) shows that there is a considerable discrepancy between the aspirations expressed in written guidelines and the statements of the practitioners. The authors highlight three aspects of how to set the stage for positive culture of collaboration: Align written concepts to realistic implementations (1), communicate expectations towards the benefit and meaning of collaboration (2), balance autonomy and participation/collegiality (3).

## A Theoretical Model: Dimensions Affecting the PPCoC

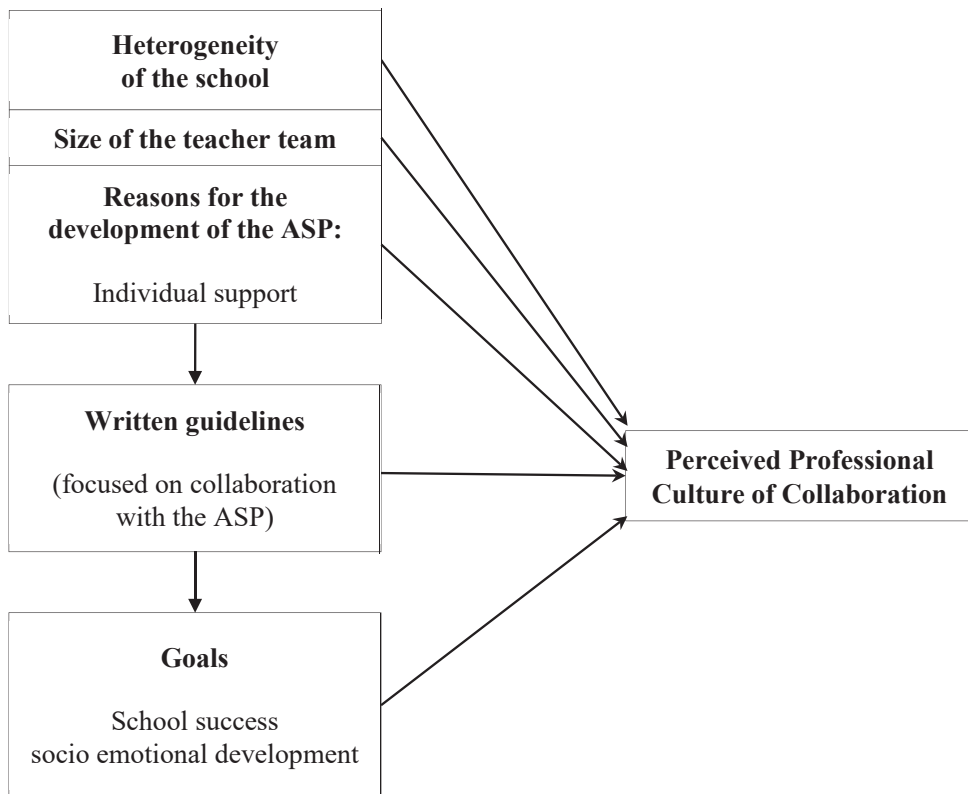
In line with Rollett and Holtappels (2010), we focus on two (of the three) different dimensions affecting the collaboration between ASPs and the school: The *goals and guidelines*, and the *organizational culture*. According to their theoretical and empirical model, setting common goals which focus on designing and shaping a context-dependent common culture of learning, and a joint approach to pedagogical action between school and ASP has positive effects on the school organization and climate. Furthermore, collaborative practice is one of the most important aspects of the organizational culture, innovative practice, and quality (Steinert & Maag Merki, 2009). Therefore, we investigate the effect of common goal orientation and clear guideline communication on the development of the PPCoC.

We focus on the intermediate level of the shared practice of collaboration rather than on the intensity of collaboration. In line with the concept of professional collaboration (Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Speck et al., 2011), we assume that the collaborative practice highly correlates with PPCoC. The collective or group, therefore, carries different values and assigns social roles to the participants which leads to the development of a commonly shared organizational reality (Buske, 2014).

In the present study, we consider only the self-reported collective attitudes of school and after-school leaders, and take them as representative of the attitudes in their team. We focus on leaders because collaboration research shows that school principals and after-school program directors play an important role for developing a positive school climate of change and while implementing collaborative practices

(Bonsen, 2005; Gajda & Koliba, 2008; Maag Merki, 2015; Steinert & Maag Merki, 2009). Figure 1 shows the theoretical connection between the different variables. The main goal of this study is to analyze aspects that are associated with the PPCoC between SP and ASD of the same school. First, we look at structural aspects of the school context (heterogeneity of the school, size of the team and the reasons for the development of the ASP). Second, on an intermediate, organizational level, we look at written guidelines for the development of ASPs and how they correlate with the shared innovative practices among ASPs and schools. And third, we investigate the effect of the individual goals of leaders on the development on their own perception of the professional culture of collaboration.

Figure 1. Factors influencing the PPCoC adapted from Holtappels et al. (2011) and Rollett and Holtappels (2010)



## Hypotheses

In alignment with the theoretical model, the testing and examining of the hypotheses follow a sequential logic:

H1: The PPCoC can be operationalized by items which represent *intentionality and positive connotation of collaboration* such as effectiveness, structure, consciousness and perceived outcome of the collaborative activity.

H2: Since the PPCoC is measured as *an attitude and shared collective approach* towards professional exchange within schools, the ASD and SP will display similar levels of PPCoC.

H3: There are no systematic group differences between the *goals* the ASD and SP associated with the development of ASPs.

H4: Having a positive attitude towards the PPCoC is influenced by aspects of the school context, school organization and the individual goals of the SP and ASD.

## Methods

### *Design and Sample*

The data is taken from a quantitative survey funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation administered in 53 primary schools and ASPs from 13 German-speaking cantons of Switzerland in 2014. The stratified sample represents different approaches to after-school programming and the different Cantons have been used as strata. The sample only includes ASPs designed as open-attendance programs and which are offered at least 3 times a week. Fifteen schools and ASPs from the main sample had to be excluded, either because significant data from one or the other leader was missing, or because their role was not clearly defined. For example, SPs and ASDs shared responsibilities or in some cases, the SP was responsible for the school and ASP. This resulted in a subsample of 37 primary schools and ASPs from 12 German-speaking cantons of Switzerland, consisting of 5 male and 32 female ASDs and 20 male and 17 female SPs. For each SP, there is one directly matched ASD present in the sample. Even though this strict matching lead to a reduction of the sample size, we can analyze a constant set of schools in all models. Furthermore, we assume that due to the clear definition, the pairs of leaders are more comparable. This proceeding is justified since we would like to draw conclusions for the school as a whole in this study. For the analysis of the PPCoC, a sample of 74 SPs and ASDs could be considered, whereas the predictor analyses were conducted on school level (N=37 schools).



## Instruments and Scales

*Dependent variable PPCoC.* Since there currently does not exist a widely accepted way to measure the PPCoC, we developed a scale which combines aspects labeled as “intensity of collaboration”, “quality of collaboration” and “effectiveness of collaboration” (Bonsen, 2005; Roos & Wandeler, 2012). The different items have been adapted verbally to the ASP context. The seven items describe how the respondents perceive and value the collaborative practice as part of their institutional culture. Their attitude and approach to collaboration is represented by items such as: *Consciously making contact<sup>1</sup>, informing the team about the modes of collaboration, perceived success and reward (gain) from collaboration, the structure of making contact, intensity of collaboration and the definition of roles and tasks during the collaborative process.* We assume that people are more likely to engage in collaborative efforts if such efforts are valued by the team and the principals.

*Predictors.* We are looking at the influence of two different sets of predictors. While the first three independent variables are only rated by the SP and apply to the school and the ASP as a whole, the second set of predictors is based on scales that are rated by the SP and the ASD separately. Those scales are then used in the pair analyses to compare the attitudes of the SP and ASD within the same school.

*School level predictors.* As predictors of PPCoC, we considered three objective variables which are only rated by the SP for the whole school – including instruction and the extracurricular activities (ASP).

The SPs reported the *sizes of the teacher teams*, representing the size of the school. Several studies and theoretical assumptions (Holtappels et al., 2011; Maag Merki, 2009) suggest that larger teams might hinder effective collaboration practices, because contact occurs less frequently and naturally. In the sample, about 50% of the schools have relatively large teams between 25 and 63 teachers. Furthermore, the standard deviation of this measure (SD=17.34) is very large compared to the mean (M=24.27).

Second, we asked the SPs to rate the *heterogeneity of the school*. This is operationalized by the percentage of second language learners present in the school. This operationalization is based on the assumption that second language learners and children from different cultural backgrounds attend the ASPs more frequently (Marcus, Nemitz, & Spieß, 2013). To provide appropriate support for those children, collaboration between the school and the ASP is desirable. According to the Federal Statistical Office (BFS, 2015), schools where more than 30% of the student population are second language learners are classified as very culturally heterogeneous. Even

1 Translated from German for the PPCoC (formulated for SPs): *SLKoop\_Schule03*: „Die Zusammenarbeit mit den Mitarbeitenden des Tagesschulangebots bezüglich einzelner SuS gelingt uns gut“; *SLKoop\_Schule04*: „Wir versuchen ganz bewusst, bei Schwierigkeiten mit einzelnen SuS den Kontakt mit den Mitarbeitenden des Tagesschulangebots aufzunehmen“; *SLKoop\_Schule05*: „Alle Mitarbeitenden der Schule werden über die bei uns vorherrschenden Formen der Zusammenarbeit mit den Mitarbeitenden des Tagesschulangebots informiert“; *SLKoop\_Schule06*: „Die schülerspezifische Zusammenarbeit mit den Mitarbeitenden des Tagesschulangebots ist bereichernd für uns“; *SLKoop\_Schule09*: „Es gibt einen klaren Ablauf für die Kontaktaufnahme mit den Mitarbeitenden des Tagesschulangebots, wenn eine Zusammenarbeit notwendig ist“; *SLKoop\_Schule10*: „Wir arbeiten mit den Mitarbeitenden des Tagesschulangebots intensiv bezüglich einzelner SuS zusammen“; *SLKoop\_Schule11*: „Die Aufgaben- und Rollenverteilung in der Zusammenarbeit mit den Mitarbeitenden des Tagesschulangebots ist klar und angemessen“

though the mean in the sample is close to a low heterogeneity, the frequency analysis shows, that 16 of the SPs report a high percentage of more than 30% second language learners, whereas 14 SPs rate the heterogeneity as mediocre and only 7 as lower than 15%.

In the study by Holtappels & Rollett (2010), the authors asked the SPs which *reasons motivated the development* of an ASP in the local school or community. From the four items describing socio-pedagogical reasons for the development of ASPs, we chose to use only two: *Improvement of educational opportunities*<sup>2</sup> and *improvement of individualized support*. Both these items refer to reasons which are directly linked to the individual and academic support of students and are less likely to reflect other, more economically oriented reasons for the development of the ASP. Also, we might assume that if the reasons for the development of the ASP are focused on student learning, there might also be a stronger motivation to develop collaboration between the school and the ASD. The descriptive statistics show that the mean is rather low, indicating that the SPs often do not agree with the statement that the ASP has been developed to support student learning ( $M=1.19$ ;  $SD=.75$ ). Nevertheless, the high standard deviation suggests that the differences between the SPs might be worth considering.

*Individually rated predictors.* As a second set of variables, we looked at predictors which were rated by both the SP and the ASD on a collective and individual level. Using these predictors, we can directly compare the ratings of the leaders within the same school context.

According to Rollett and Holtappels (2010), having *written guidelines* in the school that focus on the collaboration between school and ASP correlates with the overall quality of collaborative practice. We used three different items (adapted from Rollett and Holtappels (2010)) to gauge the extent to which guidelines focus on the systematic connection between school and ASP, the collaboration and exchange between teachers and ASP staff. Whereas the SP rated how collaboration is treated in the school's written guidelines, the ASD did the same for the ASP's written guidelines. Those guidelines might to some extent overlap in content. The descriptive statistics of the comparison between SP and ASD show that the ASD slightly more often report that collaboration with the school is declared in the ASP's guidelines ( $M=1.68$ ;  $SD=.80$ ) than the SPs do for the schools' ( $M=1.05$ ;  $SD=.79$ ).

Lastly, we assessed the *goals of SPs and ASDs* concerning ASPs in general. In contrast to Holtappels and Rollett (2009), the items were reformulated to focus on the individual attitudes of the leaders and only a part of the scale has been included. The factor analysis confirmed two one-dimensional scales of the goals: goals of improving the *student's academic success* (learning motivation, support of students with special needs, increasing academic performance and avoiding boredom with school) and the *socio emotional development of the students* (supporting talented students, social learning, health consciousness and well-being, focusing on psychosocial difficulties). Comparing the means of both goal orientations shows that the SP as well as the ASD report that they widely consider goals concerning socio-emotional support

2 German Translation of the items measuring the reasons which motivated the development of ASPs: *SLBeweggr03*: „Verbesserung der Bildungschancen“; *SLBeweggr04*: „Verbesserung der individuellen Förderung“

in the ASP ( $M_{SP}=2.14$ ;  $M_{ASD}=2.28$ ), whereas they say that they only to some degree pursue goals focused on school success of the students ( $M_{SP}=1.15$ ;  $M_{ASD}=1.18$ ). Standard deviations are stable and low across groups and between the two goals (about .60), suggesting that differences between groups and schools are low. Nevertheless, the ASDs rate the focus on clear set goals slightly higher than the SPs.

## Analysis

To address the previously mentioned hypotheses, we use multivariate hierarchical regression as well as t-tests to account for group differences (SP and ASD) and intraclass correlations to investigate whether or not PPCoC is a collective construct within the schools. However, that work is predicated on the one-dimensionality and internal consistency of the new scale called “Perceived Professional Culture of Collaboration”, which has to be analyzed by reliability measures, and exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory factor analyses (CFA). For the CFA, we used Mplus 7.4 (Mutèn & Mutèn 2010) and all other analyses have been computed in SPSS.

*Table 1.* Scale parameters: Predictor variables

	Name of the Variables & Scales	# of items	Scaling	N	M	SD	$\alpha$
One rating per school (by SP)	Heterogeneity of the school	1	1 (<15%) 2 (16–30%) 3 (>30%)	37	1.24	.76	-
	Size of the teacher team	1	metric	37	24.27	17.34	-
	Reasons for development: Individual support	2	0–4	37	1.19	.75	.74
Individually rated by SP and ASD	Perceived Professional Culture of Collaboration (PPCoP)	7	0–4	74	2.57	.98	.89
	Written guidelines	3	0–4	74	1.37	.85	.88
	Goals: School success	4	0–4	74	1.17	.58	.79
	Goals: Socio-emotional development	5	0–4	74	2.21	.54	.77

## Results

### *Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses of the PPCoC Scale*

In an exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, we validated the structures of the measured construct of PPCoC<sup>3</sup>. The exploratory factor analysis (varimax rotation) proved that the scale is suitable for factor analysis (KMO and Bartlett = .000\*\*\*), is a one-dimensional construct, and displays high internal consistency and good reliability measures (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .89$ ). The model as specified in Mplus has been fitted considering the whole sample of SPs and ASDs ( $n=74$ ). The standardized estimates show that there exists an acceptable positive correlation between all 7 items and the latent construct of PPCoC with factor loadings above .60. When allowing correlations between the error terms of certain items (PPCoC\_03 with \_09 and PPCoC\_05 with \_11), this default model shows a good fit, except for the RMSEA, which is rather high (RMSEA=.077; CFI=.98; TLI=.97; SRMR=.037). This result is confirmed in correlation analysis on an item level. The correlations between the individual items are relatively strong (all above .45) and significant for all items. The items with correlated error terms also correlate significantly with an  $r=.49$  (PPCoC\_03 & \_09) and  $r=.40$  (PPCoC\_05 & \_11).

### *PPCoC as a Shared Collective Approach of a School*

Furthermore, we examined whether PPCoC represents a shared collective approach of a school. Since ASD and SP pairs are nested within schools, we expect them to share a similar level of PPCoC (H2). Overall, the two groups of educational leaders differ in their ratings of the PPCoC ( $t=2.63(36)$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ;  $M=.48$ ;  $SD=1.13$ ;  $d=.39$ ). The ASDs rate the PPCoC considerably higher than the SPs ( $M_{SP}=2.32$ ;  $M_{ASD}=2.81$ ), whereas they show comparable standard deviations ( $SD_{SP}=.94$ ;  $SD_{ASD}=.98$ ).

Assuming that PPCoC represents a collective construct for each school, rated by both the ASD and the SP, we calculated an intraclass-correlation (one-way random, absolute agreement,  $N=37$ ). With an intraclass correlation of  $\rho = .28$  ( $p \leq .05$ ), ratings by ASD and SP correlate significantly. However, the intraclass correlation is far below the recommended value of  $\rho = .70$  (Wirtz, 2014), which would indicate a good interrater agreement. Therefore, the notion of PPCoC as a shared collective approach of a school could not be confirmed.

The low intraclass correlation indicates that there is a considerable discrepancy concerning the ratings also among pairs, not just between the groups of ASDs and SPs as a whole.

3 Threshold criteria (Hu & Bentler, 1999)

**Table 2.** Intraclass Correlation Coefficients: Differences of PPCoC within schools

	Intraclass Correlation	F-Test with true value 0			
		value	df1	df2	<i>p</i>
Single measures	.28	1.90	36	36	0.03

Note: One-way random effects model; intraclass correlation coefficients using an absolute definition; N (pairs)= 37.

### *Group Differences for the Individual Goals for ASPs Between ASD and SP*

Since the ASD and SP often work together during the development of the ASP concept and structure we assume that there are no systematic differences in the goals associated with ASPs between the SP and ASD (H3). Furthermore, we assume that a matching goal orientation of the leaders has a positive effect on how they perceive the culture of collaboration. The paired t-tests for the focus on academic goals and goals concerning the socio emotional development of ASPs confirm that the differences between the two leader groups are not significant ( $t=.23(36)$ ;  $t=1.37(36)$ ). This t-test compares the means of the pairs where the mean of the SP rating is subtracted from the mean of the ASD rating. Therefore, for both goal orientation measures, the positive results show that the rating of the ASD is slightly (yet not significantly) higher than the one of the SP.

**Table 3.** Paired t-tests for the two leader groups (ASD – SP)

		M	SD	t	df	<i>p</i>
Pair 1	ASD – SP goal: Academic success	.03	.87	.23	36	.82
Pair 2	ASD – SP goal: Socioemotional development	.14	.63	1.37	36	.18

Note: N (pairs)= 37.

### *Influence of Contextual, Organizational and Individual Aspects on PPCoC*

Since the SPs and ASDs show different perceptions of the culture of collaboration in their school, we attempt to further account for these different response behaviors by computing hierarchical regression analyses. In two different approaches, we will firstly consider how *structural aspects* of the school organization as a whole influence the SP's rating of the PPCoC. In a second approach we investigate how the *goals set in the written guidelines* of the school and the ASP respectively influence the rating of the PPCoC. In this second approach we can compare two different models for the SPs and the ASDs. Furthermore, we will also look at whether an *individual focus on specific goals* has a different influence on the SP's and ASD's PPCoC.

*Approach 1: Structural aspects and SP's rating of PPCoC.* In the multiple hierarchical regression model<sup>4</sup>, predicting the PPCoC rating of the SP, we entered the different variables blockwise, testing two different models. On the basis of cited literature, we assumed that the size of the teacher team as well as the percentage of second language learners are contextual factors which might influence the SPs rating of the PPCoC. Secondly, we entered the motivation in the community for development of the ASP into the regression model. If we look at table 4, only the reasons for development on the intermediate level of the school organization in model 2 have a significant effect on the PPCoC ( $\beta=.39, p\leq.05$ ), accounting for 14% of the variance ( $p\leq.05$ ).

*Table 4.* Variables measured on school level: Variables which the SP rates for the school on the individual PPCoC of the SP

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2
	$\beta$ (SE)	$\beta$ (SE)
School heterogeneity	-.02(.21)	-.13(.21)
Teacher	.14(.01)	.12(.01)
Reasons for development: Individual support		.39*(.21)
R <sup>2</sup>	.02	.16
$\Delta R^2$	.02	.14*

Note: N (only school principals) = 37; \* $p\leq.05$ . \*\* $p\leq.01$  \*\*\* $p\leq.001$ .

This second model suggests that if the SPs report individual support for the students as an important reason for developing ASP in the community, they also rate the PPCoC higher.

*Approach 2: Influence of written guidelines and individual goals of SP and ASD.* In this approach, we are going to present two different tables (see table 5 & 6) where we specifically focus on either the SP or ASD ratings.

The hierarchical regression model regarding SP's ratings of PPCoC<sup>5</sup> is shown in table 5. In Model 1, collaboration as an aspect in the written guidelines of the school was entered as predictor, explaining 15% of the variance in the SP's ratings of PPCoC: The more collaboration is focused in the written guidelines of the school, the higher the SPs also rate the PPCoC ( $\beta =.38, p\leq.05$ ). In the second model, individual goals of the SPs with regard to ASPs were entered as predictors. Both goals which are either focused on school success or on socio emotional learning failed to show a significant effect, while the effect of written guidelines was still significant ( $\beta =.42, p\leq.05$ ).

4 The model (only SP variables) meets the assumptions regarding auto-correlation (Durbin-Watson =1.87, while 2 stands for no auto correlation) and multicollinearity (Variance inflation factor (VIF) is between 1.01 and 1.11 (cut-off >5)). Condition index is below 6.

5 The model meets the assumptions regarding auto correlation (Durbin-Watson = 1.79 while 2 stands for no auto-correlation) and multicollinearity (Variance inflation factor (VIF) is between 1.00 and 1.10 (cut-off >5)). Condition index is below 12.

*Table 5.* Hierarchical regression for the influence of organizational and individual level predictors on the dependent variable PPCoC of the SP

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2
	$\beta$ (SE)	$\beta$ (SE)
Collaboration in the written guidelines of the school	.38*(.19)	.42*(.19)
SP goals school success		-.28(.25)
SP goals socio-emotional development		-.02(.28)
R <sup>2</sup>	.15	.22
$\Delta R^2$	.15*	.08

Note: N (only school principals) = 37; \* $p \leq .05$ . \*\* $p \leq .01$  \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

The same hierarchical regression model was calculated with regard to ASD's ratings of PPCoC<sup>6</sup> (table 6) to explore whether the effects of the predictors depend on the profession or role of the leader in the school (SP vs. ASD). Again, collaboration as an aspect in the written guidelines of the school was entered as predictor, explaining 25% of the variance in the ASD's ratings of PPCoC. The more collaboration is focused in the written guidelines of the after-school program, the higher the ASDs also rate the PPCoC ( $\beta = .50$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ). In the second model, individual goals of the ASDs regarding ASPs were entered as predictors, explaining an additional 25% of the variance in PPCoC. Contrary to the regression models for SPs, goals which are either focused on school success ( $\beta = .38$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ) or on socio-emotional learning ( $\beta = -.49$ ,  $p \leq .01$ ) showed a significant effect: ASD's ratings of PPCoC were higher, if they reported a stronger focus on school success and a smaller focus on socio emotional learning. Written guidelines still showed a significant effect ( $\beta = .51$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ), adding to a total of 49% explained variance in PPCoC, as rated by ASDs.

*Table 6.* Hierarchical regression for the influence of organizational and individual level predictors on the dependent variable PPCoC of the ASD

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2
	$\beta$ (SE)	$\beta$ (SE)
Collaboration in the written guidelines of the ASP	.50**(.18)	-.51***(.17)
ASD goals school success		.38(.27)*
ASD goals socio-emotional development		-.49(.27)**
R <sup>2</sup>	.25	.49
$\Delta R^2$	.25**	.25**

Note: N (only after-school directors) = 37; \* $p \leq .05$ . \*\* $p \leq .01$  \*\*\* $p \leq .001$ .

Overall we might conclude from the regression analyses that firstly the strongest effect was found for the written guidelines on collaboration between the school and

6 The model meets the assumptions regarding auto correlation (Durbin-Watson = 2.34 while 2 stands for no auto-correlation) and multicollinearity (Variance inflation factor (VIF) is between 1.03 and 1.06 (cut-off >5)). Condition index below 14



the ASP. Also, we can see that the model explains more variance for the ASDs than the SPs, with individual goals explaining additional variance in PPCoC.

## Discussion

In this article we tested four hypotheses regarding the development of a professional culture of collaboration (PPCoC) between school and after-school programs (ASPs).

### *H1: Operationalizing PPCoC*

Contrary to prior research, collaboration is operationalized as collective shared culture rated by the leading or managing persons on the actions of their staff. The exploratory and conformational factor analyses confirm our first hypothesis. The PPCoC is a latent factor that is defined by seven items adapted from research on teacher collaboration which show positive results for reliability and validity. PPCoC is a consistent, one-dimensional scale focusing on intentionality and positive connotation of collaboration. The construct reflects how the leaders rate the professional culture within their team and cannot be interpreted as a measure of realized collaborative practice.

These results are aligned with prior research, since the items have been adapted from recent studies which highlight that collaboration is a complex phenomenon, has to be analyzed from different perspectives, and does not only depend on the intensity and frequency (Maag Merki, 2009; Maag Merki et al., 2010). Shared collective attitudes toward collaboration – which we measured with PPCoC – also might be correlated more highly with other shared aspects of collective cultural practice, such as working climate and innovative practice and detached from individual preferences. Therefore, we might assume that a high PPCoC could also be related to a higher quality of collaboration and therefore the intentional quality enrichment of the ASP. Nevertheless, the concept of “good” or “effective” collaboration between school and ASP must be further investigated to draw conclusions for the relationship between collaboration, innovation and quality in ASPs.

### *H2: PPCoC as a Feature of Shared School Culture*

Contrary to our hypothesis, the paired t-tests highlight that there exist small but significant differences between the ratings of the SP and ASD on PPCoC. Furthermore, the low intraclass correlation coefficient could not confirm the notion of PPCoC as a shared collective concept between SPs and ASDs. Even though the two leaders of the same school seem to have a similar tendency on the rating of PPCoC, the intraclass correlations show that there is no strong correlation between the attitudes to PPCoC of the two leaders within the same school. This might be interpreted as an indication that the SP and the ASD have other values and perceptions on PPCoC and how collaborative actions are transferred into practice.

This finding is interesting, since we assumed that the two leaders are rating and operating in the same organizational context and therefore would report a similar PPCoC. Therefore, we have to reject the second hypothesis. This finding is consistent with prior research on the different perceptions of collaboration between teachers and ASP staff (Arnold, 2009; Beher et al., 2007). Maag Merki (2015) observes that there is currently no theoretical model which accounts for the complexity of the actor constellations in the collaboration between ASPs and schools (ibid. p. 91).

### *H3: Common Goal Orientation of the SP and ASD*

For the individual goals, the t-tests show that the SPs and ASDs do not significantly differ on their goals for the ASP. Nevertheless, the ASDs report slightly more often that their focus and aim for the ASP is to promote student learning in school but also regarding student's socio emotional development. This indicates that not only the SPs, but also the ASDs value the ASP as an institution which fosters academic enrichment, and also fulfills a role as a bridging institution with a positive, familiar atmosphere where children learn and spend their leisure time.

### *H4: Influence of Contextual, Organizational and Individual Aspects on PPCoC*

Whether or not the aspects on different levels of influence have an effect on the development of PPCoC has been analyzed by multiple hierarchical regressions. Contrary to prior research, we find that the size of the team and heterogeneity of the school as contextual aspects of the school have no significant effect on the PPCoC of the SP (Holtappels et al., 2011). On the contextual level, only the reasons for the development of the ASP in the community, which are focused on promoting individual learning, are significantly associated with how the SPs rate the PPCoC. This might be interpreted as an indication that if the SPs think that providing individual support for students is an important goal of the development of the ASP, they also are more open to informing their team about collaboration with the ASP, they more often report that they consciously make contact with the ASP and rate the expected success and reward from collaboration higher (which are all items of PPCoC).

For the SP and the ASD, having written guidelines which focus on collaboration is a strong predictor of how they rate the PPCoC. This indicates for both leaders that if they have already discussed collaboration in the team and have a clear vision for collaboration, this is positively associated with their rating of the PPCoC. Therefore, we can only partially confirm this hypothesis (H4) insofar that different levels of the organization and individuals do influence the PPCoC.

Moreover, there exist important differences between the ASDs and SPs aligned with the regression models considering their individual goals. Focusing on the goal that the ASP should be aiming at supporting school success might have a positive influence on the rating of the PPCoC for the ASDs. On the other hand, ASDs who think that socio emotional development is an important aspect of ASPs show lower ratings in the PPCoC. This negative effect might be interpreted as an indication that

focusing on goals which are not associated with academic achievement might be a reason to focus less on the collaboration with the school and rather strengthen the autonomy of the ASP. For SPs, neither their goals regarding school success nor socio emotional development are linked to their ratings of PPCoC.

In sum, there exist considerable differences in the PPCoC rating between the leader groups, especially within the same school. This supports the assumption that the ASPs are distinctive educational institutions with their own culture and PPCoC in the larger scheme of the school. Establishing written guidelines with a focus on collaboration showed the strongest link to PPCoC rated by both SPs and ASDs. Regarding individual goals, the results are less straightforward. On the basis of these findings we might suggest that the ASDs take action and formulate guidelines and communicate goals, and actively seek out the collaboration with the school. This has to be subject of further studies which should account for the development of the PPCoC and how this is connected to individual and collective aspects and characteristics.

When investigating collaboration, we have to consider the different institutional structures and differences in the professional scope of action between teachers and ASP staff as well as individual attitudes towards collaborative practice. Kremer, Maynard, Polanin, Vaughn, and Sarteschi (2015) argue in their meta-analysis that ASPs have to be explicit about their program goals, because “simply implementing after-school program with hopes that it will have positive impacts on a number of outcomes without building in a specific mechanism to impact those outcomes are likely to fail” (ibid, p. 630). To some extent, our results also suggest that from the perspective of the ASDs, collaboration with the school might be more desirable than for the SPs. Therefore, the ASDs, should be advised to take action and discuss collaborative action in their team to strengthen the collaborative culture. For the SPs, other factors than the goals and guidelines might come into play when they rate how they perceive the collaborative culture. Further and more detailed studies are needed to answer these questions and follow these processes more closely. Nevertheless, the school’s readiness to collaborate is an important aspect of the implemented practice.

## Limitations and Future Research

Until now, the attitudes towards collaboration of two leaders in the same organizational context have not yet been studied. Given the small sample size of the study, some restrictions have to be considered in the interpretation of the findings. Therefore, the described scales and mechanisms should be explored in a larger sample, and the development of PPCoC over time should be considered. Nevertheless, the present paper points towards an interesting interplay between the organizational context of the school and individual and collective attitudes of the leaders as a starting point for future research.

### *Collaborative Practice as a Multidimensional Construct*

The present as well as prior research points out that collaboration should be assessed as a multidimensional construct compiling of attitudes, anticipations, individual and collective perceptions and modes of action as well as the realized collaborative practice in the unique context of the educational setting. Further research might focus on how those aspects of collaboration interplay and how those correlations might describe a construct of effective and productive collaboration for daily practice between school and ASP. How, for example, does the content and topic of collaboration (homework, socio-emotional differences etc.) influence the PPCoC?

### *Collective Attitudes and Organizational Climate*

Further research should focus on how aspects of the organizational context other than the ones measured here might influence the PPCoC – for example, ASP quality, working climate, innovative practice, or other aspects of shared collective attitudes. Buske (2014) for example argues that permanent social interaction might lead to the formation of social groups and therefore intensify collaboration over time. As shown in this article, the school culture and culture of the ASP as separate institutional contexts should be coming into focus when further investigating the collaboration between school and ASP. In this case it might be interesting to leave the leadership perspective and also investigate the attitudes of ASP staff.

### *Roles and Professional Concept of Leadership in ASPs*

Since the present study highlights systematic differences in the ratings of ASDs and SPs, we might consider the ASDs as a new and independent profession which has to fulfill other tasks than the SPs. Interestingly, we found that if the ASDs focus on goals concerning the socio emotional for the ASP, a positive influence is not necessarily conferred on the PPCoC. Nevertheless, we might argue that goal conformity between the ASD and SP might lead to the development of a common theory of change and community of practice. Leadership practice, though, might significantly differ between the two contexts, which should be taken into account in future investigations.

In conclusion, leadership and collaboration in ASPs is a field of growing interest. Functional interchange between the two educational institutions is a precondition for providing a qualitatively enriching and quantitatively adequate extended education experience for children in modern society. From a governance perspective, the way SPs perceive ASPs sets the stage for productive collaborative practice. Therefore, especially in some cantons in Switzerland, the ASPs are developing as an important factor in the educational system, and they need find their role in the informal and formal context of educational practice.

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# Multiprofessional Collaboration Between Teachers and Other Educational Staff at German All-day Schools as a Characteristic of Today's Professionalism

*Oliver Böhm-Kasper, Vanessa Dizinger & Pia Gausling*

**Abstract:** The present article uses two empirical studies to look at multiprofessional collaboration between teachers and other educational staff at German all-day schools. A quantitative study is used both to develop an instrument for the measurement of multiprofessional collaboration and to analyse the connections between collaborative action and characteristic features of the teaching staff. Additionally, a qualitative study throws light on the extent, challenges and evaluation of multiprofessional collaboration at all-day schools. The two studies point to the fact that multiprofessional collaboration is underdeveloped at German all-day schools as well as to future challenges for closer collaboration between teachers and other educational staff.

**Keywords:** collaboration, professionalism, teachers, all-day staff, all-day school

## Introduction

The German school system used to be characterised mostly through Halbtagschulen (where teaching takes place from 8 am to 1 pm). Since 2000, however, Germany has undergone a substantial programme in which new all-day schools were developed and already existing ones were expanded. An all-day school is a school with an all-day programme form (mostly from 8 am to 5 pm) consisting of the instruction time plus extended education and leisure-time offerings. In addition to regular instruction, an all-day school provides morning, lunchtime, and afternoon education and care. As to their formal organization, a distinction is made between all-day schools with “open”, “compulsory”, and “partially compulsory” all-day attendance (“offene”, “gebundene” and “teilweise gebundene” Ganztagschule). The compulsory attendance all-day school has obligatory school hours in the morning and afternoon, in part rhythmic, for all students. In the partially compulsory form of all-day school attendance is only for a part of students (e.g. individual classes or different grades) obligatory. The open all-day school has regular hours of school instruction (mostly in the morning) plus optional offerings attended by a part of the students, mostly concentrated on lunch, games, sports, recreational activities and homework help from

teachers and other educational professionals. These extracurricular activities can be provided by the school or an outside organization (cf. Schüpbach & von Allmen, 2013, p. 19).

All-day schools differ from half-day schools not only by extending the school day, but also by a different composition of the staff: At half-day schools the staff consist almost exclusively of teachers. In some half-day schools also social workers or professionals for children with special needs are employed. In contrast, all-day schools are characterised by an obligatory multiprofessional composition of the educational team. While the regular hours of school instruction are held by the teachers, the optional offerings are provided by other educational staff members. This staff varies from specialists with professional pedagogic training to employees with non-educational background.

These new forms of all-day education turned a high proportion of German schools (55.9% in 2012, Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2014), which used to be the exclusive work place of teachers, into institutions with different professions, thus offering chances at multiprofessional collaboration (Speck et al., 2011).

There are many ways in which multiprofessional collaboration at all-day schools seems necessary and desirable. Among other issues, more intensive collaboration between educational staff aims to the appropriate support of students. Another aspect that makes these multiprofessional cooperative activities necessary is the goal of shaping schools into promising places of joint learning and living (e.g., Steiner, 2010; Holtappels, Krinecki, & Menke, 2013; Knauer, 2010). As a result, collaboration of different educational actors may enhance schools' external relationships and the relevance of school topics for the students' living conditions.

Furthermore, increasing collaboration between different professional groups has given an influence to the debate about the professionalism as well as the professionalization of teachers and the other educational staff at all-day schools. Accordingly, people in the teaching profession can use team work to advance their own skills and abilities. In addition, collaborating partners can experience some relief in their work through synergies, and better solutions to more complex problems can be found (e.g., Hord, 1997; Reh, 2008). On the other hand, review of recent research shows non-negligible problems in the communication, participation and coordination between different educational actors at all-day schools (e.g., Arnoldt, 2009; Holtappels, Klemm, & Rolff, 2008; Beher & Rauschenbach, 2006). First of all, problems originate from the different organizational embedding of several educational professions.

The other educational staff members at all-day schools work on the basis of different labour standards, work time regulations and labour contract periods than teachers. This in turn leads to a not inconsiderable need for coordination and organization within schools (Steiner, 2010). Secondly, the collaboration between members of different educational professions is connected with various and partly conflicting understandings of educational objectives. The perception of a lack of recognition by one professional group seems to endanger multiprofessional team building processes sustainably. Not only multiprofessional collaboration, but cooperation in general can also be a stress factor. However, only a perceived value added through collaboration does justify the effort or additionally invested time (Böhm-Kasper, Dizinger, & Heitmann, 2013; Lütje-Klose & Urban, 2014).

Despite these challenges for a successful collaboration between teachers and the other educational staff, cooperation is considered to be the means of choice for the establishment of a successful teaching and learning culture in all-day schools (Horstkemper, 2011).

This article will first present a newly developed measurement of multiprofessional collaboration as well as features that may contribute to intensive multiprofessional actions. Secondly, the challenges and difficulties of collaboration between different professional groups, which result from different backgrounds and different professional self-concepts, will be explored. In this context, we will also look at the emerging goals and the impact of multiprofessional collaboration. The overall research question of both studies conducted in a mixed methods design is therefore twofold: In what manner is multiprofessional collaboration in all-day schools realized and what are the challenges and opportunities of collaborative work between teachers and the other educational staff?

## Literature Review

### *Teacher Professionalism at All-day Schools*

Collaboration as a characteristic of teacher's professionalism is a broadly discussed issue. To pose the question of teacher professionalism is to ask the wider question of what qualifications, knowledge and capacities are necessary to meet professional requirements (Englund, 1996). This is obviously related with a discussion of professionalization which, in contradistinction to professionalism, can be understood as a process aiming to give a certain group the necessary qualifications or to enable them to tackle the challenges of their professional activities (Whitty, 2000).

There is a great number of studies on teacher professionalism which reflect the multiple and controversial discourses in this field (e.g. Demirkasimoğlu, 2010). In contrast, it is hardly possible to raise the question of the professionalism of the educational staff as a group. The reason for this is that teachers belong to a clearly defined group on the basis of governmental rules and regulations concerning education, entry qualifications, employment and remuneration – while the other educational staff at all-day schools belong to a heterogeneous group. This group varies from specialists with professional pedagogic training to employees with non-educational degrees or even with no (educational) background specific to the profession (e.g. Dizinger, 2015).

In order to illustrate the features of professional action and the place that collaboration has in the context of professionalism, we will first identify features of teacher professionalism, not least because this corresponds to the major perspective adopted also in our research. Sachs (2003) formulated five core elements of teacher professionalism which are not distilled from governmental guidelines but do justice to the specific nature and the demands of a teacher's job. One of these core elements is collaboration which encompasses two aspects. The first is the collaboration and the joint construction of profession-related knowledge by the teachers within one

school. The other aspect is that such collaboration also includes other actors within and outside the school who develop their own competences and those of the teachers in the same extent through cooperative action. A further core element of teacher professionalism is *cooperation* in the wider sense which can help to relax the restrictions from which the teaching profession suffers (no real specialist language, no technology to document and discuss successful educational practice and its impact), and to get a dialogue between professional actors under way that is oriented towards critical reflection of their practice. These principles are ideally suited for work at German all-day schools as a fruitful common platform for the debate of the professional self-image of teachers and other educational staff.

### *Multiprofessional Collaboration at All-day Schools*

Multiprofessional collaboration can be defined as a collaborative act of two or more professionals from different professional groups who work in the education sector. This must be distinguished from professional collaboration at schools which refers to the collaboration of members of the same profession, e.g. teachers.

From the perspective of the theory of collaboration, the core element of any collaborative act is the common goal or task (Gräsel, Fussangel, & Pröbstel, 2006): “Collaboration is characterised by the reference to other goals or tasks that are to be jointly achieved; it is intentional, communicative and needs trust. It presupposes a certain measure of autonomy, and is committed to the norm of reciprocity” (Spieß, 2004, p. 199).

Besides this shared task or goal, there are other central characteristic features that are equally important for the definition of collaboration, one of them being the maintenance of the autonomy of the individual and the other trust and reciprocity (Böhm-Kasper, Dizinger, & Heitmann, 2013; Dizinger, 2015; Gräsel, Fussangel, & Pröbstel, 2006; Reh & Breuer, 2012). Using these features and having recourse to the model of professional teacher collaboration according to Gräsel, Fussangel and Pröbstel (2006), three levels of multiprofessional collaboration can be differentiated (Böhm-Kasper, Dizinger, & Heitmann, 2013):

(1.) The simplest form of collaboration is the mutual *exchange* of materials and information. This can serve to provide the multiprofessional collaborators with identical information; teachers and other educational staff can, for example, exchange information about certain events that took place in the morning or the afternoon. That is more of a low-cost collaboration, and in order to implement this form of cooperation it is sufficient for the collaborating partners to share general goals and have a modicum of trust in one another. Individual autonomy is also largely preserved.

(2.) *Division of labour* is a somewhat closer form of collaboration. An example is furnished by teachers dividing up thematic project work among themselves or take over parts of a conversation with parents according to their professional expertise. This form makes an agreement about common goals, division of tasks and the aggregation of results necessary in order to achieve the goals set. In addition, a certain degree of trust that the cooperating partners will carry out their part of the task is

necessary. The cooperating partners retain, however, most of their autonomy while working on the task.

(3.) *Co-construction* is to be understood as the closest form of collaboration in which a common knowledge base is constructed and common problem solutions are made possible. In co-constructive collaboration, for example, a multiprofessional steering team may develop common goals and standards for the organization of an all-day school, or a teacher and a social worker may work in a pair to produce supporting measures for individual students.

With this close form of collaboration, goals and tasks need to be determined together at least in part which makes great trust in one another absolutely essential, and the autonomy of the individual cooperating partners can be restricted.

As for the discourse on professionalism and collaboration, it should be remembered that co-constructive forms of work have the potential to develop one's own abilities and knowledge, to reflect on one's own educational actions and make use of extended collective opportunities for action in one's everyday teaching life (e.g., Gräsel, Fussangel, & Pröbstel, 2006; Reh, 2008). According to Sachs (2003), these forms of close collaboration are an integral part of professional action (cf. section 2.1). They have, however, also a higher potential for conflict than simpler forms of collaboration. Differences in professional affiliation, for example because of diverging professional self-images, different institutional embeddedness or hierarchical positions, are plain to see and have to be overcome first if collaboration is to be successful (e.g., Reh & Breuer, 2012; Maykus, 2009).

### *Multiprofessional Collaboration at All-day Schools – Taking Stock of Empirical Studies*

The findings of current qualitative and quantitative studies on the implementation of multiprofessional collaboration at German all-day schools seem to indicate that multiprofessional collaboration is an ongoing process (e.g., Beher et al., 2007; Böttcher et al., 2011; Tillmann & Rollett, 2011). Thus, there seems to be a clear division of labour between teachers and the other educational staff in their current everyday activities. Böttcher et al. (2011), for instance, report that the two groups see themselves as groups with different functions and act within their allotted domains (teaching versus *Ganztagsbereich* [work in the all-day sector]).

Given this division in terms of tasks and functions, it seems reasonable for empirical investigations to propose the hypothesis that multiprofessional collaboration as well as professional reflection on the part of teachers is directed exclusively towards global tasks and goals, such as the holistic support of students (Dizinger, 2015).

The results mentioned above can also be identified in other studies on extended education: In the following, some findings of a study by Dahl & Karlsudd (2015), which focuses on the professional role of pedagogues in Swedish leisure-time centres, are presented. The leisure-time centre in Sweden is comparable to the concept of an “all-day-school” in Germany (Klerfelt & Haglund, 2014, p. 45). The study by Dahl & Karlsudd (2015) shows that it is important for the leisure-time pedagogues to see themselves and the teachers as different professional groups with different

tasks and knowledge: “All informants state that it is important to point out that the leisure-time teacher’s profession cannot be confused with the teacher who has the traditional teaching mission. The informants claim to have their own knowledge [...]“ (Dahl & Karlsudd, 2015, p. 27).

Moreover, the closer connection between the mission of the leisure-time centres and the school activity (cf. Dahl & Karlsudd, 2015, p. 23; Andersson, 2010) leads to a clearer professional identity and to a higher occupational status: “The leisure-time teachers have acquired higher status by being a clearer part of a common educational organization. They share the curriculum, and they have received other tasks in the school” (Dahl & Karlsudd, 2015, p. 32). Therefore, such a connection between different fields of education can have a positive effect on the respective profession and on the distinction from other professional groups. Even though leisure-time centres can be compared to the concept of the all-day school in Germany, these findings are contradictory to the idea and the objective of multiprofessional collaboration at all-day schools. In comparison, a close linkage between curricular and extra-curricular content has rarely been noted in Germany. Nevertheless, where this linkage between morning and afternoon offerings does exist, it seems to further more intensive multiprofessional collaboration (e.g., Böhm-Kasper, Dizinger, & Heitmann, 2013; Holtappels, Krinecki, & Menke, 2013).

Research from Switzerland about collaboration in schools (Tagesschulen) shows that different forms of connections between curricular and extra-curricular areas exist (cf. Jutzi, Schüpbach, & Thomann, 2013, p. 96; Forrer & Schuler, 2010).

Besides, an evaluation of all-day schools in Zurich by Forrer & Schuler (2010) found out that the type of school (open all-day school or compulsory all-day school) has an influence on the collaboration between teachers and other educational professionals. At open all-day schools the other educational professionals were mainly responsible for the extended educational offerings. At compulsory all-day schools teachers and the other educational staff worked closely together (cf. Schüpbach & von Allmen, 2013, p. 26). Thus, the structure of school (open versus compulsory all-day school) plays an important role in the realization and the intensity of collaboration.

Empirical investigations in English-speaking countries, which analyse “multiprofessional collaboration or interprofessional collaboration“, refer mainly to research in health care (e.g. collaboration between trainees in the health professions and youth and children at school; Ogenchuk, Spurr, & Bally, 2014) or to research on collaboration between teachers from different subject areas (e.g., Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall, 2000).

Furthermore, international research focuses primarily on the observation of multiprofessional teams that together look after students with disabilities (e.g., Tuomainen, Palonen, & Hakkarainen, 2010) or children at risk (e.g., Hesjedal, Hetland, & Iversen, 2013). Such teams are also not unknown at German all-day schools where the teams, for example, offer support to students at risk in so-called ‘inclusive classes’.

In a typical case, we find a division of areas and tasks between teachers and other educational staff at German all-day schools (see the section above). Given this situation, it is far more difficult to identify the impact of multiprofessional collaboration. Thus, it is of little surprise that only few studies can give information on this issue.



Research on the impact mostly investigates the effects of extended education and after-school programmes, for example the effects of extended education on student achievement (e.g. mathematics and language achievement; Schüpbach & von Allmen, 2013) or the impact of after-school programme that can improve youths' personal and social skills and academic achievement (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Bae & Jeon, 2013).

Nevertheless, it can be reported – referring to the impact of multiprofessional collaboration –, that teachers as well as the other educational staff state a positive effect on their individual competencies under favourable conditions. Moreover, multiprofessional collaboration reduces the burden of the teachers because they can delegate some non-instructional tasks to the non-teaching staff (Böhm-Kasper, Dizinger, & Heitmann, 2013).

All in all, there are only a few studies which focus on the collaboration between teachers and other pedagogical professionals.

Consequently, Schüpbach and von Allmen (2013) state that “[r]esearch on multiprofessional collaboration in all-day schools between teachers and other educational professionals is very new and just developing currently. [...] As a next step, there is a need for broader investigation by means of (intervention) studies with a longitudinal design on (development of) collaboration and on different effects of collaboration [...]” (p. 28).

Therefore, multiprofessional collaboration between teachers and the other pedagogical staff at all-day schools has been hardly investigated up to now.

## Research Questions

Using two studies in a mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), we will investigate the implementation of multiprofessional collaboration, including its evaluation, its shared goals and its impact from different perspectives.

### *A Quantitative Study on Multiprofessional Collaboration Viewed From the Teachers' Perspective<sup>1</sup>*

Based on the results from the literature review mentioned and a previous qualitative study (Dizinger, Fussangel, & Böhm-Kasper, 2011), a questionnaire was developed to assess the multiprofessional collaboration (with its different levels of collaborative action: exchange, mutual division of labour and co-construction). This procedure gave the opportunity to make multiprofessional collaboration at all-day schools measurable in quantitative terms and relate it to variables concerning conditions and impact.

1 The research project “Beanspruchungserleben und Formen der Lehrerkooperation“ [Experiencing demands and forms of teacher collaboration] (Lead researchers: Prof. Böhm-Kasper, Prof. Gräsel, Prof. Weishaupt) was financially supported from 2008 to 2010 by a grant from the BMBF [Federal Ministry of Education and Research] and the EFS [European Social Fund for Germany].



First findings on the quantitative nature of multiprofessional collaboration and selected teacher characteristics were subjected to a cluster analysis in order to deduce features favourable to a greater degree of collaboration. The reason for this analysis was that it is precisely intensified collaboration that can be regarded as part of professional action. Therefore the research question can be formulated:

- RQ 1: What teacher characteristics facilitate more intensive collaboration?

### *A Qualitative Study on Multiprofessional Collaboration and Professional Differences Viewed From the Perspectives of Both Teachers and Educators<sup>2</sup>*

The results of the first study were given a deeper analysis in a second, qualitative study. In an extension of the first study, this second study looked at multiprofessional collaboration from the perspectives of both teachers and educators. It was concerned not just with multiprofessional collaboration and its evaluation or favourable conditions. Rather, observed difficulties that had arisen, for example, because of professional differences between teachers and the other educational staff, were investigated, and the goals and impact of their mutual work were also explored:

- RQ 2: What tasks and functions do the teachers and the educators take on, and how do they mutually perceive their jobs?
- RQ 3: What are the challenges and difficulties that teachers and educators report about multiprofessional collaboration?

## Methods

The general approach of our research employed a mixed methods design according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011). We used an explanatory sequential design with a quantitative study in the beginning, followed up with a qualitative study to get more information about the characteristics of multiprofessional collaboration. Thus, the data gathered in the two studies were aggregated to achieve a broader and deeper understanding of the research object, i.e. we looked for possible convergences, mutual confirmation or overlaps.

### *A Quantitative Study on Multiprofessional Collaboration Seen From the Teachers' Perspective*

The newly developed questionnaire on multiprofessional collaboration was tested by means of a quantitative cross-sectional study (n=620) of teachers from secondary schools (ISCED-level 2). The test of the newly designed questionnaire was, howev-

2 The qualitative interview study "Interprofessionelle Kooperation an Ganztagsgrundschulen" [Interprofessional collaboration at all-day primary schools] (Lead researchers: Prof. Böhm-Kasper and Dr. Dizinger) was supported from 2011 to 2012 by a grant from the Faculty of Educational Science of the University of Bielefeld.

er, only one part of our work, we also included scales relating to the type of both job and collaboration. Besides gathering socio-demographic data (e.g. sex and age), the two following features of the teachers surveyed were also taken into account in the analyses: teacher self-efficacy (Gerecht et al., 2007) and work engagement (following Čandová, 2005).

In addition, collaboration between teachers and other educational professionals was measured through the use of four scales, two of them focussing on exchange, while the other two focussed on more intensive types of collaboration (division of labour and co-construction). Further, a scale for shared goals between teachers (Fussangel, 2008) was also part of the evaluation.

### *A Qualitative Study on Multiprofessional Collaboration and Professional Differences Seen From the Perspective of Teachers and Educators*

We conducted a qualitative study subsequent to the quantitative to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of multiprofessional collaboration. Our focus was on primary all-day schools, since multiprofessional collaboration here is the default state. The multiprofessional teams in primary all-day schools are composed of regular teachers and other educational staff (usually educators).

The link between the quantitative and the qualitative study in our explanatory sequential design must be seen less in comparable samples than as in the phenomenon of multiprofessional collaboration. Five primary schools (ISCED-Level 1) in a German city were asked to participate in a qualitative interview study on the topic of multiprofessional collaboration at all-day schools. Three of these operated open all-day (where students were free to take part in the afternoon programme) while the other two operated primarily compulsory all-day (where participation in the afternoon programme was obligatory for students).

Twelve guideline-based interviews were conducted in all. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed using a common transcription scheme.

With regard to ethical considerations and data privacy (Gläser & Laudel, 2004; Lichtman, 2013), the participants were informed about the nature and the purpose of the study in advance. The interviewees gave their consent to the recording of the interview as well as to the use of their anonymized data for publications.

A comparison of the perspectives of teachers with that of other educational staff was at the core of the study: five teachers and seven all-day staff were interviewed. The interview guideline contained questions on multiprofessional collaboration, its conditions and impact as well as the exploration of the diverging areas of tasks and activities of the professions involved. The interview evaluation was carried out employing qualitative content analysis in accordance with Mayring (2008), with two independent researchers performing the categorization.

## Results

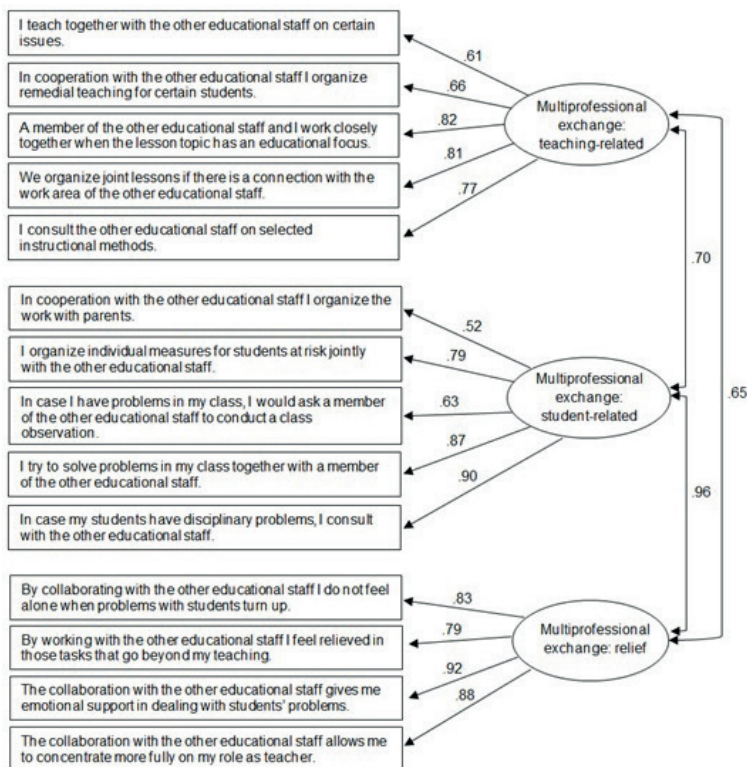
In the following, central results of the quantitative and qualitative study are presented.

### *A Quantitative Study on Multiprofessional Collaboration Seen From the Teachers' Perspective*

It was the goal of this investigation to build up scales for multiprofessional collaboration and perform explorative analyses.

Three scales were derived from results of a previous qualitative study (Dizinger, Fussangel, & Böhm-Kasper, 2011), of which two refer to the implementation of the collaboration: (1) the *instruction-related exchange*, and (2) the *student-related exchange*. The third scale was to measure (3) *relief through collaboration*. For the test of the trifactorial structure a confirmatory factor analysis for ordinal data was calculated (see Figure 1). The fit indices to judge the global model structure show an acceptable degree of adaptation to the model. The three factors of (1) *instruction-related exchange*, (2) *student-related exchange* and (3) *relief through multiprofessional collaboration* are closely related ( $\phi_{1,2} = .70$ ,  $\phi_{1,3} = .65$ ,  $\phi_{2,3} = .96$ ). In particular, the student-related exchange and the experience of relief are closely connected. A bifactorial model is, however, not superior to the trifactorial one (see the comparison of models in Table 1). Subsequent reliability analyses point to a good or very good internal consistency of the scales ( $\alpha_{\text{instruction-related}} = .85$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{student-related}} = .86$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{relief through collaboration}} = .92$ ).

Figure 1. CFA – Three dimensions of multiprofessional exchange



Note: Sample-N=544; Chi<sup>2</sup>(74)=296.8; p<.00; RMSEA=.08; NFI=.92; CFI=.93.

Table 1. Comparison of alternative CFA-models

	Df	AIC	BIC	Chisq	Chisq diff	DF diff	Pr(>Chisq)
3-factor model	74	22745	22939	472.87			
2-factor model	76	22776	22961	507.86	25.690	2	2.639e-06***
Single-factor model	77	23296	23477	1030.06	90.698	1	<2.2e-16***

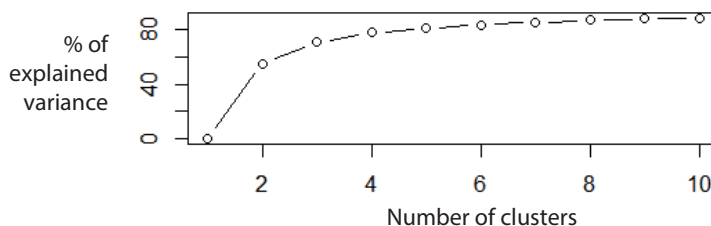
Explorative analyses show that, in parallel with the findings of the qualitative investigation followed up, forms of instruction-related exchange are hardly practiced at schools, while those of student-related exchange and the closely connected relief through collaboration are found slightly more frequently in everyday school life (see Table 2).

*Table 2.* Descriptive statistics of multiprofessional exchange scales

Scale	Mean (SD)	MD	[1st; 3rd Quartile]	Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
ME: instruction-related	2.12 (1.06)	1.8	[1.2; 2.8]	1 – 6	.99	.43
ME: student-related	3.24 (1.24)	3.2	[2.2; 4.2]	1 – 6	-.04	-.83
ME: relief	3.67 (1.47)	3.8	[2.5; 4.8]	1 – 6	-.18	-1.06

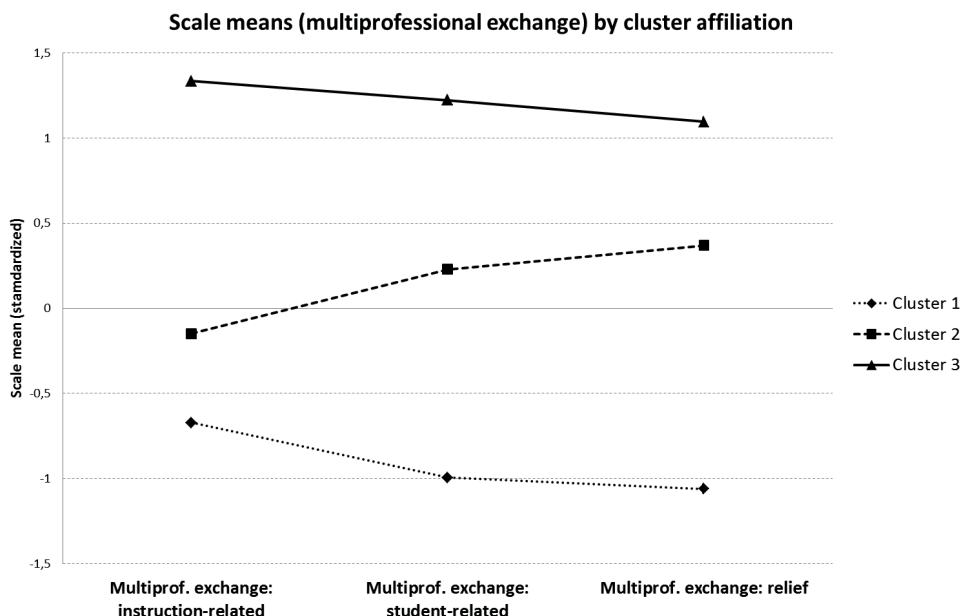
Note: ME=Multiprofessional exchange.

To resolve the question, what teacher characteristics have a favourable impact on more intensive collaboration, a cluster analysis (k-means-cluster) was conducted on the three scales for the multiprofessional collaboration. The aim was to analyse possible differences in the answer patterns of the teachers surveyed. The results of this cluster analysis show that the three-cluster solution provides an adequate mapping of the various answer patterns (see Figure 2).

*Figure 2.* Plot to determine the best number of clusters

Using the mean values of the scales for multiprofessional collaboration to visualize cluster affiliation, the three clusters thus generated can be clearly distinguished by their content (see Figure 3): The members of cluster 1 are characterised by agreement that is clearly below average when compared to the statements presented on multiprofessional collaboration. They do not cooperate in matters relating to instruction or students with the members of the other educational staff. It is, therefore, not surprising that perceived relief through multiprofessional collaboration is rare. The members of cluster 2 reported slightly below-average collaboration with the other educational staff in teaching matters. By contrast, student-related collaboration is practiced more often. Relief through multiprofessional collaboration is also slightly above average. In cluster 3 teaching staff demonstrate clearly above average values in all three scales for multiprofessional collaboration. These teachers cooperate with members of the other educational staff in matters relating both to instruction and students. The perceived relief is correspondingly great.

Figure 3. Mean values of multiprofessional collaboration by cluster affiliation



To identify more precisely which teaching staff make up the three clusters, their demographic and individual features were related to their cluster affiliation (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3. Cluster affiliation and teacher sex

	Teacher sex		Total
	Female	Male	
Cluster 1	38.5% (129)	36.9% (75)	37.9% (204)
Cluster 2	35.5% (119)	44.8% (91)	39.0% (210)
Cluster 3	26.0% (87)	18.2% (37)	23,0% (124)

Note:  $\chi^2(2) = 6.2, p < .05$ .

As to the sex of the teaching staff, it has to be recorded that women were found more often in cluster 3 (the collaboration-active one) than men. The latter were predominantly found in cluster 2. With regard to the two age groups of the teaching staff (45 years and younger vs. 46 years and older), no significant difference in cluster affiliation was found (no Figure).

*Table 4. Cluster affiliation and teacher characteristics*

Teacher characteristics	Mean / (Standard Deviation)			ANOVA	
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	F / (p-value)	Eta <sup>2</sup>
Work commitment	4.74 (1.01)	4.79 (1.02)	4.98 (.95)	2.8 (.056)	.01
Self-efficacy	3.50 (.68)	3.61 (.70)	3.90 (.75)	13.8 (<.05)	.05
Exchange between teachers: student-related	4.91 (.83)	5.09 (.69)	5.33 (.75)	11.6 (<.05)	.04
Exchange between teachers: instruction-related	4.04 (.99)	4.28 (.93)	4.73 (.90)	20.6 (<.05)	.07
Work shared between teachers	2.98 (1.26)	3.30 (1.28)	3.88 (1.28)	19.3 (<.05)	.07
Co-construction between teachers	2.68 (.92)	2.85 (.86)	3.54 (1.01)	35.4 (<.05)	.12
Goals shared between teachers	4.15 (.75)	4.39 (.69)	4.46 (.75)	9.1 (<.05)	.03

Note: Range for all scales: 1–6.

All the teacher characteristics investigated evinced the same pattern: the highest values are shown by members of cluster 3. With the exception of work engagement all differences in the mean values between the three clusters are significant. We can sum up by saying that teachers, who have high profession-related self-efficacy and practice more demanding forms of collaboration (co-construction) with their colleagues, also have a greater probability of looking for collaboration with a school's other educational staff.

### *Results of the Qualitative Study on Multiprofessional Collaboration and Professional Differences Seen From the Perspective of Teachers and Educators*

In the interview study the participating teachers and educators were first asked to describe their everyday work as well as that of the respective other professional group (RQ 2, see Table 5). In their narratives teachers and educators essentially agreed in their self and external assessments concerning their work. This was reflected in the sketches which the teachers gave of the tasks of both professional groups: they tended to see themselves as persons who pass on knowledge, while the other educational staff were seen as responsible, amongst other issues, for the promotion of the students' social and emotional competencies and for giving them guidance on how to give their afternoons and free time a meaningful shape.

The other educational staff gave a description of the work of the two professional groups that was similar to that of the teachers'. As was to be expected, the educators see their work in more differentiated terms than the teachers, underlining the fact that they are in charge of the children's holistic support (inter alia the promotion of their social behaviour, and the transmission of values and norms), the design of the



afternoon programme as well as the improvement and upbringing of the children. This contrasts, so the educators, with the teachers’ job, which they saw primarily to be that of the passing on of knowledge, as well as assessing and grading. These results are comparable to those known from the leisure-time centre research (Dahl & Karlsudd, 2015) which also found separate professional competencies in the professional groups involved. Based on these findings, we went on to investigate the concrete shape of the multiprofessional collaboration and whether the findings were comparable to the assumptions of the first study (three different levels of multiprofessional collaboration). In this qualitative study, teachers and educators named the exchange of information as the predominant form of collaboration. Characteristic features of collaboration between teachers and educators are brief, spontaneous meetings or the writing of notes. A new finding was, however, that at schools where the morning programme dovetailed with that of the afternoon the interviewees reported a more intensive collaboration. Thus, the teaching staff divide up the labour in joint projects rather more at compulsory all-day schools than at open ones, or there are meetings with representatives of both professional groups. None of the interview partners, however, reported co-constructive collaboration.

*Table 5.* Implementation of multiprofessional collaboration from the perspectives of teachers and educators

Category	Subcategory	Teachers’ perspective	Educators’ perspective
Tasks of both professional groups	Teacher tasks	Transmission of knowledge, helping students with their homework, “evaluation and marking are predominant”.	
	Educator tasks	Guidance of students on meaningful free time and afternoon activities, support and education of students.	
		Promotion of social and emotional competences of students.	Holistic promotion of students, inter alia promotion of social behaviour; teaching values, norms, and rules.
Implementation of multiprofessional collaboration	Exchange	No collaboration is reported by some interviewees.	
		The predominant form of collaboration is written and oral exchange.	
	Close forms of collaboration	Joint division of tasks reported in part of compulsory all-day schools. Co-constructive forms of work are not reported.	

A further central concern of the interview study was to reveal diverging points of views and self-images as well as challenges posed by multiprofessional collaboration as seen from the perspective of teachers and educators (RQ 3, see Table 6). The two professional groups show different conceptions of collaboration as well as views of students and of what happens in class. One teacher reported, for example, that he would “do a lot of things differently” from the other educational staff in a joint teaching unit (Teacher 1, line 263). Because of the different approaches the collaboration “was funny at first” (T1, line 175). But as the collaboration went on, the differences in working style experienced were somewhat levelled which means that perceived differences would dissolve the longer the collaboration lasts:

“But the longer and closer you work together, the more you grow together” (T1, l. 175).

Teachers and educators experienced their collaboration in general as positive. Both the teachers interviewed and the educators reported a good mutual relationship and appreciation in cooperative settings. When certain inadequate actions of the other professional group were mentioned, it tended to be on the part of the educators. Some educators reported, for instance, that in rare cases teachers were not prepared to work together with the other educational staff, that some teachers did not appreciate the educators’ work or pulled rank on them. At schools, where the morning programme was dovetailed with the afternoon one, fewer difficulties were reported by the educators.

In another part of the interview, the teachers and educators were asked what shared goals and effects were linked to multiprofessional collaboration. This question aimed at a centrally important issue of collaboration itself. There was unanimity regarding the establishment of cooperative forms of work at their school as an independent goal to be pursued. Both teachers and educators agreed in seeing the existing collaboration as positive. Both groups also considered further meshing of their activities desirable.

The interviewees, again unanimously, identified the benefit that students can draw from the mutual exchange between teachers and educators, as well as the increased benefit for students if the collaboration were to be closer, as the central positive effect. The joint work makes an earlier, more intensive and individual support of the students feasible. It was possible to support students in individual subjects but also in other respects, for example in their social competence. Another positive effect, they stated, was that students learned that arrangements are made between teachers and the other educational staff. Uniform rules for the whole of the everyday life at the school could, therefore, be implemented by all actors:

“Well, I think that’s also important, especially for children with problems that teachers and educators pull together” (Educator 3, line 195).

Through working together, both professional groups experienced additional enrichment of their own work. A feeling of encouragement by the other professional group is possible, it was argued, and through the exchange of experiences one could reap mutual benefit and extend one’s own competences. Teachers in particular experience a sense of work relief through the mere presence of the other educational staff, es-

pecially by delegating tasks and sharing responsibility. This last aspect, relief, is not reported explicitly by the other educational staff.

*Table 6.* Challenges, difficulties and goals of multiprofessional collaboration

Category	Subcategory	Teachers' perspective	Educators' perspective
Challenges and difficulties of the exchange	Harmonious working relations	Positive relations and mutual appreciation are predominant; lack of free flow of information etc. is rarely mentioned.	
	Different working methods and views	Different working methods and views on things; different methods and understandings of collaboration; these differences can be overcome in the actual collaboration.	
	Lack of appreciation of the work of the all-day staff	Colleagues do not appreciate the work of the educators.	Some teachers do not appreciate competences and work; hard work is not recognized; some teachers are unwilling to collaborate.
Effects of the exchange	Global	Collaboration as such is regarded as desirable and experienced as positive.	
	Student-related	Students benefit most; better support is made possible; staff-student interaction from one source	
	Staff-related	Broadening of one's own competences and perspective. Emotional relief through shared responsibility.	
		Work-load relief	(Not reported)
	Teaching- and offer-related	No effects tended to be noted.	

## Discussion

Beyond normative discussions about the value and the intended educational impact of cooperative actions at schools, the collaboration of different professions at German all-day schools has become a *de facto* challenge for the future implementation of the professionalism of teaching staff. In the two studies presented, we tackled three research questions using a mixed methods design.

The analysis of the levels of multiprofessional collaboration seen from the teachers' point of view shows that exchange seems to be the predominant form of collaboration. This is supported by both the qualitative and quantitative findings. This rather low cost type of collaboration is due not least to the organization of all-day learning at German schools: With the exception of the comprehensive schools, the open model of all-day schools is predominant (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2014). Content-wise, this means that there is an organizational and a conceptual separation of teaching in the morning and educational support in the afternoon. These results are in accordance with previously published studies of multiprofessional collaboration in schools (Forrer & Schuler, 2010; Jutzi, Schüpbach, & Thomann, 2013; Schüpbach & von Allmen, 2013) or in other extended education contexts (e.g. leisure-time centres in Sweden; Dahl & Karlsudd, 2015).

The results of our qualitative study indicate that compulsory all-day schools (where teaching and educational support are linked in conceptual and organizational terms) practice rather more demanding forms of collaboration. Although multiprofessional collaboration is mostly situated at the level of exchange, it is perceived as positive by the teaching staff at all-day schools. The teaching staff perceive some relief from their work, particularly through the delegation of tasks that are not related to instruction but to educational tasks in the wider sense. One has, however, to raise the question of whether this attitude is in line with the demands formulated by Sachs (2003) regarding the core elements of teacher professionalism. If collaboration with other professional groups is to contribute to an increase in teachers' knowledge and competences, the delegation of tasks, and thus the concentration on supposedly explicitly teacher-related work areas, is hardly the right way to achieve the generation of co-constructive knowledge by members of different professions. This diagnosis is supported by the analysis of the quantitative data. Teaching staff see their explicit brief in the transmission of knowledge whereas the other educational staff bring the promotion of social and emotional competences to the fore of their professional work. Our findings show a great correspondence to the study results of Dahl & Karlsudd (2015) in which the educational professionals emphasise the importance of separate consideration of professional groups in leisure-time centres.

Fewer than one in four (23%) of the teaching staff interviewed in the quantitative survey can be assigned to a collaboration-active cluster. The teachers in this cluster collaborate both in their teaching and their support of individual students with the other educational staff. In addition, these teachers tend to be female and are of high professional self-efficacy. Collaboration in general seems to come to them more naturally than to other teachers. This group of teachers also reports the highest degree of relief through collaborative activities. This finding indicates that the added value

of collaborative action does not arise until collaboration is undertaken with a certain degree of energy and seriousness.

The diverging perceptions of the different professional groups in all-day schools concerning the respective work areas are reflected in the type of collaboration used: The discussion of the qualitative data shows that collaborative action between the teaching and the other educational staff is located predominantly at the level of exchange. This result is to be understood as indicating that it is not just the form of the organization of German all-day schools that has an influence on the collaborative activities of different professions, but also the way teachers and others perceive their respective tasks. Higher forms of collaboration (division of labour and co-construction) are mainly appropriate when the educational staff of the schools share a common definition of tasks and goals.

Not only the diverging perception of tasks, but also further problems that are located at the level of the individual educator make a more intensive collaboration between the two groups difficult. Our qualitative content analysis shows that the members of the other educational staff in particular report a lack of recognition of their work on the part of teachers and the latter's hierarchical understanding of their roles. The definition of collaboration we used (Spieß, 2004) indicates that trust and reciprocity are important factors of successful collaboration. As soon as one partner of the collaboration feels that he/she invests more in the collaboration than the other people while also receiving less acknowledgement of his/her work, collaboration will not have any added value for this actor. In the findings of our qualitative study only teachers, but not the other educational staff, reported relief through the collaboration. A further qualitative result is the lack of an explicit link to collaborative action in multiprofessional settings. Multiprofessional collaboration as such is regarded as valuable and aims for a more intensive support of students. But it is extremely rare to find statements in the interviews that are related to collaboration based on co-construction or the division of labour. What is predominant is the satisfaction of teachers with the presence of other professions at their schools, and as a corollary, the possible support of their own work.

Summing up in relation to our overall research question, the results of both studies show that exchange is the most common way of multiprofessional collaboration between teachers and the other educational staff in all-day schools. Only in closely coupled teams of teachers and other educational staff (mainly educators in compulsory all-day schools) higher forms of collaboration (division of labour and co-construction) are observable.

However, despite of the relative lack of genuine multiprofessional collaboration educational actors perceive positive effects: Teachers feel relieved and both professional groups report beneficial effects (mainly in social issues) in favour for the students. On the other hand, also negative effects were mentioned by the interviewees: Especially the other educational staff are worried about the separation of professional responsibilities by the organization of all-day schooling. While the regular instruction (in the morning) remains the domain of the teachers, the other educational staff are responsible for afternoon education and care. In light of these findings, a rhythmic all-day school life and a joint schooling will be difficult to establish.

Furthermore, the other educational staff are concerned about a instrumentalisation by the teachers: Teachers commonly perceive only instruction in the focus of their professional competence. However, student-related problems are often delegated to the other educational staff. Both findings (separation and delegation) are contrary to the ideal of a reciprocal and trustful collaboration between different professions (Spieß, 2004) in all-day schools. Joint training courses of teachers and other educational staff and the use of intervention studies are to be viewed as options to achieve a sustained strengthening of multiprofessional collaboration in all-day schools.

### *Limitations of the Present Studies*

Work on the three research questions was carried out applying qualitative and quantitative methods. As for our qualitative findings, the universally acknowledged limits of the generalizability of qualitative results also apply to the present article. Our quantitative findings show, however, a high degree of agreement with the qualitative ones: the low-level multiprofessional collaboration (exchange) and the relief through this form of collaboration perceived by the teachers were mentioned both in the interview study and in the quantitative survey. A limitation of the quantitative study was the fact that it is a cross-sectional study designed to serve above all the development of a measuring instrument for multiprofessional collaboration. This is why our views on the relations between forms of collaboration themselves, further personal characteristics of the teaching staff as well as the relief provided by multiprofessional collaboration can be given only in the form of correlations. The link between the quantitative and the qualitative study is not a comparable sample, but the phenomenon of multiprofessional collaboration. It can be assumed that our qualitative findings are not only valid for primary schools, but for challenges and opportunities of collaborative work between teachers and the other educational staff in general. However, a reliable generalization of the qualitative findings to other types of schools would not be appropriate. Future research may help to overcome the limitations of the present study by the longitudinal consideration of the extent and effect of multiprofessional collaboration and by appropriate qualitative investigation plans (for example observation).

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# Building and Retaining High Quality Professional Staff for Extended Education Programs

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**Abstract:** High quality afterschool programs foster academic and socio-emotional development in middle childhood and adolescence. The success of these programs is dependent on the skills and competencies of program staff. High quality programs require staff who are able to sustain supportive relationships with young people, foster positive relationships among students, and provide engaging, challenging activities that build on student interests. This paper outlines the core competences and mindsets of staff as the cornerstone of high quality programs and proposes strategies to develop these staff proficiencies more broadly. Testing these strategies can provide rich opportunities for researchers to collaborate with practitioners to design and implement effective approaches to professional development in extended education settings.

**Keywords:** professional development, afterschool programs, program quality, staff development, extended education

## Introduction

Over the last two decades, countries around the world have looked to extended education programs to support the education and healthy development of young people outside the school day. These efforts have taken a variety of forms, including academic tutoring programs that prepare youth for high stakes entrance exams (Bae & Jeon, 2013), recreation centers that provide youth with places to hang out with peers (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000), and afterschool child care programs that offer safe places for children while parents are at work (Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, & Watts, 2015). Recently, contemporary afterschool programs have adopted a broader mandate of fostering the development of a variety of academic and socio-emotional competencies (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Fraij & Kielblock, 2015; Jones, 2012). These contemporary programs are often part of a broader vision of extended education that seeks to link the afterschool hours, schools, families, and communities to support positive youth development and to reduce achievement gaps associated with income and race.

In conjunction with the expansion of the scope of afterschool programs, a robust research literature has developed to assess whether these programs are having positive effects on academic, social, and behavioral functioning. Meta-analyses and research syntheses show consistent evidence of the beneficial effects of high quality afterschool programs on both academic functioning and socio-emotional outcomes (Durlak et al., 2010; Vandell et al., 2015). These studies underscore that when students regularly attend high quality afterschool programs, gains are observed in both academic and social outcomes, especially among low-income, ethnic minority children. However, when program quality is low or when attendance is low or sporadic, these gains are less apparent, and, in some cases, negative effects of afterschool school programs are reported (Bennett, 2015; Durlak et al., 2010; James-Burdumy et al., 2005).

In much of this research, program staff is identified as a critical factor underlying high quality programs (Larson, Walker, Rusk, & Diaz, 2015; Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008; Vandell et al., 2015). The purpose of this paper is to draw on current research to examine the characteristics of the today's afterschool workforce, the mindset and core competencies that these staff need to work effectively, and potential strategies for developing these competencies. We draw primarily on evidence from the U.S. context, but also consider implications for extended education more broadly.

## The Afterschool Workforce

In the United States, over 850,000 frontline staff function as *teachers* or *activity leaders* in afterschool programs (Parsad & Lewis, 2009). These frontline staff are responsible for leading activities that foster learning and development for some 10.2 million ethnically and economically diverse students. They typically work at public school sites and provide three or more hours of supervised, organized activities following the traditional school day. Their programs often serve 80–100 students each day, with activity leaders working directly with groups of 20 or more children.

Activity leaders are ethnically diverse, young (most often, 18–25 years of age), and relatively new to their position (working in the field for less than two years). Many are college students who have some prior experience working with children or adolescents as youth coaches, summer camp leaders, and volunteers in community-based organizations. Activity leaders often view their jobs as pathways to other careers. Most have limited formal training in the principles underlying extended education (Vandell, Simzar, O'Cadiz, & Hall, in press).

Activity leaders typically work about 20 hours per week at the program site and earn \$11 to \$15/hour to supervise 20 or more children and deliver programming in one or more academic and enrichment categories (Khashu & Dougherty, 2007). These wages are only slightly above the minimal wage in the U.S., even though demands of the job are high.

Activity leaders are supervised by *program directors* or *site coordinators* who have wide-ranging responsibilities that include planning daily lessons and activities to be implemented by the activity leaders, handling registration and attendance

paperwork, developing and overseeing site budgets, communicating regularly with families, coordinating volunteers, working with community partners, developing behavior management plans, and collaborating with classroom teachers and administrators at the host school. Although these are complex responsibilities, there are no specific certifications or clearly demarcated educational program to prepare site coordinators for their myriad of managerial and instructional duties. Due to budget restraints of the programs, most rely on a few days of induction training, one- or two-day conferences and staff meetings led by their school districts or community sponsor.

Typically, site coordinators are recent college graduates and have some work experience in education and/or child care (Khashu & Dougherty, 2007). Some began their work in the afterschool field as volunteers or activity leaders. They typically earn an hourly wage of \$15–\$20, well-below the average starting salary of \$50,000 for recent college graduates in the U.S., especially college graduates with substantial managerial responsibilities. One implication of low salaries, coupled with demanding job requirements and limited opportunities for career advancement, is high staff turnover. Activity leaders and site coordinators routinely leave the field to find easier or higher-paying jobs. In the State of California, about one-third of the activity leaders in publicly funded afterschool programs work at program sites for a year or less (Vandell et al., in press).

The effects of high staff turnover are far-reaching. High staff turnover means that directors are routinely interviewing and hiring new staff. Programs must prioritize their training budget to on-going staff orientations for new hires, limiting opportunities for more advanced professional development for the more experienced staff who would benefit from additional training. High staff turnover also undermines the strength of relationships between program staff and students, a core component of high quality programming, which serves as the foundation for positive youth outcomes. Not surprisingly, when staff turnover is high, student turnover is high (Huang & Cho, 2010).

A necessary step in achieving a stable professional work force in the extended education field is providing salaries that are more commensurate with the work demands. However, the funding model for the publically funded programs does not enable programs to pay increased salaries. With federal and state grant caps around \$1200–\$1500/student per year, and programs serving 80–100 students per day for 180 days, publicly funded afterschool programs in the U.S. are resource-challenged and must dedicate staff and resources to seeking additional funding sources. In California, for example, grant caps for programs serving low-income students have resulted in allocations of \$7.50 per day per student (California Department of Education, 2015). From that allocation, programs must fund all full-time and part-time staff salaries, training activities, teaching materials, and evaluation costs as well as overhead costs paid to the host organization for space, utilities, and administrative expenses (Partnership for Children and Youth, 2015). Programs that serve middle-income students typically cover these operating costs by fees charged to families that often result in double the revenue per student.

Increased salaries alone are necessary, but not sufficient to ensure a skilled, committed, professional work force (Huang & Cho, 2010). Site coordinators and front

line staff also need particular mindsets, core competencies, and background experiences that prepare them to work in extended education settings.

## Core Competencies and Mindsets of Effective Activity Leaders and Program Directors

In this section, we draw on prior research to identify professional competencies and mindsets of staff in high quality programs (Bouffard & Little, 2004; Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2009; Temescal Associates, 2015). The identification of these proficiencies suggests an over-arching set of goals to guide the education and preparation of afterschool staff as professionals. Many of these competencies and mindsets are relevant for summer learning programs, youth organizations, and extended education more broadly.

### *A Deep Understanding of the Ways in Which Afterschool Programs and Extended Education Should Differ From the Traditional School Day*

Central to the power of afterschool programs is the recognition that these programs differ in fundamental ways from the traditional school day (Halpern, 2002; Noam, 2003). One critical difference is that attendance is voluntary, not mandatory (Larson, 2000). This means that extended education programs must be settings that appeal to young people. If the activities are not interesting and engaging, if the staff do not have genuine and caring relationships with the youth, if peers at the program are hostile, indifferent, or culturally insensitive, youth “can vote with their feet” and simply stop attending the program (Hansen & Larson, 2007; Simpkins, Delgado, Price, Quach, & Starbuck, 2013). Students are not free simply to stop attending their regular school day classes if they find the teachers to be uncaring or their classmates to be hostile or the content to be boring. Afterschool programs are held to a higher standard!

In their quest to offer programing that engages young people, staff at high-quality programs utilize hands-on, project-based learning activities that are more free-flowing than are typical in the traditional school day (Noam, 2003). These activities evolve over several days or weeks, build on youth interests, require focused attention, and build up skills sequentially. Their content can be wide-reaching and include sports, the visual arts (painting, drawing), the performing arts (dance, music, drama), and culinary arts (Larson, 2000). Other programs build on youth interests in science (Krishnamurthi, Ottinger, & Topol, 2013), community service, and volunteer activities (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). The key point is that high quality programs operate in a more informal space in which students have greater freedom to follow their interests and passions.

Done right, afterschool programs are complementary to the traditional school day by providing a more intimate learning environment, new or different learning spaces, more time, supplementary materials and/or experiences and a more informal



environment to explore, grow, get excited about learning and gain a sense of efficacy and belonging. This environment may be particularly beneficial for students who struggle during the traditional school day because it provides an alternative path to develop their skills and make friends, helping them gain a sense of efficacy and belonging (Heckman & Sanger, 2013). Relatedly, high quality programs can be a source of supportive relationships with positive adult role models (Larson et al., 2015). Indeed, students report that a primary motivation for attending programs is that the afterschool staff genuinely care about them (Vandell, O'Cadiz, & Hall, 2012). Building and sustaining supportive relationships with students is an important mission of high quality extended and expanded learning programs, a mission that is often secondary during the traditional school day when the focus is on academic skills.

### *A Commitment to Providing Low-income and Ethnic Minority Students with Enrichment Opportunities*

In the U.S., middle- and high-income families devote significant time and money to their children's participation in organized sports, music and arts lessons, science clubs, chess clubs, and academic tutoring (Duncan & Murnane, 2013). Parents believe these investments are worthwhile (Lareau, 2011), and a large body of research has documented the benefits of these extracurricular activities for both academic and non-academic outcomes (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003). Because of a lack of money and transportation, low-income and ethnic minority students are much less likely to have access to fee-supported extracurricular activities (Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009; Reardon, 2011). An important mission of publically funded afterschool programs is to provide low-income children with access to extracurricular experiences that can similarly motivate and excite student interests. This means that afterschool programs should NOT simply be longer school days.

### *Substantive Skills and Knowledge About the Activities That They Lead*

The rich array of enrichment activities that programs *could* offer afterschool provides site coordinators with an opportunity to make good use of the skills and interests that activity leaders bring with them to the programs. These skills can be as diverse as line dancing, knitting, soccer, gymnastics, guitar, chess, and computer programming. The point is that the staff have pre-existing skills and programs should take advantage of this expertise. Having staff oversee activities in their areas of expertise and passion may positively affect staff retention, a researchable idea.

In the United States, afterschool programs are expanding their activities to include STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) offerings (National Research Council, 2015). In some cases, programs are benefiting from partnerships with science museums and universities where staff have considerable knowledge of the science underlying the activities that they are doing with their students (Bell, Lewenstein, Shouse, & Feder, 2009). In other cases, activity leaders are required to lead lessons on topics in which they have little background knowledge. This results



in inaccurate information being conveyed and a lack of connection between the activities and underlying understanding of scientific concepts (Vandell et al., in press). Mis-matches between staff background knowledge and program offerings also can occur when staff is asked to supervise homework in areas that they lack substantive background knowledge.

One way that program directors might ensure that their staff have the necessary substantive skills is to hire a diversified staff who *collectively* represent the skill sets that the program needs. Programs can then use in-service trainings, college coursework, and professional development conferences to expand the staff's repertoire of skills, activities, and projects. A fertile area for future research is the study of this differentiated staffing model versus the standard approach.

### *Skills and Competencies in Motivating and Engaging Students*

Leading activities for 15–20 youth at the end of the school day requires activity leaders and site coordinators to be highly skilled at motivating and engaging young people who have diverse interests and who are not obligated to participate (Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2009). Program staff can develop their skills by understanding motivational and learning principles derived from readings and observations, but these need to be coupled with hands-on practical experience working with young people under the daily supervision of master teachers who model good practice and provide quality feedback, as needed (Huang & Dietel, 2011; Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2009). This type of classroom instruction, paired with a year-long apprenticeship with highly skilled teachers, has been effective in the preparation of classroom teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Currently, there is no analogous supervised field experience in the afterschool field in the United States.

### *Commitment to Seek and Use a Variety of Resources for Self-Improvement and Continuous Program Development*

Staff in high quality programs have easy access to a rich set of resources to use in their work and are committed to actively using them for continuous program improvement (Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 2009; Reisner, White, Russell, & Birmingham, 2004). To this end, professional organizations and governmental agencies have developed curriculum materials for afterschool settings (California Department of Education After School Division, 2014; National Afterschool Association, 2011). Groups also have developed quality standards to guide program development, foster core competencies among staff and promote continuous improvement at both the site-level and the broader program-organization level. Afterschool standards in the State of California, for example, are informed by the Learning in Afterschool and Summer (LIAS) principles: learning should be *active, collaborative, meaningful, build mastery* and *expand horizons* (Temescal Associates, 2015). These principles are summarized in an easy-to-use rubric that program line staff can use to identify the quality of their program practices. By using this self-assessment tool, even new staff can become familiar with what these core principles look like at different levels

of progress (early, developing and mature) and the rubric allows line staff to track progress towards their growth in these areas.

## Strategies for Implementing a Comprehensive Approach to Professional Development

To date, professional development for both site coordinators and activity leaders is idiosyncratic, subject to the varied needs and resources of each program (Bessant, 2012; Bouffard & Little, 2004; National Afterschool Association, 2011). Without a consistent and coherent set of expectations about the core competencies that front-line staff and program directors need, professional development is haphazard and fragmented. Individual staff members may take the initiative to enroll in college courses related to the work that they are doing at programs, but these classes are not part of a recognized sequence of courses or body of knowledge specific to youth development needs during the afterschool hours, and there are very few of them offered. At the site level, programs may offer their staff an opportunity to attend a conference or workshop, but again, the content often fails to build upon a recognized body of knowledge or set of competencies which results in a coherent educational program. Clearly, a more coordinated, systemic approach is needed. What follows is an outline of a proposed professional development system that draws on efforts at the program site, as well as stronger partnerships with universities, school systems and community-based organizations.

### *Site-Level Efforts*

*A coordinated and differentiated hiring strategy.* For programs that have flexibility in staffing enrichment activities, it can work to the program's advantage to hire staff with different skills sets; for example, artists, musicians, engineers, and athletes each have substantive knowledge and experience in different content areas. Hiring staff with a broad array of skills in sports, music, art, and science enables programs to make learning more interesting and engaging. It gives programs an opportunity to leverage the collective strengths and passions of staff, likely leading to an increase in staff sense of belonging as well as staff retention.

*Strategic use of staff meetings and planning time.* Regular staff meetings that include ongoing skill development increase staff feelings of efficacy and competence (Vandell et al., in press). Opportunities to share best practices and to learn that others are going through similar challenges builds a sense of shared purpose and is linked to staff retention (Huang & Cho, 2010). Finally, dedicated time for planning activities, especially planning that involves collaboration with teachers at the school site, is associated with staff feelings of efficacy and competence as well as gains in student academic outcomes (Bennett, 2015).

### *Educational Partnerships with Universities*

Higher education has a critical, but largely unrealized role in the development of afterschool professionals. As previously noted, afterschool programs (as well as other forms of extended education) suffer from the absence of a well-articulated and defined course of study. By developing undergraduate coursework that is specific to out-of-school-time learning and youth development, universities can help to create a pipeline of extended education professionals who share a common identity and knowledge base from which a strong field can be built. Integrating fieldwork into courses not only helps ensure undergraduates can demonstrate the practical application of theory to practice, but helps to build a pool of well-prepared afterschool staff for partner programs.

For almost ten years, the University of California, Irvine has been working to create such a shared knowledge base with its Certificate in After-School Education (CASE) program <http://ucirvinecase.weebly.com>. To earn this certificate, undergraduate students complete six four-unit university courses, totaling 180 hours of class time and a minimum of 70 hours of field work. The introductory course in the certificate program provides a theoretical grounding and foundational knowledge in historical and current issues in afterschool education. For their second course, students select between child development, adolescent development, or multicultural education, depending on their interests and career plans. Students then have several options for their three “content” courses, including coursework that examines teaching and learning in mathematics, science, literacy, arts, sports, or tutoring in out-of-school contexts. Finally, students enroll in a CASE capstone course in which they put what they have learned into practice during a minimum of 50 hours of fieldwork at an afterschool program. More than 300 students are enrolled in CASE coursework each year, with 40 to 50 students receiving their certificates each year. After graduation, program participants have been employed in the afterschool field as well as admitted into teaching credential programs to become classroom teachers.

The development of on-line classes and on-line degree programs provides an important access point into university-level coursework for the staff in the afterschool and summer learning field. Two of the courses in the CASE program (“Foundations in Out of School Learning” and “Educational Technology”) are available on-line. Plans are underway for the remaining courses in the Certificate program to be re-structured to include on-line versions that would be available to non-matriculated students.

Another way that higher education can contribute to the development of afterschool professionals is evident in a program developed by the California State University system. Cal State has developed a teacher pathway program that incentivizes and supports the preparation of undergraduate students who first work in afterschool programs in high-need communities and then receive their post-baccalaureate credential as a classroom teacher. Recognizing the afterschool teaching experience as a pathway to classroom teaching helps to create a mindset among future and current teachers that the skills and competencies used afterschool are important to being successful in the classroom.

Graduate-level coursework also has the potential for improving the quality of afterschool programs and may be particularly valuable for site coordinators who already have undergraduate degrees. These courses may also provide important links with traditional education programs. One of the required courses in the Masters of Arts in Teaching program at the University of California, Irvine is ED 245, Learning Inside and Outside of School, which requires readings and fieldwork related to out-of-school settings. In this course, graduate students who are preparing to be teacher-leaders and administrators in local schools examine the role of afterschool settings as a context for learning.

The preparation of prospective activity leaders and directors and the inclusion of extended education within university corpus are not the only ways in which universities can contribute to the professionalization of extended education. The systematic study of extended education, which includes afterschool and summer learning programs, offers rich opportunities for research. Faculty and graduate students can become engaged in evaluations of specific afterschool and summer programs as well as undertaking general programs of research in these settings. Leveraging the interests and skills of these faculty and students, in conjunction with insights and feedback from practitioners, can help advance our understanding of effective (and ineffective) afterschool practices as well as effective (and ineffective) strategies for developing high quality staff.

### *Partnerships with Host Schools*

In the U.S. context, 90% of the over 11,000 federally funded afterschool programs are located in public schools (Afterschool Alliance, 2015). In some cases, this proximity has resulted in close partnerships between afterschool programs and the school day programs, but in other cases, there are minimal connections (Bennett, 2015). Teachers have their own conferences and in-service training workshops; and afterschool staff have their own conferences. Student achievement data, curriculum materials, and equipment are not shared. Teachers and program staff attend different faculty meetings.

Bennett (2015) has found higher levels of student achievement in those schools in which afterschool programs work closely with their school-day staff and leadership to identify high-need students, plan how those needs will be met afterschool, and identify curriculum and activities that will foster remediation by giving students new ways to learn material. In order to help systematize collaboration between schools and afterschool programs, Bennett has determined that afterschool staff must become respected partners of the classroom teachers. This partnership is facilitated, in part, by an awareness that high-quality afterschool programs contribute to gains in student achievement and improved behavioral outcomes, over and above changes associated with the traditional school day.

## *Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations*

In the United States, community-based organizations and private foundations have a long history of partnerships with extended education programs. Many of the early programs serving low-income youth in the United States were developed by charitable organizations like the Children's Aid Society and the Boys' and Girls' Club (Halpern, 2002). Recently, with funding from the Soros Foundation, ExpandedED schools (formerly The After-School Corporation, or TASC) has been a leader in offering high quality afterschool programs in New York City. Many of the approaches to staff professional development proposed in this paper are practiced by these programs.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation also has been a major force in efforts to improve the availability of high quality afterschool programs in the United States. The Foundation has been instrumental in the establishment of statewide afterschool networks in 48 of the 50 states. To receive the afterschool funding from the Foundation, states are required to establish and maintain partnerships between afterschool programs, school districts, institutions of higher education, and state and local government officials. Funds from the Foundation also support meetings at the regional and statewide level, as well as participation in national meetings. A central role of each of the statewide networks is supporting the professional development and training of high quality staff in the state.

An example of the work of one statewide professional development network is the Power of Discovery: STEM2 Initiative in the State of California. With funds from the California Afterschool Network, the California Department of Education, and several private foundations, ongoing professional development in the form of materials, on-site coaching, workshops, and staff meetings were provided to staff at more than 200 programs in five regions of the state. The effects of this initiative on staff beliefs and competencies, STEM programming, and student outcomes, are being evaluated.

## Conclusions

A robust research literature has documented that high quality afterschool programs can foster academic and social-emotional outcomes for youth from diverse backgrounds. The effectiveness of these programs, however, is dependent on knowledgeable and caring staff who create learning environments that are engaging for students. Developing and retaining front line staff and program directors who have the mindsets and skills to do this work must be a priority, if programs are to achieve this mission. In this paper, we propose a multi-prong professional development strategy that includes specific actions at the program level, as well as partnerships with higher education, host schools, and community-based organizations and foundations. Research and evaluation of these strategies should be undertaken to assess their efficacy in improving staff skills and reducing staff turnover. Many of these same strategies may have merit for other forms of extended education such as summer learning pro-

grams, youth clubs, and camps, and we hope this paper may serve as motivation in these areas as well.

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# Aligning Professional Development to Continuous Quality Improvement: A Case Study of Los Angeles Unified School District's Beyond the Bell Branch

*Tiffany Berry, Michelle Sloper, Hannah Pickar & Harry Talbot*

**Abstract:** There is a strong, empirical link between facets of afterschool program quality and a range of positive youth outcomes. However, implementing quality programs that are more likely to produce positive youth development require a high-level of knowledge and expertise among program staff. Training staff on the critical components of high-quality programming requires approaches that are systematic, ongoing, data-driven, inclusive of all staff, embedded into their organizational roles, and supported by organizational leadership. We present a case study of a preliminary continuous quality improvement (CQI) system at the Beyond the Bell (BTB) Branch of the Los Angeles Unified School District. We discuss the components of a CQI system (i.e., strategic planning, development of tools, staff development and data use) as well as reflect on important organizational factors that promote CQI.

**Keywords:** after school programming, program quality, professional development, continuous quality improvement

## Program Quality in Afterschool

Afterschool program quality is a critical mechanism for promoting positive outcomes among youth attending afterschool programs (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2007; Lauer et al., 2006). According to leading afterschool researchers, afterschool program quality relates to a range of positive youth outcomes (Cross, Gottfredson, Wilson, Rorie, & Connell, 2010; Little, 2007). However, program quality is an elusive concept that is both difficult to describe and to assess (Granger, Durlak, Yohalem, & Reisner, 2007; Hirsch, Mekinda, & Stawicki, 2010). Program quality has been defined by identifying the structural features (e.g., student-to-staff ratios, staff qualifications and education level, environmental features) and process features (e.g., student-staff relationships, peer relationships, opportunities for skill-building, supportive emotional climate, appropriate staff practices) that make afterschool programs successful (Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, & Mielke, 2005; Little, 2007). Other research has characterized quality in after school programs as engaging in

effective partnerships to promote learning and community engagement, providing academic content that complements school-day learning, and conducting evaluation for continuous improvement (C.S. Mott Foundation Committee on After-School Research and Practice, 2005). Recently, consensus has begun to emerge around critical program quality elements that are most predictive for enhancing positive youth development: activities that are sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE features; Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2007), giving youth choice and voice (Ward & Parker, 2013), and strong student-staff relationships (Vandell et al., 2005).

Collectively, these elements of program quality are difficult to implement, requiring a high-level of expertise and facilitation among program staff. In fact, Cross, Gottfredson, Wilson, Rorie, and Connell (2010) argued that staff knowledge and expertise might be the “single most important characteristic of program success” since program staff influence the quality of other aspects of implementation (p. 378). Findings from Cross et al.’s (2010) study suggested that staff members who were highly educated, well trained, and employed long-term were more likely to implement high quality afterschool program practices. Similarly, Grossman, Campbell, and Raley (2007) suggested that staff play an essential role in activity management and provide positive adult support, both of which are important predictors of engagement and learning among youth. Thus, if program staff are the primary mechanism for creating high-quality experiences for youth afterschool, how can we equip staff members with the tools, knowledge, and resources to implement high-quality programming afterschool? And, as a corollary, how does professional development need to be organized for maximum effectiveness?

The purpose of this article is to answer these questions by providing a framework for integrating staff professional development and evaluation into a continuous quality improvement (CQI) cycle. First, we argue against traditional approaches to staff professional development (e.g., one-day workshops, end of year reviews), especially if the goal is to improve program quality so that youth development outcomes are maximized. Second, we introduce the concept of continuous quality improvement as a mechanism for promoting staff knowledge about program quality. CQI processes intentionally involve varied staff members in active and reflective data collection to capture the nuances in program quality that can then be fed back into staff professional development opportunities. Finally, we present the framework for one CQI system that is in the early phases of implementation at the Beyond the Bell (BTB) Branch of the Los Angeles Unified School District, a large multi-site afterschool program. Details related to the development and early implementation of BTB’s CQI system are described to introduce the conceptual underpinnings of CQI and to highlight its role in the professionalization of afterschool staff. At the time of this publication, BTB is initiating its CQI process and fine-tuning the components of the CQI system. As such, this article will focus on the preliminary steps in creating and implementing a CQI system because there is limited information currently available about the effectiveness of this system to date.

## The Need for Continuous Quality Improvement in Afterschool Programs

Staff play a pivotal role in creating and maintaining high quality afterschool environments and activities; however, staff must possess knowledge about program quality and the skill to implement high-quality activities with youth. Unfortunately, traditional approaches to staff professional development around program quality are plagued by two critical issues: (1) staff professional development typically takes place once a year with limited follow-up or reflection, and (2) this professional development is informed by limited data about program implementation strengths and weaknesses, or not informed by evaluation data at all. These traditional ‘one stop shop’ workshops, ‘sit-and-get’ sessions where staff members patiently sit and listen to an instructor for several hours, or annual end of year reviews, are not sufficient for changing staff behavior, staff attitudes, or student performance (NSDC, 2001). Training staff on the critical components of high-quality programming will require more than attendance at an annual workshop; rather, it will require approaches that are systematic, inclusive of all staff, embedded into their organizational roles, and supported by organizational leadership. Furthermore, these training opportunities should be tied to program quality evaluation data from the afterschool program to ensure that staff are gaining knowledge and strategies to address their own unique challenges around offering high quality programming. To support this process, afterschool programs should engage in ongoing data collection from multiple data sources to inform professional development opportunities. As Sheldon and Hopkins (2008) indicated, professional development should be re-envisioned away from “one-shot” trainings with little or no follow-up and only periodic observations – to a continuous system that supports program quality improvement. This shift is intended to have a significant impact on program quality (Sheldon & Hopkins, 2008).

These approaches focused on embedded and continuous learning are referred to as Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). CQI differs from traditional quality improvement methods in its emphasis on understanding the key underlying processes and systems necessary for program improvement, instead of identifying and correcting mistakes after the fact or on a yearly basis (Shortell, Bennett, & Byck, 1998). CQI systems are complex; they involve a range of practices, supports, structures, and resources that need to be thoughtfully and meaningfully incorporated into program operations for programs to continuously improve. CQI systems involve iterative and ongoing cycles of goal setting about quality programming, using effective training practices to support staff learning and development, frequent program monitoring and data collection, follow-up coaching for staff, analyzing data to identify strengths and weaknesses in program quality, and implementing improvement plans (Blumenthal & Kilo, 1998). Once these goals are met and programs have addressed their challenges related to program quality, the process starts over again at the assessment stage, to begin a new cycle of quality improvement. As CQI systems begin to make their way into the afterschool program sector, some CQI strategies that can be adopted by afterschool programs include: hiring a senior staff member to serve as a point person for program quality improvement efforts, providing targeted staff training

sessions throughout the academic year, conducting on-site observations and coaching, and conducting ongoing analysis of program quality data to identify and address implementation challenges (Sheldon, Arbretton, Hopkins, & Grossman, 2010). Although there is little empirical research on the effectiveness of CQI systems, preliminary research suggests that these CQI strategies can produce improvements in the quality of afterschool activities (Sheldon et al., 2010).

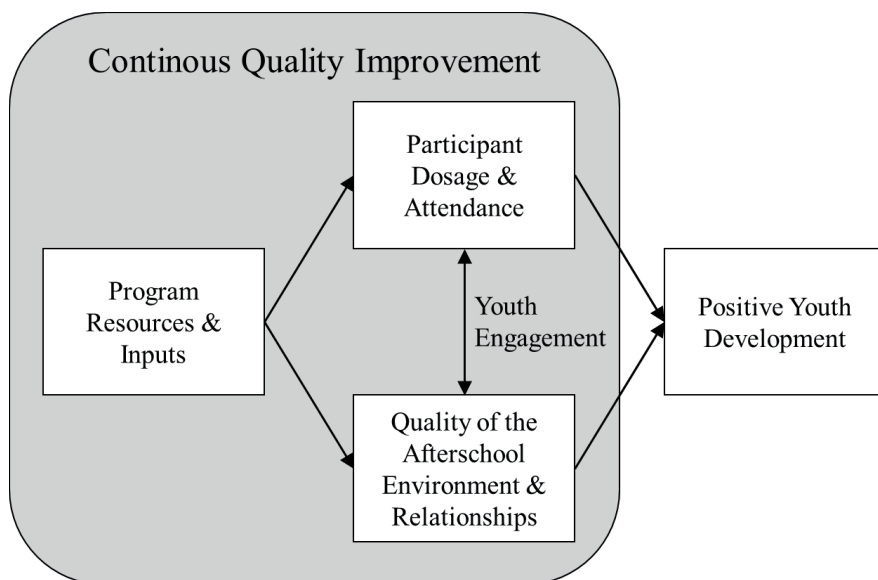
## Continuous Quality Improvement Afterschool in California

The impetus for CQI systems for afterschool programs in California stemmed from Senate Bill 1221, which required expanded learning programs in California to “submit evidence of a data-driven program quality improvement process that is based on the department’s guidance on program quality standards, as specified” (CDE, 2014). This legislative mandate shifted reporting requirements from attendance rates and standardized test scores to program quality and CQI, and provided a concise outline of the “Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs.” This policy change mirrors a shift in the broader afterschool field focused on emphasizing positive youth development beyond academic performance (Yohalem & Wilson-Ahlstorm, 2010; Vandell, 2013) and promoting program quality as the key mechanism for producing positive youth outcomes. That is, although test scores can be useful indicators of program success, they are not well aligned to the experiences youth typically receive in afterschool enrichment programs (e.g., community service, career or technical education, job readiness, mentoring opportunities, service learning, arts, computer technology, physical fitness, and sports).

Structuring afterschool programs to promote a broader range of youth outcomes is drawn from the Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspective. Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an approach to youth programming and a philosophy of research that seeks to understand and promote positive characteristics possessed by youth (i.e., positive values, positive identity, commitment to learning, and social competence) through developing environments where youth can build competence, confidence, compassion, character and connectedness (Damon, 2004; Lerner et al., 2005; Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blythe, 2000). The PYD framework in practice aims to support broad developmental outcomes (e.g., moral, social, cognitive, emotional, and physical) (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczek, Hawkins, 2004). Informed by this more holistic approach to youth development, the authors argue that although academic test scores are important indicators of cognitive development, this is only one facet of developing the whole child in afterschool programs. Structured afterschool activities exemplify the characteristics of PYD and whole child development by creating opportunities for youth to develop a broad range of skills, become more involved in the school and broader community, strengthen peer relationships, and achieve goals as individuals or groups (Eccles, Barber, & Stone, 2003; Larson, 2000). By providing autonomy and decision-making opportunities, youth can select activities that best showcase their developing competencies, and allow for the cultivation of new talents across developmental domains (Eccles & Gootman, 2002).

As Figure 1 depicts, improving afterschool program quality is designed to result in better PYD outcomes. However, to maximize youth development outcomes, afterschool programs should focus on strengthening the processes of program implementation, including (a) critical resources to operate high-quality environments, (b) participant dosage and attendance, and the (c) quality of the afterschool environment and relationships. The components included in Figure 1 present the constructs of interest for broadly defining program quality that undergird staff development, data collection about program quality and reflections about the current level of quality provided by partner agencies. These components are the focus of continuous quality improvement, as each is theoretically important (Granger, Durlak, Yohalem, & Reisner, 2007; Hirsch, Mekinda, & Stawicki, 2010), occurring daily, and can be measured in an on-going manner.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Afterschool Programs & CQI



CQI systems focus on measuring these three components continuously so that staff receive real-time feedback about whether they are implementing a program with sufficient quality to warrant a change in youth development outcomes. Given the empirical links between program quality and youth outcomes (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Kataoka & Vandell, 2013; Pierce et al., 2010; Vandell et al., 2005), coupled with the success of CQI systems in healthcare for promoting patient outcomes (Blumenthal & Kilo, 1998), it is plausible that afterschool programs with a strong CQI system around program quality will produce better youth development outcomes than programs with no explicit system for CQI. However, that is an empirical question and can only be answered as afterschool programs begin to develop strong and effective CQI systems. Thus, the remainder of this article describes one approach to CQI that was undertaken by a large afterschool program provider and highlights the challenges encountered and lessons learned along the way.



## A Case Study of Continuous Quality Improvement in Beyond the Bell

One of the largest afterschool providers in California, the Beyond the Bell (BTB) branch of the Los Angeles Unified School District, has begun to initiate Continuous Quality Improvement. BTB operates structured grant-funded Out of School Time (OST) programs in over 600 schools serving over 100,000 K-12 students daily with before and after school programs. The programs are delivered in partnership with 34 organizations (e.g., some agencies are individual entities, while other agencies are managed by internal BTB staff) in many low-resourced, high-poverty schools. BTB is funded with an annual budget of 100 million dollars from a combination of state funding, federal funding, state smoking prevention funds, and foundation grants. BTB implements daily academic assistance (homework assistance and academic support), academic enrichment (activities that provide standards-based enrichment opportunities such as the service learning, leadership, career exploration, arts and STEM programming), and recreation/sports.

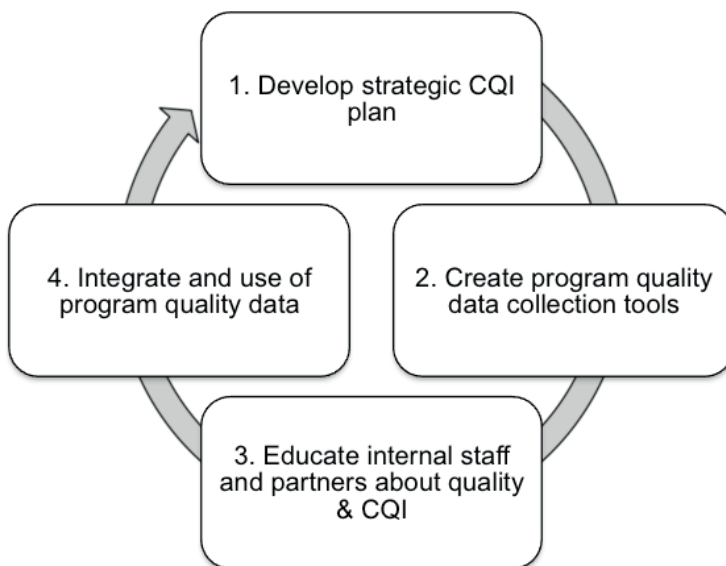
BTB was selected as a case study of CQI systems for three reasons. First, BTB is a large, diverse, and complex organization. Showcasing a large organization that has begun to shift towards meaningful CQI, despite numerous hurdles and roadblocks, is intended to inspire and educate other agencies that may experience similar challenges to CQI. Second, BTB had organizational systems in place (i.e., an internal observation team who regularly visited sites, biannual agency meetings with partner organizations, on-going staff training sessions, etc.) that could be leveraged for CQI implementation. These systems provided the building blocks in which CQI could flourish in this large organization. Third, and most importantly, BTB had the motivation to change from a compliance-driven organization to one that fostered quality improvements among partner organizations and within afterschool program sites. Prior to SB 1221, BTB implemented a compliance model that was centered on monitoring student program attendance, improving student outcomes (measured by standardized state tests and regular school day attendance) and compliance with state and federal directives and regulations. BTB recognized the limitations of that approach, given that little direct information was being fed back into programs to improve quality. The motivation to change among BTB leadership is an important antecedent for effective CQI systems to emerge (Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008).

BTB partnered with the authors to re-conceptualize their organizational quality systems and begin creating a culture of continuous quality improvement in 2014. BTB's CQI process centered around four primary steps (refer to Figure 2): (a) developing a strategic CQI plan to serve as the foundation for this work, (b) creating evaluation tools to gather data about program quality through inclusive meetings with BTB staff, (c) educating partner agencies about CQI and the indicators of program quality, and (d) engaging in meaningful interpretation and use of program quality data to inform improvement plans. These goals were chosen to capitalize on the knowledge of BTB staff and providers, and were intended to be responsive to the priorities of BTB and aligned with their existing evaluation systems. While the concepts included in the conceptual model in Figure 1 outline the content of how we



are defining and conceptualizing the major components of quality, Figure 2 outlines the process of improving quality through strategic CQI efforts at BTB. These steps are expanded in the following sections. It should also be noted that given the early stages of implementation of this CQI process, BTB has made significant progress on both developing a strategic CQI plan (steps 1) and creating the data collection tools (step 2), but less organizational effort has focused on steps 3 and 4.

Figure 2. Primary Steps in the CQI Process for BTB



### Step 1: Planning for the CQI Process

The first step in the CQI process for BTB was to create a three-year strategic quality improvement plan. This plan served as a guide for future quality improvement processes for BTB providers, by outlining the purpose of this process, identifying the necessary data sources, timelines, and data reporting/use mechanisms within the organization. The authors and BTB engaged in thoughtful collaborations to understand the current evaluation systems and organizational priorities that motivated the development of this strategic quality improvement plan. The overarching objectives of this quality improvement process were three-fold: (a) to capitalize on current evaluation and data collection systems, (b) develop additional data sources where necessary to capture critical elements of program quality, and (c) foster strong alignment across evaluation systems and data sources with the ultimate purpose of using these evaluation data sources to inform quality improvement efforts. Table 1 provides an example of the data sources, both new and existing, identified to support BTB's CQI process, including data collection timelines, data availability, mechanisms for data use and data presentation formats.

*Table 1. Details of Strategic Data Use for Selected Quality Improvement Data Sources*

Data Source	Data Collection Timeline	Data Availability	Mechanisms for Data Use	Data Presentation Format
Program Observations	Ongoing	Ongoing	Twice-yearly meetings with agencies; ongoing internal improvement	External evaluation reports; data dashboard; accountability reports
Principal & Site Coordinator Interviews	Ongoing	End of academic year	Twice-yearly meetings with agencies; external evaluation	External evaluation reports
Self-Assessment for Continuous Improvement	Based on site preferences	Based on site preferences	Twice-yearly meetings with agencies; ongoing internal improvement	Self-assessment protocols; action plans for improvement
Attendance Data	Ongoing	Ongoing/End of academic year	Twice-yearly meetings with agencies; external evaluation	External evaluation reports; data dashboard; accountability reports
Youth Survey	Fall/Spring survey administration	End of academic year	External evaluation	External evaluation reports
District Archival Data	Ongoing	End of academic year	External evaluation	External evaluation reports; Accountability reports

Strategic plan development was informed by creating a conceptual model of positive youth development (PYD) in afterschool programs. This conceptual framework identified activities that were essential for high-quality implementation (e.g., positive adult-student relationships, responsiveness to student needs, active/engaged learning, youth choice/voice) and intended outcomes associated with those activities (e.g., intrinsic motivation, social competence, leadership, and academic persistence). This model ensured that the BTB CQI system captured the indicators of program effectiveness that were identified by the research and theory surrounding positive youth development in afterschool programs.

## *Step 2: Assessing Quality at BTB Provider Agencies*

The second step in BTB's CQI process involved developing an internal system to assess program quality systematically, guided by the evidence-based conceptual model and the strategic CQI plan. This internal assessment system attempted to create a shared understanding of program quality, provided evaluation data about the current state of BTB programs and participants, and identified areas for targeted improvement efforts. BTB already had an established data collection process for tracking participant attendance and dosage in their afterschool programs as reported by the partner agencies, so this system was already in place. As an initial step towards assessing quality, the evaluation team developed two new data collection tools: (1) a provider self-assessment and (2) an internal observation system. To supplement attendance and dosage indicators, these data sources were intended to capture the program resources/inputs, and the quality of the environment/relationships, as major components of program quality outlined in Figure 1. These data were intended to fuel data-driven decision-making to support the CQI process by identifying the organizational, or agency-specific, strengths and areas to target for quality improvement. The purpose of developing data collection tools specific to LAUSD BTB, as opposed to using publically available tools, was to ensure tools and processes were tailored for the BTB evaluation context. Although publically available observational and self-assessment tools existed, these tools did not include all of the quality indicators laid out by the CDE and many required extensive off-site training that were time and money intensive (Bialosiewicz & Newhouse, 2014). Additionally, allowing staff to co-construct the data collection tools would facilitate their buy-in to the content and processes. At this time, these data collection systems are in preliminary implementation and thus the authors have limited information about the measurement properties (i.e., validity, reliability) of these data collection tools. However, the authors present the conceptual components as examples of the indicators that were selected for this context.

*Provider Self-Assessment.* The provider self-assessment tool allowed program providers to reflect on the quality of their program's structures and processes and rate themselves across dimensions of program quality. The self-assessment development process began with scanning previously published self-assessment tools from similar organizations. Existing self-assessment tools were evaluated across two primary criteria: (1) alignment with California Department of Education (CDE) "Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs," and (2) alignment with research on Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspectives in organized youth programs. Our environmental scan yielded useful insights around tool content (i.e., indicators of quality) as well as tool processes (i.e., timing, frequency, involvement). Although there were a number of published tools available, none of these tools were strongly aligned with the criteria set by the CDE, the specific BTB context, or with the research in youth development more broadly.

Based on the environmental scan, the authors identified the need to develop two self-assessment tools, one for line staff (Point of Service) and one for program managers (Effective Program Management). Given the limited time afterschool for staff to engage in these conversations, it was important to focus staff time around the

things they could actually control. Line staff should focus on improving their direct service whereas program managers should focus on improving the structures of support so that line staff can do their work effectively. Thus, the purpose of the Effective Program Management tool was to engage program leadership, management, and supervisors in discussions about relevant programs structures that most effectively support implementation quality (i.e., collaborative partnerships, quality staff hiring). Point of service quality (i.e., active engagement, positive relationships) focuses on the intentionality of program activities, the delivery of those activities, and the nature of interactions between students and staff. The purpose of the Point of Service Quality Tool is to engage front-line program staff in conversations surrounding evidence-based practices to improve the quality of student interactions and engagement that have been empirically linked to improved PYD outcomes in youth participants. Table 2 outlines the primary self-assessment tool categories for both tools and sample indicators. To maximize feasibility, these tools are brief, but deep in their coverage of program quality facets. By creating and piloting two tools aligned to the BTB context with input from BTB leadership and staff, this process was more cost effective for BTB and required less time commitment from staff to begin to reflect on program quality.

*Table 2.* Self-Assessment Tool Categories & Sample Items

Tool Categories	Sample Indicator
<b>Effective Program Management Tool</b>	
Clear Mission, Purpose & Planning	The program has a written statement of mission and goals. Program staff are aware of and understand the program's mission and vision.
Program Funding & Sustainability	The program has an effective marketing strategy that is used to promote the agency, its programs, and its value to youth and the community.
Quality Staff	Staff are recruited and hired based on competence, experience, and interest in working with youth.
Physical Environment	Staff and program participants have access to sufficient indoor and outdoor space.
Collaborative Partnerships	Program provides meaningful opportunities for family participation.
Program Attendance	The program encourages consistent attendance to ensure that students attend enough to reap the benefits of participation.
Continuous Quality Improvement	Promising practices in the program are identified and share internally and externally.

Point of Service Quality Tool	
Active & Engaged Learning	The program engages participants with a variety of diverse activities to promote engagement in all children and youth.
Youth Voice, Choice & Leadership	Activities and experiences that promote youth leadership are incorporated into program components.
Positive Relationships & Social Norms	Staff members intentionally promote psychological and emotional safety through a culture of support, inclusion, and mutual respect to nurture a sense of belonging in all children and youth.
Intentional Activity Structure	Activities are thoughtfully sequenced into smaller, simpler components to enhance learning over time.
Developmental Opportunities	Youth have the opportunity to learn and practice new skills, and build competence with support from staff.

At internal agency meetings, self-assessment teams would rate themselves on each indicator on a scale from one (not adequate) to four (exemplary). The self-assessment team would need to come to a consensus surrounding each rating by engaging in dialogue regarding each indicator and presenting evidence (i.e., observations, anecdotes, program documents) for their ratings. Not only did this process encourage agencies to reflect on their implementation across the critical features of program quality, these ratings suggested areas to target for improvement. Short-term, solution-oriented action plans could then be developed for self-assessment items that received low ratings. Self-assessment teams would create action plans, indicating who will take the lead on supervising the action plan, and the proposed timeline.

*Internal Program Observations.* To supplement self-assessment findings, a BTB internal observation tool was developed and piloted to provide objective, high-quality data about program operations. Similar to the self-assessment tool development process, there was no single, existing observational tool that addressed all of these indicators and priorities. Additionally, many of the published observational tools available were accompanied by extensive costs for use, extensive trainings for observers before implementation, or lengthy observation indicators requiring large time commitments, none of which were feasible for BTB given the short observation timeline. Thus, a BTB-specific observational protocol was created. This short and user-friendly tool was intended to equip internal BTB staff with the resources to operationalize, monitor and support program quality at the sites and at a broader organizational level. This observational system documented quality related to two primary facets: (a) program compliance (i.e., sign in/sign out, resources, and attendance ratios) and (b) program quality (i.e., active and engaged learning, skill-building opportunities). More specifically, the observational system examined several facets of key program activities as outlined in BTB's conceptual model, including indicators falling under the larger umbrellas of program quality, adult-student relationships, and program environment. Table 3 displays the observation tool categories and sample indicators.

*Table 3. Program Quality Observation Tool Categories & Sample Items*

Tool Categories	Sample Indicator
Active & Engaged Learning	Students are actively engaged (e.g., concentration, enjoyment, interest)
Student Leadership	Students take authentic leadership roles in activities and decision-making efforts
Student Choice	Students make choices about what to do (activity content) and how to do it (activity process)
Student Voice	Students have opportunities to express their ideas, concerns, and/or opinions
Welcoming & Supportive Environment	Program staff creates a welcoming environment through inclusion and mutual respect
Positive Feedback	Program staff provides positive, constructive feedback to students or groups
High Expectations	Program staff sets high expectations for students' interpersonal behaviors and performance
Fairness	Program staff provides equitable access to activities for all students
Positive Peer Interactions	Program staff encourages positive peer interaction skills (e.g., cooperation, teamwork, shared goals, conflict resolution)
Intentional Activity Structure	Activity is sequenced to build upon previously learned skills and behaviors
Developmental Opportunities	Activity content allows students to explore new academic and/or career interests in real world applications
Diverse Activities	Activity content reflects diverse ethnic, cultural, gender, and/or geographic settings
Tangible Resources	Program provides adequate student access to resources and materials needed for activities
Adequate Physical Space	There is sufficient indoor and/or outdoor space for program activity
Campus & Classroom Safety	Campus and classroom perimeter is secure (e.g., gated perimeter)

Internal BTB staff provided ratings from one (not evident) to four (highly evident) to reflect the frequency and quality of each indicator on the protocol, as well as providing written notes to supplement numerical ratings. An observational rubric was also created to describe the rating for each observational indicator to reduce the ambiguity around individual ratings and promote consistency across raters. Once this tool was finalized, BTB programmed this tool into an online system for use at agency visits in the field. The program quality data collected via these two primary methodologies served as the foundation for strategic revisions to program processes and activities to enhance the ability for BTB to effectively improve program quality. Observational data is particularly important to the CQI process because these data are collected in an ongoing manner, as BTB staff members visit program sites throughout the academic year to observe their activities. As such, these data are regularly collected, entered into an online system, and displayed in real-time. This allows BTB leadership to constantly digest and explore trends in program quality as the observations occur over the academic year to address emerging issues and challenges at provider agencies.

### *Step 3: Professional Development around Program Quality*

The third step in the CQI process was to engage BTB internal staff and provider agencies in professional development around program quality. This was the primary means through which BTB staff and partners learned what were the most important features of program quality and reflected on their own abilities to craft these developmental experiences for youth participants. As a first step, the authors hosted meetings with BTB internal staff to discuss each data collection protocol and explained the purpose of activity observations, the meaning/definition of each quality indicator, and the ideal processes for use. Upon finalizing these tools, the evaluation team conducted trainings with internal BTB leadership to discuss the critical features of high quality programming that BTB staff will assess during site visit observations. Additionally, the authors hosted a staff meeting with the BTB traveling supervisors who would use this observation tool during their regular visits to afterschool provider agencies. The purpose of this training was to gain a shared understanding of the features of program quality that appear on the observation protocol. This shared understanding promoted consistency and accuracy of program quality ratings. During these conversations, protocols were also revised given BTB staff feedback.

After BTB internal staff members received training on the tools, they used it to structure their monthly observations to each afterschool site. This process served as the informational bridge between the larger BTB organizational leadership and the agencies themselves. During observations, BTB staff would provide each agency with a copy of the observational system and the CDE quality standards to structure conversations about what they observed, the quality ratings they assigned to the site, and engage in conversations about strengths and areas of improvement. This was the primary pipeline through which agencies could critically think about program quality and initiate efforts to foster higher quality services. In the coming year, BTB will host additional professional development for agency representatives to clarify how



BTB is defining a high quality program, the observation protocol categories, and how to transform observational data into actionable program improvement practices.

#### *Step 4: Using Data to Reflect on Quality*

The final step in the CQI process was to reflect on program quality and transform data-driven findings about program quality into action. This includes both (1) asking agency providers to review the data collected about quality at their sites and develop agency-specific strategies for improvement, and (2) reflecting on aggregate data at the BTB organizational level to define organizational priorities for quality improvement and staff development. In this step, BTB must systematically explore the program quality data collected and identify specific challenges that require action for program improvement. This requires staff time and effort be put forth to consume the trends in program quality data, both during formalized organizational time-points, as well as during informal daily programmatic processes. The three most prominent mechanisms for data use at BTB were: (a) the twice-yearly meetings with BTB provider agencies, (b) external evaluation results presentations and (c) on-going communication and internal quality improvement efforts by BTB-affiliated agencies. These instances were considered ideal times to reflect upon the data collected and engage in conversations about the current status of program quality, identify areas where improvement is needed, and develop plans to address these challenges. These opportunities for reflection should involve diverse members of the BTB team to encourage meaningful discussions about quality as well as drive strategy for professional development and site-specific improvement practices. In addition to these formal mechanisms, conversations about program quality and implementation practices should be taking place informally on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. These continuous informal reflections on the evaluation data are the crux of continuous quality improvement processes because they occur much more frequently than formal meetings about quality and are more cost-effective. The overall success of this strategic quality improvement process is contingent upon BTB prioritizing data use to inform quality improvement efforts through these formal and informal approaches to continuous data reflection.

To support the reflection process, the authors conducted detailed analyses of the observational data collected via the revised observational system. These analyses examined data in aggregate to explore overall program strengths, and identify areas of improvement across all providers observed. Additionally, the observational data was disaggregated by relevant characteristics of the sites (i.e., age of site, provider, size of program). These sub-group analyses provided a more detail-oriented exploration of program quality trends. The evaluation team provided a comprehensive summary report of these data to BTB, as well as engaged in structured discussions about the most relevant and salient findings about quality at provider sites. During these conversations, strategies were discussed to support increasing program quality and directly inform professional development activities for line staff.

To supplement the aggregate findings, the authors also developed a data visualization system, or a modified data dashboard, to display the quality ratings over

time. A data dashboard can be conceptualized as real-time progress report consisting of simple, graphical presentations of the current status and historical trends of an organization's quality (as measured via observations). For BTB, the dashboard was linked to BTB's observational quality database, and allowed for real time updates as new observational data were entered into the online system. Data dashboards are useful tools for program monitoring because they provide timely feedback about whether actions designated for improvement are actually improving over time. Plus, dashboards can be accessed regularly between formal reporting intervals to encourage continuous reflection about program quality and drive professional development opportunities for afterschool staff.

Because this CQI system is currently in process, little information is available about the quality of data collected via these tools, the findings, and the consequences of CQI for BTB. As these data systems continue to be employed by BTB, the measurement properties, trends in data findings, and the translation of these findings into meaningful program improvement need to be investigated. Embedding systematic evaluation into the CQI process is an important next step for BTB; we must begin to identify whether CQI is working as intended, resulting in better professional development for staff, improved program quality at sites, and better outcomes for students.

## Reflections About CQI Implementation from LAUSD BTB Administrators

BTB has begun to engage in the building blocks for CQI through developing tools aligned to empirical research and CDE standards, testing these tools out in the field, training staff on how to use the tools, and using data to initiate discussions about quality across the organization. However, engaging in CQI is more than just an accumulation of tools. Implementing continuous quality improvement practices is challenging work and many lessons have surfaced, including the importance of: (a) sharing an organization-wide commitment to CQI, from top leadership to line staff, (b) gaining staff buy-in and collaboration, and (c) maximizing resources (time, money, personnel, etc.) effectively. Each of these lessons learned will be described in detail below.

First, a collective organization-wide commitment was needed to shift the culture of BTB towards program quality. Prior to implementing CQI practices, long-term change in performance objectives was not being realized and program indicators, particularly attendance rates, would vacillate year to year without anyone understanding the underlying reasoning behind these changes. Thus, BTB began internal conversations with provider agencies and internal BTB staff about these data patterns, and the importance of program quality quickly emerged. The question then became how to prioritize program quality and incorporate the values of CQI into the structures, routines, and norms that collectively comprised their organizational culture (Schein, 2010). Given the passage of SB 1221, CQI was becoming the mantra of

how afterschool providers do business in California and BTB hoped to position itself as an industry leader and early adopter of these CQI values and systems.

The key to developing an organization-wide commitment to program quality was strong front-end collaboration to develop the structures, routines, and processes necessary for CQI. Collaboration occurred through recognizing and rewarding early adaptors of a quality culture at partner agencies, reaching out to agencies who had demonstrated a high level of commitment to CQI so they could jointly develop a CQI implementation plan and serve as role models to other agencies, and promoting a shared vision for CQI during site visits, quarterly executive meetings, provider biannual review meetings, and in the annual external evaluation. Part of this collaboration also involved redirecting programming priorities from compliance to quality. Rather than impose external objectives on programs, BTB began encouraging provider agencies to develop their own internal quality objectives to examine their progress over time. In a similar sense, BTB leadership must continue to make time to reflect on the trends in quality and program attendance as these data are available to track changes and ensure that continuous improvement is promoted throughout the academic year.

To facilitate a shift towards a CQI culture, the second lesson learned involved the importance of gaining staff buy-in to the process. BTB understood that staff training was critical to improving program quality, given the correlation between staff development and high-functioning afterschool programs (Huang & Dietel, 2011). Further, BTB also recognized that few afterschool programs focused their improvement efforts specifically on staff performance (Smith, Akiva, Blazevski, Pelle, & Devaney, 2008). BTB needed to instill in their internal staff, as well as agency staff, that CQI was not the new “flavor of the month.” BTB realized that the key element of CQI was to empower students, partner agencies, and internal BTB staff to own the program improvement process. This was partly accomplished by staff co-constructing the tools that were used, giving data back to agencies from observational visits promptly, and giving agencies autonomy for measuring program quality and developing their own strategies for quality improvement. The success of this system will continue to be contingent upon staff retaining a high level of information about what high quality programs are and BTB continuing to offer professional development and training, in a formal and informal sense, to agency staff to build their capacity and buy-in.

One persistent challenge related to staff buy-in was the high rate of staff turnover, a problem not unique to BTB (Shortt, 2002). In an effort to reduce staff turnover, some provider agencies began to hire staff based on the extent to which they bought in to CQI. Adding CQI to the process of hiring new staff members required considerable time and resources, but anecdotally seemed to result in staff members who were (a) committed to making CQI work at the school site, (b) better able to implement CQI practices, and (c) more connected to the organization, especially for the newest employees. Aligning CQI to the hiring practices of agencies encouraged BTB’s youngest staff to understand their role in producing program outcomes, as well as supported their growth as educators to shape the outcomes of their students. With continued support and actively securing staff buy-in to CQI, BTB anticipates creating a cultural shift in the long-term that may decrease staff turnover. Research

suggests that staff who understand what it means to be part of the organization are likely to remain longer as employees (Huang & Dietel, 2011).

The final lesson learned is the importance of maximizing resources so that CQI does not bankrupt programs during the process. As a large afterschool provider, BTB needs to be cognizant of the costs that are incurred in CQI, and how it could be done effectively with the least amount of resources. During BTB's first year implementing CQI, they opted for tools that were aligned with their conceptual model, co-constructed with staff to increase buy-in, and could be rolled out relatively quickly and seamlessly. This saved costs, as did partnering with the CDE to attend and implement web-based trainings focused on educating staff to become proficient in the new organizational CQI processes while limiting the amount of time spent in costly face-to-face training. Further, many of the tools and techniques discussed previously were relatively inexpensive, as was changing directives from compliance to quality, collaborating with partner agencies, and soliciting structured feedback.

However, the ultimate challenge will be maintaining the momentum and resources required for organizational change and having staff internalize these values. Training costs and the inability to monetize improvements made based on this system remain barriers for BTB. To address the need for information about the success of this CQI system, BTB will place special emphasis on exploring program dosage and attendance indicators during the upcoming year of implementation. BTB believes that demonstrating a link between program quality and youth dosage will motivate continued interest in CQI and incentivize agency providers to invest in quality improvement given that dosage is tied to funding and sustainability. Sustainability and continued enthusiasm for the effort associated with CQI, despite the lack of concrete information on the benefit of CQI, are critical challenges that BTB will need to address moving forward. However, given that OST program quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the staff who deliver it, BTB is committed to CQI into the future.

## Conclusions and Looking Ahead

The authors and BTB have outlined several important processes for future implementation of the CQI system. First, it is important that BTB explore the measurement qualities of data collection tools to ensure that the tools developed for this process are reliable and valid. Second, BTB should gather feedback from internal and external staff about the use of tools, including the internal observation team and agency providers engaging in the self-assessment. This feedback can be used to revise and finalize data collection tools to ensure use, viability, and relevance. Lastly, our team must ensure that BTB has the means and motivation to examine program quality continuously throughout the year to fuel training opportunities for staff, address implementation challenges, and ensure that quality improvement is indeed taking place as intended. In conclusion, although BTB recognizes the realities of their business model, staff shortages, and budget constraints, BTB believes that CQI practices have the potential to transform BTB so that staff continue to deliver

high-quality experiences for students afterschool. CQI is not implemented quickly, but rather is a long-term change in culture that will take a shared and sustainable commitment to prosper. This is important if we are to equip afterschool staff with the tools they need to move the needle on positive youth development.

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# Animating Mastery: Navigational Play as Integrative Learning

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**Abstract:** This research examines mediational processes in digital activities at Projeto Clicar, a program designed to promote the social inclusion of children living and working on the streets of São Paulo, Brasil. It offers a cognitive ethnography of how the program's particular relational habitus, or pedagogical frame, shapes children's participatory appropriation through navigational play in digital learning activities that provide for an integrative sociocultural learning process. Making the relational habitus explicit enables us to observe and clarify the mediational tools and pedagogical strategies that shape children's navigational play and their ultimate participatory appropriation of program activities, as well as their sense of social inclusion among a community of learners.

**Keywords:** participatory appropriation, third space, relational habitus, navigational play, social inclusion

## Introduction and Research Questions

This article looks closely at the sociocultural process by which an educational setting's "relational habitus," or sociocultural and pedagogical frame, establishes the context for participatory appropriation to create the basis for integrative learning through navigational play. We provide an ethnographic account of how one informal digital activity provides for an integrative sociocultural process that enables young people, through the mediation of shared tools and artefacts, not only to acquire specific digital skills, but also to master social and cognitive capabilities by which they transform their participation in program activities from relatively passive consumption of entertainment to more agentic, personal, and mutual engagement with shared bodies of knowledge. In this way, we explore the process of learning as participatory appropriation (Rogoff, 1995) within a cultural system of activity. We suggest that participatory appropriation, as framed by the relational habitus, enables us to sidestep the mystification of learning as something that takes place inside an individual's head and instead focus explicitly on observable aspects of learning.

We examine mediational processes in a program designed to promote the social and educational inclusion of children living and working on the streets of São Paulo, Brasil. For over seventeen years, Projeto Clicar provided informal educational

resources and activities at Estação Ciência, a science museum in the Lapa district of São Paulo, until its recent (2013) closure. In its informal digital and hands-on activities, Projeto Clicar linked these children (aged 5 to 18) to professional educators and older peers (university students from the Universidade de São Paulo).

The children of Projeto Clicar (many of whom were not in school, had never been to school, or had only attended school for a year or two) entered a space where they were able to explore a variety of digital tools and other resources – board games, art activities, picture books, etc. Their participation in these activities was entirely voluntary. There was little or no formal instruction, although there were always educators (including both professionals and trained university students) at hand whom the children could ask for guidance when they were unable to solve a problem for themselves. The children learned to engage in these varied activities through interaction with each other and with the educators, who often participated with them as more experienced partners in the activities. The team of educators was specifically trained not to “instruct” the children, but to ask questions, to guide them gently to work together and build on each other’s knowledge.

In this sense, Projeto Clicar represented a separate “world” of activity, an arena of playful activity, a “third space” beyond the constraints of strict surveillance and practical, purposeful pursuits (Gutiérrez, 2008). Importantly for the young people of Projeto Clicar, the program’s space was seen by the children as their own. It was a time and place set aside specifically for them, where the rigors of social exclusion and the hard ethos of the streets that they daily experienced were temporarily suspended. It was a space where the participants were free to remove their masks of quasi-adult street toughness and, for a few hours each day, assume the personae of – in short, act like (and actually “be”) – children (Underwood, Mahiri, Toloza, & Pranzetti, 2003).

Projeto Clicar made use of computer and board games such as matching games, checkers and chess, Lion King, Pajama Sam, Freddie the Fish, Sim City, various math and word games, as well as other more sophisticated web-based and digital multi-media activities, to provide intensive individual connections with shared artifacts and meanings (including negotiated game rules) and also intensive social connections with others in the program. Participation in the program thus entailed an intense traffic in shared tools, artifacts, and symbols. The specific character of each child’s participation, even though initially conditioned by his or her own individual background or life circumstances, was in the course of time framed by the artifacts with which he or she engaged with others, and by the interactions that took place through the mediation of those artifacts. In time, the character of their participation changed – they learned how to make their way through the cultural system that the program framed.

## Review of the Literature

The educators at Projeto Clicar pursued a pedagogical strategy based on the work of Freinet (1990, 1993), Freire (1970), and Vygotsky (1978). To understand the charac-

ter of children's playful participation at Projeto Clicar, we follow these same complementary theoretical approaches. In his cultural historical approach to the study of learning, Vygotsky (1978) was especially interested in understanding how human beings moved from lower to higher mental processes. He emphasized the importance of approaching learning not simply as an individual phenomenon, but in its specific sociocultural context. Yet by "history," he did not simply mean a careful description of that context. "To study something historically means to study it in the process of change" (Vygotsky, quoted by Scribner in Tobach, 1997, p. 244, in Robbins, 2001, p. 27). Vygotsky was particularly interested in the transition process from "involuntary" to "voluntary" levels of perception, attention, and memory, and in the transition from these lower mental process to higher processes such as logical memory, creativity, verbal thinking, and regulation (Robbins, 2001, p. 25). This transition often took place in what he called "the zone of proximal development," the space-time field of interaction in which an individual becomes able to do things with others that he or she could not do alone (Vygotsky, 1978).

Lave (1996) and Rogoff (1995) have demystified this process by focusing on learning as individuals' changing participation in sociocultural activities. This transformation is not simply a process of the internalization or acquisition of a social world that is somehow external to the individual; it is instead a process of participatory appropriation, in which the individual is developmentally engaged in "a dynamic, active, mutual process involved in people's participation in cultural activities" (Rogoff, 1995, p.153). In this process, the individual's participation not only increases; the very character of that participation changes as the individual begins to assume and enact new roles and relationships in the activity. As such, learning takes place in the open; it is visible and observable, not only in formal educational situations but even in playful activity. Viewing situated learning as changing participation enables us to capture the learning lives of young people by observing individuals' participant orientations both within and across situations and sites over time (Arnseth & Silseth, 2013).

Such participant orientations can be viewed most clearly in the context of what Stone, Underwood and Hotchkiss (2013) have called the relational habitus. Stone et al. amended Bourdieu's (1990) concept of *habitus* to foreground the intersubjective and agentic character of meaning-making in learning and development. Bourdieu's approach to *habitus* emphasized individuals' dispositions constituted in practice and thus focused on the reproduction of social structures and practice. Stone et al. adapted Bourdieu's approach by using the concept of relational habitus, to emphasize not so much the psychological dispositions of individuals internalizing social structures, but more conclusively the interactive engagement of selves and others in the intersubjective co-production of communicative processes that are constitutive of, as well as constituted by, historically emergent knowledges and practices. The relational habitus is "an ensemble of relations enclosing self, tools, tasks, and others that is intersubjectively constructed and sustained over time in formal and informal learning environments" (Stone, Underwood, & Hotchkiss, 2012, p. 66).

The concept of relational habitus allows for a pragmatic focus on observable communicative processes that are often implicit in learning and development (Underwood, Parker, & Stone, 2013). By specifying the configuration of these elements

and their enactment in a particular learning environment, we are able to describe and analyse individuals' participant orientations and trace their transformation over time. In this sense, the changing participation of the children in the informal activity described below represent a navigational exploration of possibilities and limits, the "relational rights and responsibilities" (Stone, Underwood, & Hotchkiss, 2012) implicit in the relational habitus established by the learning environment in which the children are cognitively and interactively situated for this exploration. We have intentionally focused on an informal activity to emphasize the cognitive development that takes place in navigational play.

By navigational play, we mean playful activity involving the exploratory determination of one's position and direction both in the context of a given or negotiated task or activity and in relation to other participants in the same activity. As Hutchins notes, "The central computations in navigation answer the questions, Where are we? And if we proceed in a certain way for a specified time, where will we be?" (1995, p. 39). These questions are matters of concern for determining how to proceed in any environment. The navigational aspects of play may be seen both in recreational games and in activities mediated by digital media, card and board games, or other hands-on tools, materials, and activities. Until its recent closure, Projeto Clicar was a prime locus for observing navigational play. Importantly, to understand the cognitive implications of navigational play, we have used the approach and methods of cognitive ethnography, which implies specific strategies for observing, describing, and analysing or interpreting the observed interactions involved in navigational play.

## Methods

Cognitive ethnography explores the co-construction of meaning and understanding among participants in real-world sociocultural activities. It studies human cognition as it occurs in its sociocultural context. That is, cognitive ethnographies study distributed cognition within social ecosystems that both constitute and are constituted by individual agents' enaction of tasks and activities framed by a particular social setting's relational habitus. Within this context, information, understanding, and meaning are embodied in the joint activity of participants in the setting. The unit of analysis is not the individual, but the activity in which individuals are engaged – that is, the interactive frame (what we call the "relational habitus") among "individuals and artifacts and their relations to each other in a particular work [or play] practice" (Rogers & Ellis, 1994, p. 122).

Analyzing activity in this way enables the researcher to observe the social distribution of cognition and knowledge among participating individuals through their mutual engagement with tools and media over time. Accordingly, cognitive ethnography takes an inductive approach to observation in the field (i.e., in an authentic, "naturally occurring" social situation or activity), while drawing deductively on theoretical concepts, propositions, and hypotheses to orient one's observations. This ethnographic approach calls for observation of the specific physical space of activity (including the physical arrangement of objects and persons), the objects and tools

used (including individual language use and task-oriented dialogue) and participants' actions in the pragmatic transfer and exchange of information and knowledge (Hollan, Hutchins, & Kirsh, 2000).

As a result, in our cognitive ethnography of the relational habitus established (and continually negotiated) at Projeto Clicar, we observed concrete operations and interactions among the children in a variety of tasks and activities. We often selected particular tasks or activities for special observation, and we observed the children while maintaining our engagement with the children in those activities. The process called for careful data collection, and we not only made detailed observations while engaging fully in the activities with the children, but also cross-checked our observations and interpretations with each other as fellow researchers and practitioners, and also with the more experienced participants (the young people served by Projeto Clicar) in the activity themselves. We also conducted observations and analysis of specific activities across time frames, comparing specific instances of the activity and looking for patterns of interactivity among them.

This article presents an ethnographic case study of one child's interaction with others in learning a relatively simple computer game at Projeto Clicar, a program dedicated specifically to children (aged 5 to 18) living and working on the streets of São Paulo, Brazil<sup>1</sup>. Again, the unit of analysis is the relational habitus established by Projeto Clicar as the learning context and pedagogical frame in which individuals and groups engage with each other in navigational play. From 1996 until 2012, Projeto Clicar, supported by the Universidade de São Paulo, an NGO, and Petrobras, was located at Estação Ciência, an old factory converted into a science museum. Estação Ciência, until its recent closure, offered a wide variety of hands-on and digital activities, exhibits, and demonstrations illustrating scientific knowledge and inquiry. This museum offered exhibits and activities for school children and their teachers, but also set aside a portion of its space for Projeto Clicar.<sup>2</sup> Projeto Clicar, as part of the museum, operated Monday-Friday from about 12pm-6pm throughout the year and offered young people who faced severe conditions of social exclusion new learning tools and activities within this inclusive world inside the museum (Underwood, Pranzetti, & Toloza, 2014).

The primary child whom we focus on throughout this article was Paulo, a six or seven year old boy living on the Streets of São Paulo. Paulo visited Projeto Clicar regularly and the observations on which most of this account is based were collected during a three week period. During this time, Paulo was deeply engaged in playing "Lion King," a computer game that consisted of a variety of possible activities, built into the framework of the animated world of Simba the young lion, the hero of the animated Disney film. In this game, players must go through 10 levels, overcome

1 The authors wish to express their profound gratitude to Professor Ernst Hamburger (Universidade de São Paulo), the renowned physicist and visionary Director of Estação Ciência, for his many years of support to Projeto Clicar, to its educators, and to the children it served. We also wish to express our deepest thanks to Marcos Matsukuma (Universidade de São Paulo), and Olga Vasquez (University of California, San Diego), for their cogent and insightful comments and suggestions.

2 As Scheper-Hughes (1992), Hecht (1998), Da Cunha Frontana (1999), and others have noted, the term "street children" masks a multifaceted reality; many have come to use the term "meninos na rua" (children on the street) rather than the former "meninos da rua" (children of the street) to acknowledge this complexity and diversity of life circumstances.



a variety of obstacles and overcome his uncle to become the Lion King himself. In this regard, the Lion King game is potentially transformational in two ways, in that participants are engaged in the activity of furthering the full development of the Simba character, and at the same time, within a relational habitus of small-group collaborative activity, they are engaged in furthering their own social development in relation to their peers. While Paulo sometimes played this game alone, there were often multiple children watching, playing or interacting around the game. Our observations of these interactions were later supplemented and contextualized by additional observations on successive visits to Projeto Clicar over a period of years to form the basis for the present ethnography.

By describing and interpreting the informal learning activities involved in navigating the Lion King game, we attempt to show how program activities mediated children's development over time. We conducted participant observation, using a combination of research strategies in which we engaged directly in everyday activities and interactions with the young people of Projeto Clicar to learn explicit and implicit aspects of their social world (Spradley, 1980; Dewalt & Dewalt, 2010). These strategies included face-to-face observations of activities, the study of appropriate conversational pragmatics appropriate to the site and its participants, and informal conversations and interviews, among other research methods (Briggs, 1986; Pelto, 2013). While this qualitative research stance has often erred on the side of the observation, we focused on the participatory side – what might be called *observant participation* – because of the specific character of the social setting and our particular roles in the setting of collaborating closely with the program's directors in supporting program activities, in working directly with the children as they engaged in those activities, and in discussing with the directors various strategies for improving and documenting the program. As Directors of Projeto Clicar, Dirce Pranzetti and Cecilia Toloza were professionally active in the site's organizational and pedagogical activities almost daily over a period of seventeen years, while the authors took part in successive ethnographic visits to the site, both together and separately. As such, the research was a collaborative effort between the authors and the directors of the program. In carrying out our respective professional responsibilities, we maintained a vigilant observation, kept detailed field notes, and held many discussions about the learning processes among the children with whom we were participating and observing. This strategy enabled us to confront ethical dilemmas of qualitative research as we focused on examining alternative, inclusionary modes of relation in the co-construction of social activity (Packer, 2011).

We followed this approach in response to ethical and methodological considerations attendant to working in an educational setting which precluded clinical or experimental research design, and which was designed explicitly to advocate for, rather than conduct research on, the young people who took part in the site's activities. Our research was formative, in the sense of seeking to find ways to modify and improve the learning activities at Projeto Clicar. In this sense, our approach was a form of design based ethnographic research, examining learning processes and interventions in those processes, with the objective of generating innovation in educational activity (Brown, 1992; Drotner, 2013). In doing so, we drew on Luria's narrative approach to presenting scientific findings that attempts "to preserve the wealth of living reality"

(Luria, 1979, in Sacks, 1990, p. 183). Luria's approach emphasized the importance of grounding the scientific study of human beings in their concrete existence, in order to elucidate "the role of the historical, the cultural, the interactive, not merely in modifying, but in actually making higher nervous functions *possible*" (Sacks, 1990, p. 187).

Accordingly, we have described the young people of Projeto Clicar as a way to illustrate the strategies by which they learned to create a place for themselves in an otherwise unwelcoming world. Like Projeto Clicar itself, this ethnographic study, following Freire (1970), accepted them as they were, socially and cognitively, and observed what they were able to do both by themselves and in concert with each other. Notably, the authors were not absent as subjects from the descriptions that emerged. As participant observers engaged in the process of observing how the children in the program learn how those activities work, our own participation was obviously implicated. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the children of Clicar were themselves participant observers, engaged in the ongoing task of finding out what one needs to know to operate acceptably and agentively in a given social world. In describing Projeto Clicar as a community of learners, a social world that encompasses educators' guidance, children's independent discovery, and the transformational participation of both in interactive activities (Rogoff, 1994), this cognitive ethnography attempts to unpack the process of participatory participation that took place in the program.

## Results

Through participation in a shared system of learning – in a shared community of learners – the children of Projeto Clicar came to connect past experiences with present experience, to remember what had worked and what had failed to work. In short, they came to recognize themselves and others as constituting a shared world (even the unique world of relative safety and ease that the program temporarily represented). As they built on the cumulative experiences with the artifacts and activities they shared in the program, they also came to recognize continuities that situated them as a community of learners, and that defined their place among others in the program – a place where the ethos of the street was not in play, where they could see that they were active players, again and again, where they knew they were welcome and able to return, where they went from being novices to being experts and back again, where they recognized that they were accountable to each other and yet, without question, belonged.

### *The Relational Habitus: Projeto Clicar and the Lion King Game*

An example of the early stages of this navigational process for many of the children who came to Projeto Clicar was observable in their experience of the Lion King game. A number of the smaller children, as well as some of the older children who

were new to the program, often played this game. The favorite activity for these younger children appeared to be very simple at first glance. This involved using the mouse to send Simba, the lion cub, in one direction or another. The possible path was basically two-dimensional; one could direct the lion cub to the right or to the left, but not away from or toward the viewer. Two or three of the children we observed never did anything else (as long as we were observing them) but direct Simba along this linear journey. Minute after minute, hour after hour, and day after day, we watched the children intent on making the lion cub walk along the animated landscape until he came to a barrier – a stream, a cliff, or an ominous larger animal.

For several days we watched Paulo, a newcomer to the program, as he played the game again and again, generally with one or two other children sitting beside him. By moving the mouse and directional keys to guide the pace of the lion cub, Paulo could make the game go faster or slower. In this way, he could make the game more exciting or be more cautious in the face of obstacles that appeared in Simba's path. In the beginning, he usually chose the latter. He peered at the screen and seemed fascinated at first simply by the movement on the screen – the familiar character prancing along the animated landscape totally captured his attention. It was enough for him to watch the character move to the right or left. After a few minutes of this, however, the other, more experienced children would say to him, "Vai! Vai!" (Go! Go!). Paulo then worked the mouse to make the image move a little faster. When Simba came to an obstacle, Paulo worked the mouse to send the lion cub in one direction or another. In doing so, he often glanced down at the mouse or keyboard. Whether doubtful of the connection between the mouse and what was happening on the screen, uncertain of his hand-eye coordination, or unsure of his control over the tool, he momentarily turned his focus from screen to mouse and back again. Usually Paulo made the lion cub turn around and go back the way he had come, to see if the obstacles in that direction were less formidable. But after a while, with some urging from the other children, Paulo began trying to keep the lion cub going in the same direction and by moving and clicking the mouse in coordination, attempted to overcome the obstacle.

Intently, Paulo watched the screen as his right hand guided the mouse, clicking to make the lion cub leap from rock to rock, or from rock to tree limb to rock and thus over the forbidding stream, then on again along the perilous path. Much of the time, another child, or sometimes two or three, sat next to Paulo and watched the game and commented on Paulo's progress or gave him advice or criticism on maneuvering the lion cub. After a while, especially if it was an older child who had taken part in the program for a while, he would say, "this is boring," and stand up and walk away. Nonetheless, Paulo kept his attention on the Lion King game. If others criticized his use of the directional keys and mouse, he would nod or respond monosyllabically, his eyes almost always on the screen, but glancing down from time to time at the mouse. In a fairly short time, he seemed to become fascinated and enlivened that the work of his hands had such an impact on the movements he saw on the computer screen. For a while, this sense of amazement and empowerment was enough to fully engage him throughout the hours he spent at Projeto Clicar each day.

The Clicar educators often sat next to him at some length during the time when Paulo was new to the program and observed Paulo as he played the game. For a while, he made Simba move to the right, now the left, and at first kept the lion cub

walking at a moderately slow pace, until prodded by the others to make things go faster. Paulo leaned back a little in his chair and held his head inclined forward a bit. It was not long before he forgot about the mouse and keyboard. His hands worked them almost by reflex, it seemed. His eyes hardly ever left the computer screen. He watched as the software landscape rolled by, his hand on the mouse. Still, it appeared that Paulo's stance toward the game was somewhat passive.

Paulo followed the animated character as it ambled along and reacted only at the last moment when an obstacle appeared in the character's path. It happened fast, and he reacted with too little movement, too late. As a stream appeared on the left side of the screen, Paulo leaned forward a little. As the lion came closer to the stream, Paulo moved his hand and clicked the mouse, in order to make the lion cub jump from the ground to the top of a rock. He made the leap to the rock but the second leap to a tree branch required a higher leap. Paulo paused Simba on the rock, then made the leap, without success. Paulo had not clicked with enough force to send the lion cub into a higher leap.

Roberto and Antonio, two other Projeto Clicar participants who had been watching Paulo play, commented loudly on Paulo's act. "Demais devagar!" ("Too slow!") He tried again and failed again, then immediately turned the lion cub around to walk in the other direction. He seemed a bit bored and the others did too and said so, "Mais rapido!" ("Faster!"), so he made the lion cub walk a little faster until he came to a rhinoceros. Here again, Paulo failed to click with the needed combination of speed and intensity, and Simba's leap failed. Paulo turned the lion cub around again and sent him in the original direction – to the right. This time, when the lion cub came to the stream, Antonio and Roberto were already instructing him, preparing him. "Mais alto!" ("Make him jump higher!").

Paulo leaned forward, eyes firmly on the screen, hand on the mouse, ready to act. "Now," said Antonio, and Paulo clicked the mouse, and Simba leaped onto the rock and paused to plan for the leap to the first branch. "Now," said Antonio, and Paulo clicked the mouse but again the leap was not high enough. The two others chorused their critique of his action.

"Faster."

"Stronger."

Paulo tried and failed again.

"This is boring," Roberto said. He got up and walked away. Antonio reached over and grabbed the mouse from Paulo. Paulo complained but knew the rules of sharing and let Antonio play for a while. Antonio activated the lion cub to leap onto the tree branch, paused, then leaped to the branch of another tree with another click of the mouse, then jumped down on the other side of stream. Antonio's posture was different than Paulo's. He leaned forward all the time, his chest touching the table on which the computer sat and both forearms resting lightly on the table. He worked the mouse not with his hand alone, but with an action that involved his forearm and even his shoulder, which leaned in to situate his upper arm in a relaxed but ready stance.

We watched to see if Antonio would now take over the game. Turn taking is encouraged at Projeto Clicar, and at time the children physically jockey or briefly

argue for control of the mouse. But sharing is also a value instilled in them from their first arrival, and Antonio leaned back at this point, turned to Paulo, and said, “Como isso” (“Like that”). He passed the mouse back to Paulo. It was clear from watching Antonio and other children more adept at the Lion King game that to make Simba leap effectively from rock to rock or from branch to branch, it was necessary to move him in the right direction and then to click the mouse at the correct moment and with precisely the right force to make the lion cub leap far enough. Hand-eye coordination, together with fairly precise movements of the hands, were crucial to the effective manipulation of the mouse.

### *Navigational Play*

When children like Paulo would first begin to play Lion King, they often approached it initially as a spectator activity. They would sit down and activate the character to watch it move across the screen, at times forgetting to use their hands until the movement on the screen came to a halt. Their perception of the animated landscape with its distinctive flora and fauna appears at first to be elementary, reactive, almost passive. When they sat down next to a more expert player like Antonio for the first time and watched the field of action, they were viewing it as an animated motion picture. Soon, as they began to see that the player was himself causing the action on the screen by working the mouse, their attention became more focused. An observer like Antonio would watch the newcomer staring at the screen, almost entranced by the moving cartoon figures on the screen. At one such moment, Paulo turned to the more experienced player and looked at his face, and then his hands, which were constantly moving in subtle quick movements.

“How does it work?” he asked.

Antonio shrugged and said, “Like this. Like this. Then click.”

Paulo looked at the screen and watched Simba jump over rocks and other obstacles.

“Let me try.” Antonio again shrugged and pushed the mouse over toward Paulo.

For novices like Paulo, it was at first entertaining enough to activate the animated character of the lion and cause it to move through a colourful landscape. When Paulo moved the mouse over toward Charles (one of the authors of this article), who had sat down next to Paulo, and invited him to take a turn, Charles wondered if he was perhaps a bit frustrated with the more complicated movements or if he was acknowledging the unspoken rule for sharing the equipment at Clicar. Paulo appeared very willing for Antonio and Charles to take their turns with the mouse, but he was quickly very eager to return to the game soon after he had fulfilled sharing duties. Although Roberto had long since walked away with a sense of boredom because of the level at which Paulo was playing the game, Paulo did not appear to lose his interest in the game. He kept playing and playing. Antonio turned his attention to the activity at the adjacent computer from time to time but always returned to observe the Lion King game and offer bits of advice to Paulo. As Simba approached the stream yet

again and leaped onto the first rock, then the branch, Antonio nodded his head with approval.

“Remember to click”, he said. Simba jumped to the next branch. “Now. Stronger!” Antonio urged emphatically. Another boy, Emerson, leaned over from the group at the next computer and began to join Antonio in counselling Paulo. At times, Paulo appeared frustrated. One of the educators stepped in at this point, reminding Roberto that he had once been a novice himself.

“That’s what you did before, remember? How did you learn to do it?”

“I just did,” Roberto said.

“But how?”

“Well, I watched Antonio and Joao. They were good. I watched them.”

“Just like that?”

“Like that. They laughed at me so I wanted to get better.”

“So you know how Paulo feels when you laugh at him.”

“Yeah, yeah. But it’s just for fun.” Roberto said. He looked at Paulo

“We want you to know. Like us. We’re just laughing because it’s funny, once you know how. It should be fun. We’re laughing for fun.”

They all laughed, including Paulo, who took the mouse and moved the lion cub until it approached a rhinoceros. Then came to a stop. Then he tried to make the lion cub jump over it, but it failed to jump high enough. He started to turn back.

“No.” Antonio said. “Don’t stop.”

He laughed at Paulo and took over the mouse again. He worked the lion cub and made it move nimbly across the landscape.

“Don’t go back,” he said. “Keep moving. Look ahead and think what’s coming before it gets there. So you’re ready and you already move when it gets there. Like that!”

He pushed the mouse over to Paulo, who made Simba move again, every now and then glancing at Antonio, who was playing football on the next computer.

Antonio glanced at Paulo and said, “Too slow.”

Paulo tried to make the lion cub move faster but faltered. “I can’t.”

“Take your time,” Antonio said. “But be ready for what’s coming.”

Paulo continued to manipulate the mouse. Occasionally Antonio grabbed it and made the lion cub move faster, saying, “Look.” Antonio worked the mouse efficiently, the movements of his hand and arm guiding the mouse about as his fingers clicked it with a variety of subtle accents, stresses and lifts, like a piano player evoking the precise accent of various notes with an economy of exact movements of his hand and fingers. Paulo watched for a minute, then took the mouse and worked the lion cub



along, at times glancing at Antonio in anticipation of his comments and critiques. Antonio continued to play his football game, at times glancing over at Paulo's screen and at his hand working the mouse. Over time, in fact, in a relatively brief period, Paulo began to move the lion cub with greater speed and anticipation. In the process, by watching others and receiving their very minimal comments on his effectiveness in navigating the Lion King landscape, he worked out his own sense of finesse, his own feel for the game.

### *Participatory Appropriation*

Paulo continued to play the Lion King game again and again. It appeared to be the only thing he did at Projeto Clicar over a considerable period. In time, the movement of his hands and fingers changed. The way he held his arms changed. Adapted to a state of readiness, he began enjoying himself at a different level of activity – almost casual in his stance and movements. While at first he had viewed a moving cartoon and turned his attention to the mechanics of how to control its movement, he later began to look for features of the animated environment, to remember trees or rocks or clumps of grass as clues, as telling as his partners' cues, and thus anticipate the specific feature of the terrain that was to appear next. The movement of his hands and fingers became less reactive, less exaggerated in response to something unforeseen in the animated landscape, and subtler, more proactive as he looked ahead and poised for the next leap. Paulo himself began to assume the relaxed pose of a master, his identification with Simba stronger and stronger. On the screen, the lion cub jumped from the ground to a rock, then up to a branch and from branch to branch, quickly crossing streams and evading the larger creatures in his path.

Paulo and the others groaned at his failures but reveled in his successes. Multiplied across about twenty computer screens with one or two, and sometimes three children at each screen, the activity in Projeto Clicar looked and sounded a bit like chaos, yet throughout the shared space, the mode of activity and interaction was the same. The relational habitus within the space of Projeto Clicar was one of mutual anticipation. Individual participation orientations varied individually and changed in time as children became more accomplished at simple games and moved on to more and more sophisticated games and activities, in which they again had to go through the same process, moving from tentative ineptitude to greater and greater mastery, but with increasingly understanding of how they could most quickly navigate the overall program most efficiently through collaborative engagement with each other. This habitus of participatory appropriation was established without any formal instruction, without any explicit rules. The interaction among the children was raucous, sometimes reaching a crescendo that the educators had to call to their attention, but there was rarely any issue of discipline. The young people did not want their own engagement interrupted so they moderated their interactions themselves, through a process of casual discourse by which they set their own and each other's limits and allowances. Knowledge and skill swept through the setting with a self-regulating energy and enthusiasm, as learners became educators and educators became learners again as they moved from activity to activity, mastering one task and tool and game

to enable them to become novices again in another, and in the process realizing that they were always learners and there was always more to learn.

## Discussion

Using informal digital activity to provide insight into the process of learning and social and cognitive mastery through participatory appropriation, we have presented a cognitive ethnography that details the relational habitus shaping participatory appropriation at Projeto Clicar. We have seen how the relational habitus provides the context and basis for this learning, as is demonstrated by the mediational tools and informal frame through which the children engage with each other in navigational play. We observed the participatory appropriation and transformation of Paulo's learning, as demonstrated by the shifts and progress in his navigational play, both by himself and with others. We have focused on a few moments of this development to illustrate how, through Paulo's active engagement with mediational tools and his peers, he gained mastery in the world of the Lion King and in the process acquired specific digital skills, while developing the social and cognitive capacities to engage more directly and openly with his peers and with the educators at Projeto Clicar. In this way, it became evident how the relational habitus co-constructed within Projeto Clicar and through its activities provided for an inclusionary framework that enabled its participants to transform themselves.

### *The Relational Habitus*

The Lion King game, a digital activity based on the internationally popular Disney character that Paulo and his companions had seen among the weekly movies sponsored by Projeto Clicar and on posters in the streets of Sao Paulo, and had come to know as a "person" – a persona in a drama of loss and belonging and eventual power – with whom children living on the streets could easily identify, provided an activity which the educators at Projeto Clicar shaped and guided in accordance with the program's relational habitus. While some might lament the intrusion into these children's lives of narrative material from North America's capital of popular culture, the children of Clicar by no means took their weekly exposure to this cartoon medium too seriously. Paulo, Antonio, Roberto, and their *companheiros* approached the Lion King game as a challenge to their dexterity and capacity to anticipate. The recognition of Simba the lion cub was perhaps momentarily significant, but for them, the game was the thing. Simba quickly became unimportant except as their proxy in the game's animated world. The background landscape, which initially seemed to captivate them as spectators, soon faded into relative obscurity as they increasingly focused on the foreground terrain, with its many hazards and cues to action. Remembering those cues and the hazards they foreshadowed, and anticipating the precise moment for clicking the mouse with the exact tactile intensity necessary to achieve the indispensable leap to the next level of activity, resembled more the assiduous

practice of aspiring musicians, with all the associated postures of physical and psychic readiness, and not the often presumed indolence of children playing around and wasting time with computer games.

Even to the authors, the *Lion King* game at first appeared rather uneducational, with little to offer for children's cognitive development. Working the mouse and directional keys to make an animated character wend its way through a two dimensional cartoon landscape did not at first appear very educational to most of us educators. But after a relatively short time, as we observed children's rapid mastery of the mouse and keyboard, we began to re-estimate its value as a tool for learning. In the context of *Projeto Clicar*, the children's participation with the *Lion King* game was voluntary but by no means solitary. A child was rarely alone when playing the game. His or her own participant orientation – the character of his or her participation – was framed by the participation of other children who came and went, or who sat next to each other, or looked over the shoulder of the one who was presently working the mouse. As a result, the child who played the game was continually observed, encouraged, critiqued, teased, prodded, and challenged by his peers, and guided both verbally and nonverbally on how to work the animation more skillfully. In this way, the children, both individually and collectively, were always changing the nature and scope of their participation in the activity – always learning something new about the tricks of navigating this animated world.

### *Navigational Play*

As the children began figuring out, both together and separately, how to navigate this world, they did so not as solitary individuals; instead, they worked together as a distributed system of cognition, similar to what Hutchins (1995) has described in the professional world of pilots and navigators. After the children became captivated by the flickering screen and the African landscape it depicts, and after they became intrigued by the lion cub and by their ability to make it move in different directions, their practice of the activity became a study in navigation – how to establish their own positions and actions in relation to others in their environment. For the children playing the *Lion King* game, the concerns are equivalent to those faced by pilots and navigators, and are experienced just as intensely, if their expressions, reflex movements, gestures and verbalizations are any indication. The always looming barriers, obstacles, and other creatures that the lion cub must evade or overcome make these navigational questions of immediate and crucial concern, suspending for a while the more perilous barriers and obstacles to be faced on the streets. As he became more and more involved in the game, a child like Paulo again and again needs to establish where he, Simba himself, is situated in the animated terrain, and where he will be in the next few seconds if he maintains the same pace. It is a matter of remembering what has happened before, of recalling specific clues and cues, and anticipating exactly what feature of the landscape is about to appear.

Fortunately for Paulo and others like him, he was not alone in this activity. Others, sitting beside him or looking over his shoulder, were also engaged in the act of remembering and anticipating. They were pointing at the screen, calling out advice,

interjecting warnings, nudging his shoulder, or simply leaning forward in vicarious excitement – a collective excitement that contributed to the affective engagement of the player. At any particular moment, each child was bringing a specialized way of approaching the game – a specialized knowledge of various facets of the game. One of them would focus on recognizing clues for upcoming hazards. Another might be an expert at manipulating the mouse and keys for pacing and making the lion cub leap the right distance at the right moment. Yet another simply knew the game’s geography – like a tracker knows a physical terrain – from relatively long experience with it. In a process similar to what Hutchins (1996) describes for bearing takers, bearing time-recorders, and plotters engaged in intricate navigational computations, the children of Projeto Clicar pooled their knowledge. Their personal expertise increasingly overlapped with others.’ As the children came and went, as the group playing the game shifted and realigned itself, as experts and novices peered at the screen and squirmed and pointed and talked, they operated together as a functional system, and over time the game became a joint project, a shared body of knowledge, a blending of cumulative experience that became collectively memorable for them, as it informed their present practice in other games and activities, or as it enabled them to play the role of authoritative observer – of cultural broker – for any newcomer to Projeto Clicar.

### *Participatory Appropriation*

When we look closely at how Paulo learned to navigate the Lion King game, it becomes clear that we are seeing precisely what Vygotsky was describing when he wrote about the zone of proximal development and the emergence of higher level mental processes from more elementary processes. Through practice on his own and with others, Paulo accomplished a passage from relatively involuntary to more voluntary perception and attention. The character of his participation transformed from his initial moments of passively perceiving intriguing objects moving on the computer screen to the active recognition of the content, the “nature” of the world it represents, the further recognition that it was possible to have a measure of control over that world, and the subsequent recognition of the tools of power available to him – both the computer accessories (the mouse and keyboard) and the precise physical mechanics of control (his posture, arm, hand and finger movements). Memory – the re-membering of both the physical mechanics of using the mediational accessories and the social dynamics of working with others – enables a further recognition – the anticipation of action in response to upcoming circumstances – and ultimately, a cognitive and kinesthetic stance toward a variety of potential circumstances. In short, with a little help from his friends, Paulo moves from relatively involuntary (or passive) perception and attention to a more intentioned, selective, and instrumental perception of the world of the Lion King, and by implication, the larger social world in which he took part. As Vygotsky noted, this transformation represents the emergence of capacities of a different order, which cannot be reduced to the natural, lower capacities. In this process, Paulo’s attention is honed to focus on certain features of that world, to assume other features, and to neglect or ignore other features. His re-

call of the right features, of the objects deemed worth remembering by the others in his immediate social world, becomes “a process of active searching” (Luria, 1979, p. 5). Through the mediation of tools and material culture, as well as the medium of talk (“verbal thought,” to use Vygotsky’s term), Paulo is actively engaging (and feeling included) in a broader cultural world.

As Paulo and the others moved from their initial perception of moving images on a colorful screen to more voluntary perception of those images and to more intentional attention to their implications and manipulability, they began to approach the imaginary world of the Lion King as second nature. From all appearances, their movements became effortless. They exulted in their power to pace and position Simba, not as a Disney character, but as an extension of their own will, as if they themselves had taken on the task of moving through an animated African landscape. In effect, they became the Lion King, navigating the hazards of the digital landscape with the same anticipation and ultimately, the same sense of self-assured adeptness, as the animated character itself. The confident look on their faces, and the assertive yet relaxed mechanics they employed to control their digital movement (that is, the lion cub’s movement) through that landscape, demonstrated their mastery, their appropriation of the sense of the participatory finesse necessary to navigate their way through the world of the Lion King. That world, and their relationship to it as a community of learners, came to make sense. Their progress – steady, observable, almost tangible – illustrated why even the simplest digital media can be so engaging as tools in the world of children, and why programs like Projeto Clicar can be so productive in framing activities that provide an inclusive path to integrated learning and an animated sense of mastery.

## Conclusion

Our purpose has been to illustrate the importance of making explicit a theory of learning that often remains implicit in extended education programs as an unspoken cultural system or relational habitus. Making the relational habitus explicit enables us to clarify and observe the mediational tools that enable navigational play and the ultimate participatory appropriation and transformation. Approaching learning as an observable sociocultural process that takes place in the context of a particular relational habitus enables us to begin to map out children’s development over time. We begin to view the interactions of learning selves with specific configurations of materials, tools, and others as tangible, repeatable patterns that can be identified as progressive levels of engagement, which indicate not only the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, but also the transformations that take place in individuals’ orientation to participation in specific activities framed by the culture, or relational habitus, of an educational program. By making explicit our understanding of what learning is and how it is constituted in extended education programs like Projeto Clicar, we can thus begin to specify pedagogical strategies and tools that promote the social inclusion of marginalized young people.

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# How Youths' Profiles of Extracurricular and Leisure Activity Affect Their Social Development and Academic Achievement

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**Abstract:** Research has shown that participation in extracurricular activities has a positive effect on adolescents' social behaviour and academic performance; however, the reciprocal influence of extracurricular activities and leisure on the development of adolescents' academic performance and social behaviour is unclear. In our study, we investigate the effect of school based and out-of-school leisure activities on adolescent's social and scholastic development. We also explore how students' gender, socioeconomic status and ethnicity influence their choice of, and engagement in activities. A sample of 5278 students (females 50%; migrant background 26%) filled in questionnaires in grade 5 and 7 and provided personal background information as well as evidence of their engagement in extracurricular and leisure activities, their social behaviour and academic performance. Using latent class analysis, we distinguished five identity-related patterns of engagement in extracurricular and leisure activities among 5th-graders. We found a connection between adolescents' gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity and their choice of, and engagement in, extracurricular and leisure activities, social behaviour and grades. We also identified a link between adolescents' patterns of engagement in extracurricular and leisure activities and developmental tendencies in their social behaviour and scholastic achievement between grades 5 and 7.

**Keywords:** extracurricular activity, leisure, adolescent development, academic achievement, social behaviour

## Introduction

One objective of schooling is to prepare young people to cope in an adult world that is typically disordered (Larson, 2011); however, classroom instruction usually takes place in a highly structured environment. Extracurricular activities provide adolescents with learning environments that resemble real-world settings and therefore have become a significant topic of empirical research in the field of education (Larson, 2011; Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett, 2009). Findings suggest that how adolescents spend their free time affects the development of their social behaviour, their academic achievement as well as their abilities to cope with real-life challenges (Shernoff, 2010; Eccles & Barber, 1999). Also, by participating in extracurricular activities, adolescents have the opportunity to experiment with social roles, behav-

hours, and identities without getting involved in risky activities (Barber, Stone, Hunt, & Eccles, 2005; Larson, 2000, 2006, 2011, Eccles & Roeser, 2011). It is assumed that the positive influence of extracurricular activities on adolescents' development is due partly to young peoples' positive experiences during participation. Students for example reported high levels of concentration and intrinsic motivation during extracurricular activities (Larson, 2000; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003).

There are some apparent weaknesses in existing research on extracurricular activities. In most of the studies, adolescents' (self-)selection of extracurricular activities is not randomized, limiting the possibility of drawing causal conclusions on the effects of participation (Fauth, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2007; Mahoney et al., 2009). Moreover, the influence of participation in extracurricular activities cannot be separated from personality characteristics, peer influence, and effects of participating in other activities (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001).

In this article, we focus on the last issue and explore effects of participation in diverse extracurricular activities. As a first step, we perform latent class analyses (LCA) to investigate patterns of adolescents' participation in school-based and out-of-school extracurricular activities. After that, we explore whether adolescents' activity patterns differ according to their social behaviour and academic achievement (grades) in 5th grade and how the activity patterns influence the development of social behaviour and academic achievement between in 7th grade.

### *The Influence of Type and Breadth of Activity*

Most studies in the field of extracurricular and leisure activities have been conducted on the influence of one specific kind of extracurricular activity – mostly sports – on social behaviour and/or academic outcomes (Broh, 2002; Gano-Overway, Newton, Magyar, Fry, Kim, & Guivernau, 2009; Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2011; for an overview see Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Mahoney et al., 2009). But there are also studies that investigate the effects of participating in several extracurricular activities on adolescents' development (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006, 2005; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Darling, 2005; Shernoff, 2010; McGee, Williams, Howden-Chapman, Martin, & Kawachi, 2006). Although in most cases small but positive effects of extracurricular activities have been identified, some negative results also have been found. For example, participation in sports has often been related to a higher likelihood of substance abuse (Barber et al., 2001; Fauth et al., 2007); however, this link vanished when peer influence was taken into account (Blomfield & Barber, 2010).

While most studies have neglected that approximately 70% of adolescents report participation in more than one out-of-school activity (Larson et al., 2006; Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Feldman & Matjasko, 2007), some scholars have taken the breadth of extracurricular activities into account (Simpkins et al., 2008; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006, 2010; Fauth et al., 2007; Larson et al., 2006). Hence, participation itself as well as the number of activities that adolescents are regularly involved in should affect their development in a positive way. This has been supported by empirical research. For example, Fredricks and Eccles (2010) found that the breadth of partic-

icipation in extracurricular activities was associated with positive academic outcomes and less risky behaviour. Some authors argue that participation in several activities exposes adolescents to a wider variety of peers and supportive adults (Feldman & Matjasko 2007; Larson, Hanson, & Moneta 2006). Furthermore, adolescents spending a significant amount of time in different organized activities have less time to engage in delinquent acts (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Also, differences based on the type of activity have to be considered. It can be assumed that participation, for example, in sports and community-oriented activities differs from participation in drama and academic activities. In a cross-sectional study, Feldman and Matjasko (2007) distinguished between various "portfolios" of extracurricular engagement. The authors grouped more than 30 activities into conceptually homogenous groups (sports, academia, school based, performance) and created a multiple activities category for students participating in at least two activities belonging to different categories. They compared students who participated in activities in only one category (e.g., sports) to those who participated in multiple activities. Participation in multiple activities was more common for students with a high socioeconomic status (SES) and a higher GPA. Feldman and Matjasko (2007) underlined the need for more research taking various activities in to account.

Bartko and Eccles (2003) included extracurricular activities taking place at school as well as unstructured leisure activities (e.g., hanging out with friends and watching television) in their research. In a cross-sectional analysis, they identified six clusters of adolescents. While the first cluster comprised of students participating in sports and spending substantial time with friends, the second cluster consisted of students spending time in school-based clubs, doing homework, and reading. The third cluster included uninvolved students reporting low rates of involvement in all activities and the fourth cluster involved students with high participation rates in volunteer activities. Moreover, the fifth cluster comprised students who were actively involved in all activities. Finally, the sixth cluster consisted of students working after school who were underrepresented in the other activities (Bartko & Eccles, 2003). The authors linked the clusters to psychological and socio-ecological indicators. Students in the second and sixth clusters had the highest GPA, while those in the third cluster had the lowest GPA. Problematic behaviour (e.g., substance abuse, fighting, cheating on tests) was reported mainly by students in the clusters related to sports, those who were uninvolved in activities, and working adolescents. In general, participation in structured activities was linked to adaptive behaviour (less problematic behaviour and higher self-esteem); participation in few activities was connected with poor psychological functioning (e.g., depression). Peck, Roeser, Zarrett, and Eccles (2008) performed a cluster analysis as well and reported similar participation patterns. Also, participating in a sports-oriented, volunteer, or school-based activity was related to higher rates of college attendance.

Overall, participation in various types of activities may lead to even more positive effects than involvement in only one kind of activity. Furthermore, some scholars have taken the participation of students in several extracurricular activities into account, which can be displayed in participation profiles. In summary, there are three recurring profiles of adolescent engagement in extracurricular and leisure activities: sports-oriented, highly-engaged, and minimally-engaged. Disadvantaged adoles-

cents are overrepresented in the minimally-engaged activity pattern (e.g., Zarrett et al., 2009).

### *Research Objectives and Hypothesis*

Many studies have revealed a positive impact of engagement in extracurricular activities on students' academic performance and social behaviour. However, as most adolescents spend their time participating in more than one extracurricular activity and have leisure time to read, meet friends and so forth, it is nearly impossible to determine the effects of one specific activity on adolescents' development. Some studies have addressed this issue by including the breadth of activities or by focusing on patterns of activities. All studies at hand have been conducted in the United States, but German culture differs from North America's. Traditionally in Germany school ends at 13/14 p.m. Lunch and extracurricular activities are not generally offered at school. This fact led to a long tradition of adolescent activities organized by club and institutions outside of school (Fischer, Theis, & Züchner, 2014). However, since 2003 in Germany the number of schools offering extracurricular activities, lunch and additional learning time (so-called all-day schools) is increasing (Fischer & Klieme, 2013). In 2011 more than half of the schools were registered as all-day schools (Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Laender in the Federal Republic of Germany, 2013). Students of these schools have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities (at school) as well as in leisure activities (outside school). In both cases attendance is mostly optional.

Based on a sample of students in all-day schools one purpose of this study is to explore participation patterns and their predictors in a German sample and to compare the results and to the American studies. However, these studies seldom analyse effects on students' social behaviour and/or academic achievement (e.g., Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Peck et al., 2008; Zarrett et al., 2009). Therefore, the second purpose of this study is to explore how adolescents' participation profiles are related to the development of social behaviour and academic achievement.

Taking into account the variety of activities that adolescents are involved in at school and during their leisure time, we identify different adolescents' profiles based on engagement in school-based and out-of school extracurricular activities and leisure time behaviour. Based on earlier research findings we suppose that variables such as gender, SES and school track relate to these profiles (Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Peck et al., 2008). Therefore, we included these variables as control variables.

## Method

### *Design and Sample*

Analyses are based on data from the “Study on the development of all-day schools” (StEG, [Studie zur Entwicklung von Ganztagschulen]), a longitudinal study. Students completed questionnaires at three assessment points (waves), one each in 2005, 2007, and 2009. The StEG design included a combination of longitudinal (panel-) and cross-sectional (trend-) data. In this paper a subsample of StEG was used. Analyses were conducted using data gathered first in 2007 and second in 2009 from 5278 students in grades 5 and 7. Females comprised approximately 50% of the sample (n=2610). Approximately 26% of the sample (n=1387) had a migration background. Thus, at least one parent or the student himself/herself had been born outside of Germany. The secondary school system in Germany is multi-layered and regulated according to state legislation. It consists of either a two- or a three-tiered structure. Tracking begins in 5th grade and is based on students' performance in primary school. Passing final examinations in the highest track entitles students to attend university. In this study nearly 27% (n=1415) of the students are in “Gymnasium”, the highest track of secondary school in Germany.

## Measures

### *Participation in School-based Extracurricular Activities*

Students indicated on a list of 14 school-based extracurricular activities the ones they were involved in in 5th grade (2007). To reduce the variables for the LCA the individual activities were combined content related and the following categories of activities were formed: academic-related, which consisted of activities covering the subjects of mathematics, German and foreign languages (e.g., English, French, Latin); cultural activities, which subsumed music (e.g., singing, playing in the orchestra) and cultural activities (e.g., drama, dancing); sports; and computer/media. Table 1 shows the percentage of students participating in the different types of extracurricular activities.

### *Participation in Out-of-school Activities and Spending Leisure-time*

Students reported on which out-of-school activities they joined regularly and how they spent their leisure time. They indicated on a five-point ordinal scale (1=never; 2=less than once a month; 3=once a month; 4=weekly; 5=every day) how often they were engaged in each of the six common activities displayed in Table 1. These variables were dichotomized for methodological reasons (see Analytic strategy). Values of 4 and 5 were recoded to 1, while responses with values of 3 or lower were set to 0.



*Table 1. Frequency of Engagement in Leisure Activities*

School-based extracurricular Activities	Frequencies (n Students)
Sports	37.3% (1967)
Culturally orientated	24.9% (1316)
Subject related	22.2% (1174)
Computer/ media courses	16.8% (885)
Out- of-school and leisure-time Activities	
Meeting Friends	68.5% (3618)
Sports (in a club)	56.2% (2968)
Reading	53.0% (2797)
Computer	51.7% (2730)
Music	32.5% (1715)
Private lesson	14.2% (752)

### *Academic Achievement/Grade*

Academic achievement was assessed according to students' self-reported grades in mathematics, German and a foreign language (usually English) as indicated on their latest report card. Note that in Germany grades range from 1 (best) to 6 (worst). For analyses of data in this study we built a latent factor of grades. Analyses showed an acceptable Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for both assessment points (5th grade .743 | 7th grade .730). Strong measurement invariance of the factor grade is given (RMSEA: .058 | CFI .981). In 5th grade the mean of this indicator was 2.73 (SD .73) and in 7th grade it was 2.99 (SD .76). This means that students' grades decreased between grades 5 and 7, a result which has been reported in other studies (e.g., Urdan & Midgley, 2003).

### *Deviant Behaviour in School*

To assess deviant behaviour, students indicated on a five-point Likert scale (1=never - 5=every day) how often they had done the following over the previous 12 months in school or on their way to school: made fun of someone, provoked a teacher, cheated on a test, disturbed lessons. The internal consistency of the scale was good at both assessment points (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  5th grade .805 | 7th grade .791) and strong measurement invariance was obtained (RMSEA: .036 | CFI .980). Like many other deviant behaviour scales, the scale used in this study was skewed. The mean in 5th grade was 1.45 (SD .78) and in 7th grade it was 1.76 (SD .88). Although students tended to describe their behaviour in a favourable way, deviant behaviour seemed to increase between the 5th and 7th grades (Fischer, Kuhn, & Züchner 2011).

### *Prosocial Behaviour in School*

To assess prosocial behaviour students indicated on a five-point Likert scale (1=never - 5=every day) how often during the previous 12 months at school they had helped other students solve a conflict without using violence, helped other students with their homework, helped new students find their way at school, helped tidy the classroom, tried to intervene if lessons were disturbed. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in 5th grade (.723) and 7th (.727) grade was acceptable and strong measurement invariance was given (RMSEA: .042 | CFI: .952). Students had an average of 2.55 (SD .96) in 5th grade and 2.28 (SD .82) in 7th grade. Analogous to the increase in deviant behaviour, a decrease in prosocial behaviour can be seen between the 5th and 7th grades.

### *Cooperative Behaviour*

The students' cooperative behaviour was measured on a four-point Likert scale (1=don't agree - 4=completely agree) and based on their responses to the following statements: I enjoy working together with others, I feel good when I am working together with others, and generally I manage working together with others. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  in the 5th (.835) and 7th (.858) grades was good. Strong measurement invariance (RMSEA: .019 | CFI: .998) was given. On average, students reported values of 3.41 (SD .68) in the 5th grade and 3.20 in the 7th grade (SD .71).

### *Control Variables*

All regression analyses were controlled for sex (girls vs. boys), migration background, school track and SES. For the binary-coded migration background variable students were considered to have a migration background. For school track, a dichotomous variable consisting of the highest school track vs. other tracks was employed. For SES, the international socioeconomic index of occupational status (ISEI) was used. The ISEI is based on the assumption that jobs can be classified in a hierarchical system. The lowest level job (i.e., agricultural non-skilled worker) is given a value of 16 while the highest (i.e., judge) is given a value of 90. Each parent is assigned to a SES value of between 16 and 90 (see description of the control variables above). To determine the participants' SES we used the highest ISEI value in the family, the HISEI. On average, the students' families had a value of 47 (SD=17).

### *Analytic Strategy*

Latent Class Analyses (LCA) were conducted to identify the different groups of adolescent according to engagement in extracurricular activities in and out of school. Latent classes or groups were identified according to the patterns of participation in school-based and out of school extracurricular activities and leisure time behaviour. Individuals could then be classified into distinct groups based on their response patterns (Finch & Bronk 2011; Magidson & Vermunt, 2004; Jung & Wickrama, 2008).

Typically, neither the number of groups nor their characteristics are known prior to conducting an LCA (Kaufman & Rousseeuw, 1990); thus, LCA is an exploratory method.

To determine the correct number of latent classes, we adhered to suggestions from Nylund, Asparouhov, and Muthen (2007) regarding the advantages and disadvantages of several suitable indices based on a simulation study. Nylund et al. (2007) found strong evidence that the BIC is the most reliable when a sample size is large enough. In addition to the BIC, there are likelihood ratio-based tests to determine the correct numbers of classes. We used the Lo-Mendell-Rubin (LMR) test that compares the improvement in fit between neighbouring class models. In addition to the BIC and LMR test, the bootstrap likelihood ratio test (BLRT) was considered in the decision for the right number of classes. Similar to the LMR test, the BLRT compares the improvement of fit in the current model with a model with one fewer class. The p value means that the fit improves significantly given a solution with one more class (Nylund et al., 2007). In summary, results from the simulation study by Nylund et al. (2007) suggest that the BLRT performed better than the LMR test (Nylund et al., 2007). For the LCA we used MPlus Version 6.

Latent structural equation models (SEM) were applied to investigate the influence of the classes on GPA, deviant behaviour, prosocial behaviour, and cooperative behaviour. To investigate longitudinal effects, GPA, deviant behaviour, prosocial behaviour and cooperative behaviour in 7th grade was regressed on latent class membership in 5th grade, in four separate analyses, and the corresponding 5th grade variables were controlled. The clustered data structure was taken into account using the type = complex function in Mplus. We used the full information maximum likelihood estimator (FIML), which is implemented in Mplus to deal with missing values.

## Results

We computed several LCA with solutions including four to six classes. Table 2 indicates that the best solution consisted of five or six groups according to the BIC. Results of the LMR test and the BLRT suggest that the five-group solution was better than the four-group solution. As results of the LMR test indicate the five-group solution would be best while results of the BLRT are in favour of a six-group option, we compared the five-group and six-group solutions based on their content. Due to boundary estimates and difficulties interpreting six different groups, we chose the five-group solution. In line with Magidson and Vermunt (2004), we thus chose the model with the smallest numbers of latent groups, which fit the data and could be sufficiently explained.

Table 2. Comparison of Fit Indices for Four-, Five- and Six-Group Solutions

	BIC	Adjusted BIC	LMR	BLRT
			For k-1 (H0) vs. k classes	For k-1 (H0) vs. k classes
Four Classes	49838	49702	p<.05	p<.001
Five Classes	<b>49789</b>	49617	p<.01	p<.001
Six Classes	49806	<b>49599</b>	p=.13	p<.001

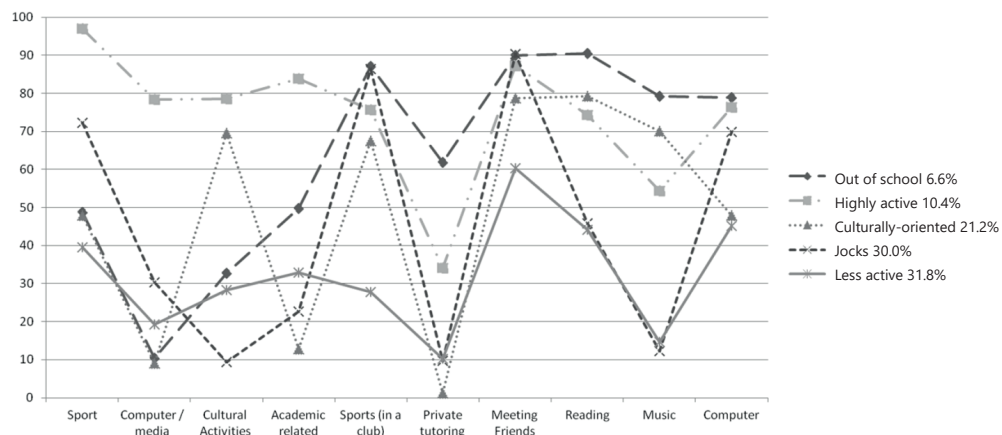
Note: k = number of latent classes; BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion; LMR = Lo-Mendell-Rubin; BLRT = bootstrap likelihood ratio test.

### Types of Adolescents

In the following, we describe five types of adolescents as determined by their participation in extracurricular and leisure activities (Figure 1).

The first type of adolescent engaged in several activities out of school and did sports in a club, met friends, read, partook in musical activities (organized privately or in a music school) and received private tutoring. Students belonging to this group were named out-of-school adolescents (Figure 1). The probability that adolescents in this group also engaged in activities organized by the school was less than 50%. This group was the smallest: less than 7% of all adolescents belonged to this group. No specific demographic pattern was associated with this group (see Table 3).

Figure 1. Five types of adolescents based on their participation in extracurricular and leisure activities



Note: The Y axis shows the probability of members of a certain group participating in specific activities.

The second type of adolescent reported participating in several (9/10 listed) activities in and out of school and was referred to as highly active. The only type of activity highly active adolescents did not participate in was private tutoring (Figure 1). These students generally had a below-average SES, were more likely to have a migration

background, and often were in lower er school tracks (see Table 3). Altogether, 10% of the adolescents investigated belonged to this group.

The third type of adolescent was referred to as culturally-oriented and tended to engage in cultural activities in and out of school (i.e., reading and music), do sports in a club and meet friends. These adolescents tended to play computer games less frequently than their peers (Figure 1). More than 20% of the students involved in the study belonged to the culturally-oriented group, which comprised more girls, students with a higher SES and students in the highest school track (see Table 3).

The fourth type was called adolescent jock, and typically engaged in sports in and out of school and met friends. Jocks frequently played computer games (Figure 1) but did not participate in culturally-oriented activities or activities related to school (private tutoring, academic-related clubs). Two-thirds of the jocks were boys, and 30% of all the adolescents in our sample belonged to this group (Table 3).

The fifth type of adolescent was specified as less active due to low rates of participation in the listed activities. Students in this group participated in no specific activity and even the probability of them meeting friends out of school was quite low (60%) compared to adolescents in the other groups (Figure 1). There were no specific demographic patterns for the less active students. Nearly one-third of the students from our sample belonged to this group.

As they could not be described by specific demographic characteristics or engagement in specific activities, the less active adolescents were included as a reference group in the regression analyses.

*Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of the Identified Groups*

Characteristics	Out-of- school	Highly active	Culturally orientated	Jocks	Less active
Girls	49.0%	51.7%	63.7%	33.3%	55.6%
HISEI: low	24.9%	30.0%	17.6%	23.8%	25.6%
HISEI: middle	28.2%	28.5%	19.7%	28.2%	28.2%
HISEI: upper	20.9%	19.1%	23.7%	25.7%	23.4%
HISEI: highest	25.9%	22.4%	39.0%	22.3%	22.8%
Gymnasium	20.1%	14.8%	43.2%	23.9%	23.9%
Migration	31.7%	39.7%	20.4%	26.4%	25.4%

### *The Impact of Adolescents' Activity Profiles on Their Social and Academic Development*

To facilitate analyses and interpretation of results, an overview of the means and standard deviations of all five profiles on each outcome is shown in Table 4. This table shows an overall decrease in all dependent variables between 5th grade and 7th grade, independent from the activity pattern. Nevertheless, there were differences between activity patterns: The culturally-oriented adolescents had the best GPA in 5th grade and 7th grade while the out-of-school and highly active adolescents had the lowest GPA. The out-of-school and highly active adolescents had the highest

mean of deviant behaviour. The jocks showed an increase in deviant behaviour between 5th grade and 7th grade. Prosocial behaviour decreased between 5th grade and 7th grade across all activity patterns. The out-of-school, highly active and culturally-oriented adolescents reported the highest level of prosocial behaviour in 5th grade and 7th grade. Even for cooperative behaviour culturally-oriented adolescents showed the most developed skills.

The next section focuses on how group identity influenced students' development over time or protected adolescents from a negative development in adolescence. More specifically, how activity profiles in the 5th grade influenced GPA, prosocial behaviour, deviant behaviour, and cooperative behaviour in 5th grade and 7th grade was analysed using regression models. All dependent variables were included as latent variables in the models. The reference group was the less active class. We controlled for SES, sex, migration background, school track in 5th grade. The cross-sectional analyses explained how the students' profiles differed in 5th grade but did not allow any conclusions to be drawn about the students' development. To look at this we regressed GPA, prosocial behaviour, deviant behaviour, and cooperative behaviour in 7th grade on the students' 5th-grade profiles, additionally controlling for the corresponding 5th-grade variables.

*Table 4.* Descriptions for all Dependent Variables According to Activity Profiles

Type of students' based extracurricular and leisure-time activity participation				Type of students' based extracurricular and leisure-time activity participation					
		M	SD	N		M	SD	N	
GPA 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Out of sch.	3.05	0.71	293	GPA 7th Grade	Out of sch.	3.17	0.70	293
	Highly act.	2.93	0.75	408		Highly act.	3.15	0.72	408
	Cult.-ori.	2.43	0.69	933		Cult.-ori.	2.71	0.75	933
	Jocks	2.70	0.68	1300		Jocks	3.02	0.74	1300
	Less activ.	2.66	0.71	1324		Less activ.	2.95	0.74	1324
Deviant Behavior 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Out of sch.	1.77	1.16	293	Deviant Behavior 7th Grade	Out of sch.	1.80	0.91	293
	Highly act.	1.78	1.06	408		Highly act.	1.92	0.96	408
	Cult.-ori.	1.24	0.49	933		Cult.-ori.	1.61	0.77	933
	Jocks	1.45	0.70	1300		Jocks	1.88	0.91	1300
	Less activ.	1.38	0.70	1324		Less activ.	1.70	0.84	1324
Prosocial Behavior 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Out of sch.	2.93	1.14	293	Prosocial Behavior 7th Grade	Out of sch.	2.49	0.99	293
	Highly act.	2.85	1.03	408		Highly act.	2.44	0.89	408
	Cult.-ori.	2.72	0.88	933		Cult.-ori.	2.41	0.75	933
	Jocks	2.51	0.93	1300		Jocks	2.19	0.80	1300
	Less activ.	2.31	0.90	1324		Less activ.	2.17	0.78	1324
Cooperative abilities 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Out of sch.	3.44	0.71	293	Cooperative abilities 7th Grade	Out of sch.	3.21	0.72	293
	Highly act.	3.42	0.68	408		Highly act.	3.17	0.78	408
	Cult.-ori.	3.55	0.56	933		Cult.-ori.	3.34	0.66	933
	Jocks	3.45	0.64	1300		Jocks	3.23	0.69	1300
	Less activ.	3.30	0.75	1324		Less activ.	3.15	0.73	1324

Note: Test results of the differences between the means was significant ( $p < .001$ ) for all variables. No covariates were considered. Out of sch.=Out of school; Highly act.=Highly active; Cult.-ori.=Culturally-oriented; Jocks=Jocks; Less activ.=Less active.



### Academic Achievement/Grades

Out-of-school and highly active students reported poorer grades in the 5th grade than the less active group of students. The culturally-oriented students showed significantly better academic achievement in the 5th grade. The jocks profile did not have a significant influence on learning outcomes in mathematics, German or a foreign language (Table 5). Students with a migration background had the poorest grades whereas female students, students in a higher school track, and those having a high SES had better grades. Longitudinal data analysis revealed that activity profiles did not influence academic achievement.

*Table 5.* Regression of Activity Profiles on GPA, the Reference Group Being the Less Active Adolescents

	GPA (5 <sup>th</sup> Grade) <i>b</i> (SE)	GPA (7 <sup>th</sup> Grade) <i>b</i> (SE)
Intercept	1.868 (.033)***	.651 (.050)***
Variance	.265 (.015)***	.139 (.011)***
Out-of- school	.278 (.041)***	-.058 (.032)
Highly active	.199 (.034)***	.006 (.030)
Culturally-oriented	-.109 (.028)***	-.034 (.022)
Jocks	.019 (.020)	.025 (.021)
Migration background	.154 (.028)***	.014 (.022)
Girls	-.174 (.020)***	-.065 (.017)***
Track (highest vs. other)	-.253 (.040)***	.038 (.034)
HISEI (centered)	-.006 (.001)***	-.022 (.001)***
GPA (5 <sup>th</sup> Grade)		.768 (.026)***
Chi <sup>2</sup>		683.867***
CFI		.926
RMSEA		.055

Note: Data are unstandardized estimates with standard error (SE) in parentheses. GPA = grade point average a high gpa means low academic achievement.; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.  $n_{(students)}=5278$ ;  $n_{(schools)}=211$ ; \*\*\*  $p<.001$ , \*\*  $p<.01$ , \*  $p<.05$ .

### Deviant Behavior in School

Table 6 shows that students with an out-of-school or a high activity profile as well as those with a migration background reported more deviant behavior. Females, students with a high SES, and students in the highest school track reported significantly less deviant behavior (Table 6). Longitudinal analysis revealed that a jock profile in 5th grade was associated with deviant behavior in 7th grade. The other profiles were not related to any changes in deviant behavior in 7th grade compared to the less active students. Immigrant students' deviant behavior also increased between the

5th and 7th grades whereas girls and students with high HISEI values showed less deviant behavior.

*Table 6.* Regression of Activity Profiles on Deviant Behavior, the Reference Group Being the Less Active Adolescents

	Deviant Behavior in school (5 <sup>th</sup> Grade) <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )	Deviant Behavior in school (7 <sup>th</sup> Grade) <i>b</i> ( <i>SE</i> )
Intercept	.726 (.031)***	.740 (.034)***
Variance	.433 (.033)***	.525 (.030)***
Out-of-school	.452 (.072)***	-.032 (.052)
Highly active	.342 (.047)***	.022 (.045)
Culturally-oriented	-.036 (.025)	.008 (.030)
Jocks	-.001 (.027)	.115 (.028)***
Migration background	.115 (.033)***	.107 (.035)**
Girls	-.280 (.024)***	-.213 (.028)***
Track (highest vs. other)	-.194 (.024)***	-.022 (.038)
HISEI (centered)	-.003 (.001)***	-.002 (.001)*
Deviant behavior (5 <sup>th</sup> Grade)		.0374 (.033)***
Chi <sup>2</sup>		400.985***
CFI		.968
RMSEA		.030

Note: Data are unstandardized estimates with standard error (SE) in parentheses. CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.  $n_{(students)}=5278$ ;  $n_{(schools)}=211$ ; \*\*\*  $p<.001$ , \*\*  $p<.01$ , \*  $p<.05$ .

### *Prosocial Behaviour in School*

Next, we analysed the prosocial behaviour of students in school (Table 7). First it can be seen that the students in each activity profile exhibited more prosocial behaviour in 5th grade than those in the reference group (the less active students). Furthermore, students with a migration background and girls reported more prosocial behaviour whereas students from the highest school track showed less. With reference to long-term development, culturally-oriented adolescents showed an increase in social behaviour, as did females and students with a migration background (Table 7).

*Table 7. Regression of Activity Profiles on Prosocial Behavior, the Reference Group Being the Less Active Adolescents*

	Prosocial Behavior (5 <sup>th</sup> Grade) <i>b</i> (SE)	Prosocial Behavior (7 <sup>th</sup> Grade) <i>b</i> (SE)
Intercept	1.251 (.031)***	.728 (.034)***
Variance	.359 (.026)***	.252 (.019)***
Out-of- school	.511 (.054)***	.063 (.044)
Highly active	.395 (.036)***	.044 (.033)
Culturally-oriented	.304 (.029)***	.068 (.025)**
Jocks	.183 (.024)***	-.009 (.020)
Migration background	.082 (.025)***	.113 (.022)***
Girls	.133 (.025)***	.071 (.019)***
Track (highest vs. other)	-.070 (.029)*	-.011 (.028)
HISEI (centered)	.000 (.001)	.001 (.001)
Prosocial behavior (5 <sup>th</sup> Grade)		.318 (.022)***
Chi <sup>2</sup>		760.948***
CFI		.923
RMSEA		.035

Note: Data are unstandardized estimates with standard error (SE) in parentheses. CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.  $n_{(schools)}=211$ ;  $n_{(students)}=5278$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

### *Cooperative Behavior*

The impact of the activity profile on cooperative behaviour is reported in Table 8. Similar to prosocial behavior, all activity profile groups of students had greater cooperative behavior than the reference group. Being a girl was related positively to cooperative behavior. The development of cooperative behavior from the 5th grade to the 7th grade was influenced positively by the culturally-orientated and jock profiles. Also, females and students in the highest school track showed an increase in their cooperative behavior.

*Table 8.* Regression of Activity Profiles on Cooperative Behavior, the Reference Group Being the Less Active Adolescents

	Teamwork (5 <sup>th</sup> Grade) <i>b</i> (SE)	Teamwork (7 <sup>th</sup> Grade) <i>b</i> (SE)
Intercept	2.197 (.029)***	1.282 (.059)***
Variance	.397 (.017)***	.407 (.016)***
Out-of -school	.120 (.049)**	.057 (.044)
Highly active	.125 (.040)**	.002 (.039)
Culturally-oriented	.215 (.028)***	.069 (.026)**
Jocks	.173 (.029) ***	.082 (.025)***
Migration background	-.053 (.025)*	-.035 (.027)
Girls	.131 (.021)***	.198 (.021)***
Track (highest vs. other)	.059 (.027)*	.127 (.031)***
HISEI (centered)	.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)
Teamwork (5 <sup>th</sup> Grade)		.304 (.021)
Chi <sup>2</sup>		70.976***
CFI		.997
RMSEA		.012

Note: Data are unstandardized estimates with standard error (SE) in parentheses. CFI= comparative fit index; RMSEA= route mean square error of approximation.  $n_{(students)}=5278$ ;  $n_{(schools)}=211$ ;  
 \*\*\*  $p<.001$ , \*\*  $p<.01$ , \*  $p<.05$ .

## Discussion

This paper adds to earlier research on the effects of extracurricular involvement on students' development by taking into account various extracurricular and leisure activities in and out of school. Results of our LCA showed that participation in one activity was related to participation in other activities or it reduced the probability of engagement in other activities. Five different activity engagement profiles were identified in our sample: out-of-school, highly active, culturally-oriented, jocks and less active. These patterns strongly resemble those found by Bartko and Eccles (2003). Thus, we assume that patterns of activity participation in Germany resemble the ones found in American studies. The same is true for predictors of participation patterns: Gender effects were identified in connection with activity patterns, a finding which is in line with earlier research (e.g., Eccles & Barber, 1999; Barber et al., 2005; Simpkins et al., 2005). Males were overrepresented in the jock pattern while females tended to participate more in culturally-oriented activities. Second, we found a connection between SES and activity patterns: culturally-oriented adolescents were mostly from high SES families as were those in the highest school track (Gymnasium). Out-of-school and highly active students were represented less in the highest school track and had a lower SES (Table 4).

Compared to findings from other studies (e.g., Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Peck et al., 2008; Zarrett et al., 2009) these results were surprising. In studies conducted in the United States high levels of engagement in extracurricular activities were associated with a higher SES and greater enrolment in college while disadvantaged students were overrepresented in patterns of little activity (Zarrett, 2007; Zarrett et al., 2009). Our results showed that students in the highest school track and with high SES were overrepresented in a culturally-oriented activity pattern and underrepresented in profiles of high levels of engagement in activities (out-of-school and highly active adolescents). One explanation for this could be that students in a German Gymnasium have more lessons at school, spend more time on learning and therefore probably have limited spare time to participate in many extracurricular activities. Furthermore, being in the highest school track and having a high SES are linked. However, adolescents from low income families participate more in community centres and adolescent service organizations (Simpkins, Ripke, Huston, & Eccles, 2005; Posner & Vandell, 1999). In Germany, many out of school activities are offered in adolescent centres. For example, adolescents can join music sessions for free in an adolescent centre or they can attend a music school, which is often quite expensive. Unfortunately, our data does not allow us to differentiate between such students as they were merely categorized as participating in a musical activity or not. This also holds true for students participating in sporting activities.

Generally students in our sample developed negatively between the 5th grade and the 7th grade (Table 4). But regression analysis show that this negative development could decrease or increase in its amount with regard to the activity patterns of students. Therefore our results suggest that extracurricular activities have the potential to protect adolescents against a negative development in adolescence which is in line with the assumptions of American researchers (Barber, Stone, Hunt, & Eccles, 2005; Larson, 2000, 2011; Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Larson, 2000, 2006, 2011; Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Larson, Perry, Kang, & Walker, 2011) as well as German results on school-based extracurricular activities in all-day schools (Fischer, Kuhn & Züchner, 2011).

In summary, the results of the regression analyses showed that in contrast to less active students, those in the out-of-school and the highly active groups obtained rather low grades and reported more deviant behaviour but more prosocial and more cooperative behaviour in the 5th grade. Here, our results contradict findings from Feldman and Matjasko (2007), who reported a positive connection between participation in multiple activities and good grades. A possible explanation could be that highly active students in our sample were not focused on academic success. Most of them were not in the highest school track and therefore would not be attending university after school. Our data indicated that the out-of-school and highly active adolescents had higher levels of social competencies in the 5th grade. The decision to participate in extracurricular activities depends on several factors at the personal and the environmental levels (Mahoney et al., 2009; Barber et al., 2005). Informal educational settings require students to be able to cooperate, listen to other's opinions and speak for themselves (Sturzenhecker, 2004). Considering this, our finding that cooperative behaviour and prosocial behaviour are two important factors for participating in diverse extracurricular settings can be clearly explained. Not only

cooperative behaviour and prosocial behaviour are more common among adolescents in the highly active and the out-of-school groups, but deviant behaviour (in school) is also more frequent in these groups. At first glance, these results seem to contradict earlier research (e.g., Eccles & Roeser, 2011). However, in this study the items used to measure deviant behaviour only assessed the deviant behaviour of students at school, for example making fun of someone in the classroom. Other questionnaires employed to gather data on this subject have assessed dangerous and violent deviant behaviour out of school (Eccles & Barber, 1999).

The highly active group was not the only group associated with better social competencies. Culturally-oriented adolescents had better grades and reported a high level of prosocial and cooperative behaviour in the 5th grade. Being culturally-oriented also was associated positively with the development of prosocial behaviour and cooperative behaviour up to grade 7. The culturally-oriented students developed these skills more than the less active students. While both groups reported a decrease in prosocial behaviour (Table 5), the results imply that being culturally-oriented only had a protective effect against a decrease in prosocial behaviour. Thus, culturally-oriented adolescents did not decrease in their prosocial and cooperative behaviour in a way that the less active students did.

The findings mentioned above also apply to the jocks, which showed more prosocial and cooperative behaviour in grade 5 and a more favourable development of cooperative behaviour than the less active adolescents. However, the jocks also showed an increase in deviant behaviour. Considering the fact that in sports and cultural activities adolescents have more opportunities to meet other students and that success in these activities often depends on the abilities and teamwork of the whole group, it is not surprising that the cooperative behaviour of the jocks decreased less between the 5th and 7th grades. The tendency for adolescents participating in sports to exhibit more deviant behaviour also has been described in previous research and this effect is mediated by peers in sports activities (e.g., Eccles & Barber, 1999; Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Blomfield & Barber, 2010). The less active students showed lower rates of prosocial behaviour and cooperative behaviour in the 5th grade only. Regarding their development, they did not differ from students in the out-of-school or highly active groups. These results indicate the importance of gathering information on how students spend their leisure time. Less active adolescents were not necessarily inactive; rather their participation rates were lower than those of adolescents in other groups. Above the knowledge that some met friends in their free time, we had no further information. These students might have had a job after school, had to take care of younger siblings, had to help their parents, or had to do additional homework with or without peers, or they might simply have watched television. All these activities can influence a student's social behaviour, thus the lack of information is a limitation of this study. On the one hand the development of the less active students is critical only in comparison to the culturally-oriented students and the jocks. The development of less active adolescents seemed to be similar to the out-of-school and the highly active adolescents but on a lower level. On the other hand they obtained better grades; therefore, they cannot be considered "at risk students".



### *Limitations and Future Research*

There are a few limitations to this study which could be managed in future research. As stated above, there was a lack of knowledge about how the less active students used their free time. Future research should investigate in greater detail the extracurricular activity patterns of such students. Moreover, it would be worth knowing why students participate in certain extracurricular activities and avoid doing others. Also, all of our dependent variables except cooperative behaviour referred explicitly to a school context. This is true for prosocial behaviour and deviant behaviour. Thus, it is possible that the students' behaviour out of school differs from their behaviour in school. Hence, further studies should inquire about students' behaviour out of school. Finally, all of these variables underlie confounding factors such as social desirability and acquiescence, and are not comparable to objective tests used to assess knowledge of and skills in mathematics, science and reading. Therefore, future research could take into account different points of view on students' social behaviour by interviewing teachers, pedagogues, and parents, and/or using ratings by external observers.

### **Conclusion**

The results presented in this paper indicate that five profiles of adolescents can be distinguished based on their extracurricular engagement, which is in line with previous research. Our data enabled us not only to describe patterns of students' extracurricular engagement but also to link them to the students' development in social behaviour and academic achievement. Our findings underline how participating in several extracurricular activities and combining various activities has an important influence on this development. Furthermore, our results confirm that participation in extracurricular activities, SES and gender are interlinked, which has also been shown in previous studies. Although the students in this sample were younger than those in samples of previous research, the resulting activity patterns and most of their predictors are comparable (Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Peck et al., 2008; Zarrett et al., 2009).

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# Learning Environments in Swedish Leisure-time Centres: (In)equality, 'Schooling', and Lack of Independence

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to describe and analyse how teachers perceive the internal learning environment at Swedish leisure-time centres and set it in relation to steering documents. The empirical data is based on a comprehensive web-survey of 4,043 leisure-time teachers in Sweden. The methodological approach is a qualitative directed content analysis. The results show large differences and inequalities in the quality of leisure-time centres' premises, an educational form characterized by integration with school and therefore to some extent lost autonomy. Activities in leisure-time centres combine individuality and social community in creative forms of play and social relationships. Because of this there are complex requirements for premises and dysfunctional premises reduce the opportunities to create good learning environments. The existing conditions for the majority of leisure-time centres do not correspond to the intentions in the steering documents concerning good learning environments. Leisure time centres have started to reproduce the (environmental) logic of 'traditional teaching premises' and to ignore their own (environmental) potential, which is even prescribed in specific steering documents. These results have implications for policy decisions and educational development.

**Keywords:** comprehensive survey, internal learning environment, leisure-time centres, Sweden, teachers' perceptions

## Introduction

### Leisure-time Centres in Sweden

Leisure-time centres (LtCs) are a large and comprehensive arena for student's learning, available to children from 6–12 years. Eighty percent of Sweden's 6 to 9 year-olds are enrolled (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2014) and 20% of students aged 10–12. In total there are approximately 444 400 participating in 4200 LtCs in Sweden (Skolverket, 2014). According to Boverket's (2015) investigation, one quarter of these are independent of school and pre-school buildings and the others are fully or partially integrated. LtCs are part of the school system and are controlled by the Education Act (SFS, 2010:800), the School Ordinance (SFS, 2011:185) and the curriculum plan (Skolverket, 2011). The LtCs mission is to complement education in pre-school and school, to stimulate development and learning and to provide meaningful leisure and recreation. Children should be offered training in their leisure time as required with regard to parents' work or study, or the student's own needs. Student



groups should be of an appropriate size and composition and students shall otherwise be offered a good learning environment (SFS, 2010:800). The focus should be on the students' desire to learn, their needs, experiences and knowledge, and be adaptable to both the students and to different conditions. Their goal is to support the social and general development of students and to extend and deepen their knowledge and experience, as well as offering meaningful leisure time (Skolverket, 2015). Students should also receive practical training in democracy, influence and responsibility. Important elements of this educational form are play, movement and creative work (Skolverket, 2011, 2012).

### *Criticism Concerning LtC*

The steering documents state that an LtC should provide a good learning environment, motivating the desire to learn, and that everyone – students, staff, and parents – will have the opportunity to be involved, and to influence the physical environment (e.g. space, areas designated for play, art) (Skolverket, 2011, 2007). Widespread criticism from various groups, including parents, staff, and the school inspectorate, has emerged in recent years, focusing on the extent to which learning objectives in LtCs have been fulfilled, analysed, and developed to meet learning goals (Lorentzi, 2012; Skolverket, 2001, 2012; Skolinspektionen, 2010, 2012). The critiques emphasise, for example, that the educational goals must be taken more seriously, more variety is needed to stimulate every child, and the importance of all staff being familiar with the steering documents, as well as having a leadership familiar with this educational form and its mission. The number of students has increased and long-term staffing levels have reduced.

Criticism of LtC internal learning environments has focused mainly on misaligned space for activities, large groups of students, few academically educated personnel, insecurity, and a lack of quality in the educational activities. As an example of the substandard buildings and excessively large groups, in 2012, there were around 20 children per full-time staff member and about 40 students on average per unit (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2014).

Critics have usually noted the lack of sufficient premises (Boström, Hörnell, & Frykland, 2015), even though the law emphasizes a healthy environment. With regard to the regulation of the environment, the new Education Act clearly states, 'The head shall ensure that student groups have the appropriate composition and size, and that students are also otherwise offered a good environment' (SFS 2010:800, Chapter 14). Similar, but more detailed descriptions are available from the National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2007, 2015). These results also revealed that LtCs that are separate from the school premises (a minority of all LtCs) are perceived to offer better learning environments than those that are integrated into the school.

The School Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen, 2010) conducted a national review that mostly agreed with the earlier criticism. However, it directed even sharper criticism at activities in LtCs. It made significant recommendations regarding the learning environments, including specifying the volume, congestion, stress, opportunities for peace and quiet, and focused activities. The National Agency for Education

(Skolverket, 2007) outlined the quality of learning environment in terms of *should* but not *shall*, which was insufficiently strong, according to the staff in LtCs. The learning assignments for LtCs were not fully clarified in the National Agency for Education 2007 report, (Skolverket, 2007) but have been clarified in the Education Act (SFS 2010:800). Along with the sharp criticism from the School Inspectorate, this has meant that in many places development work has started to focus on learning tasks and the learning environment in a new and different way.

### *Problem Area*

With policy document regulations, increased pressure on LtCs and criticism of this form of education from different directions, we see a gap in the research concerning how the staff feel that they can enforce policy documents guidelines in the available premises (internal learning environments). A constructive learning environment makes it easier to engage staff to make changes in culture (values and norms), which in turn can improve teaching and learning (Evanshen, 2012). In this study, we wish to analyse how leisure-time teachers (LtTs) perceive and describe the LtC premises at a national level. Because the study is based on a socio-cultural and didactic perspective, the research approach responds to the gap of knowledge about LtCs and their activities identified by Hjalmarsson (2014) and the School Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen, 2012). That is, the paradox between interpreting, and understanding leisure-time pedagogy (LtP), and evaluating the outcomes of learning, even as the number of students increases and the number of staff decreases in the premises. Furthermore, the study will give substance and nuance to the criticism of current learning tasks and provide an empirical basis for the development and improvement of LtCs.

The purpose of this study is therefore to describe and develop an understanding of LtTs' perceptions of Swedish LtC internal learning environments that is the premises, in relation to the steering documents. The premises, which have not previously been studied, are the foundation of and a prerequisite for the activities of the LtCs. This study is relevant for several reasons. Firstly, LtCs have a special position in relation to other school activities. Secondly, LtCs must meet both the curriculum objectives and their own specific objectives as formulated in the Education Act (SFS 2010:800). Thirdly, the personnel themselves are left to interpret and implement the learning task, without specific detailed legal directives. Fourthly, there has been sharp criticism of how goals are fulfilled, analysed, and developed to match the learning tasks. Finally, the international and national research on LtCs is sparse, particularly regarding educational practices. These reasons motivate the overall stated aim, to investigate and analyse how the premises are perceived by LtTs in Sweden at the national level.

### *Concepts and Limitations of the Study*

Since the concept of learning environments is complex, we have narrowed the focus in this study to include only the internal learning environments, which is framed

by the existing premises. This is one limitation of the study. Another concept is leisure-time pedagogy (LtP), which covers the social development, education and learning of students in relation to LtC activity. LtP is a generic concept and the closely related practical concept is the general didactic, which includes the environment where the teacher can build a context that stimulates both the group and individual. Another limitation is that the methodology is based on a qualitative, directed content analysis, which does not deal with quantifying of the categories.

## Previous Research: Leisure-time Centres

This section is a summary of previous LtC research, and research on learning environments and school. The concept of learning environments can be broad. For example, it may be aimed at both the outdoor environment and the indoor environment of social relationships and learning resources (Ahlberg, 1999). In this study the concept of learning environments is applicable to the premises, that is, the internal learning environment. What we are studying is the premises the students work within, for example classrooms, handicraft rooms, dining rooms and playrooms.

### *Research on the Swedish Leisure-time Centres*

LtP covers the students' social development, education and learning in relation to LtC activity. This area has emerged in the interaction between schools and LtCs to create a context for the child throughout the day. The knowledge areas of LtP include informal learning that can be planned, but just as often is about unlocking the educational situations that arise from a child's play and interaction (Andersson, 2013).

Literature shows that research on LtCs in Sweden has been marginal, with only about 15 licentiates and doctoral theses (Persson, 2008). These have mainly highlighted the impact of LtCs' integration with school on activities and staff. The corresponding image is reproduced in two surveys of LtCs, which also includes evaluation research (Skolverket, 2012). Research on Swedish LtCs is dominated by qualitative studies, broadly divided by subject into the recreation profession, the educational form, and learning.

Research that directly addresses LtC professionals reveals a number of dilemmas that the group has had to face during educational policy reforms and the transfer to the school sector, together with the encounters and collaborations with the school's teachers that followed these reforms. Status differences and differing social goals complicate these meetings (Haglund, 2009) and teachers tend to set the framework (Andersson, 2013). LtTs assert their pedagogical knowledge and skills even in school contexts, but this is related to local control and the collective staff facilities available in the school (Andersson, 2013; Hjalmarsson, 2010).

The National Agency for Education's report (Skolverket, 2011) shows, however, that LtCs are largely unknown to politicians and have had their resources reduced,

especially when those resources are needed for schools, such as to improve students' performance on national tests.

Research on learning in LtCs shows that they boost students' confidence but make no difference to school results. Informal and social learning emerges as central to this form of education (Johansson & Ljusberg, 2004). LtCs also tend to entrench a local culture's socialization and traditional gender patterns in students. Saar, Löfdahl and Hjalmarsson (2012) problematize and develop the notion of teaching as the teachers' ability to control their students' learning of predetermined knowledge. The National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2012) says that there is a real need to increase research-based knowledge of learning and development within LtCs. This study would help to meet this need.

### *Learning Environments in LtCs and Schools*

LtCs have been identified as a haven where the interests of students have been cherished (Lorenzi, 2012). Design of an LtC educational environment has, however, been unfairly ignored (Boström, Hörnell, & Fryklund, 2015). School is dominated by formal learning and the LtC by informal learning, though both forms of learning exist in both environments. According to steering documents the LtC should complement the school's learning environments, inspire the students, focus on their complementary goals and not compensate for school (Nordin, 2013).

One type of research relates to value issues and whether the view of students affects the learning environment. Environments can be didactic tools but LtTs rarely explain them as such. With the environment as didactic tool, the teacher can build a context that stimulates both the group and individual (Hippinen Ahlgren, 2013).

Play is central in the LtC, especially free play. Many LtCs have developed their learning environment to provide good play environments. Play has always been indispensable to training for LtTs. Jensen (2001) emphasizes that the LtC didactic should start from the varied environments that support different learning content. Qvarsell (2013) emphasizes that different environments suggest meaning-making activities, as confirmed in other studies, and that learning processes in LtCs should be cultural and contextual. The premises for LtC activities can range from classrooms to well-adapted, remodelled residential premises that have a strong focus on LtP.

LtC environments and work with social relationships involve a very important learning process (Ihrskog, 2011; Johansson & Ljusberg, 2004). Thus, the social community becomes central and the environment a didactic tool for LtCs' most important task. Kane (2013) argues that an important didactic starting point is to reflect on both relational and physical conditions to provide space for play, as is best done when LtCs' premises are not based on the formal school.

A learning environment is a social environment with didactical and pedagogical reflection (Evanshen, 2012). When people interact with the physical and social environment they influence it and are influenced by it (Björklid & Fischbein, 2011). Understanding of individual differences and similarities in learning lets students become fully immersed in learning environments (Evanshen, 2012). Hence,

good learning environments are important in all kind of learning and working places (Knoop, 2006).

School learning environments include approach, behaviours, attitudes, premises, and a classroom's characteristics (Ahlberg, 1999). The architecture of new schools has aimed at a modern era and a new way of thinking. However, we still have remarkably little knowledge of the interactions of students with the physical frame of a structure (Björklid, 2005; de Jong, 2011; Dranger Isfält, 1999).

In summary, research suggests that environment in LtCs is an essential element for students from a variety of perspectives. The LtTs are working with both traditional and new forms of control, which puts tension on their attitudes, vocations, and learning environments (Andersson, 2013). LtC premises should be adjusted to support students' development of social relationships, play, and work that complements traditional schoolwork (Kane, 2013).

## Steering Documents and Learning Environments

The objectives of LtCs, which are supposed to complement other forms of education in which students fulfil their school attendance, involve both care and learning. There are different steering documents to regulate different activities. The Education Act (SFS, 2010:800) and School Ordinance (SFS, 2011:185), decided on by the Government, contains the fundamental regulations concerning leisure-time. The head shall ensure that student groups have an appropriate composition and size and that students also generally have a good environment (SFS 2010:800, Section 14). For corresponding but more detailed descriptions, see General Advice, quality in school (Skolverket, 2007, 2015). Curriculum Activities (LGR 11) in LtCs have the same curriculum as the pre-school class and compulsory school. The first two parts, "Fundamental values and tasks of the school" and "Overall goals and guidelines" – apply to the pre-school class and the LtC (Skolverket, 2011). In General advice (Skolverket, 2007, 2015) there are a number of relevant references to the LtC's learning environment and the connections between learning and a good learning environment for students in the LtC are also clearly stated.

A similar picture among researchers is that students, who in their early years are given a stimulating learning environment with opportunities for interaction and play with peers and with knowledgeable and interested adults, have more opportunities to develop and learn than students who did not have access to these environments (Skolverket, 2015, p. 13).

The curriculum should certainly apply in LtCs, but has been written with schools in mind (Skolverket, 2015). This means the LtC staff risk being left themselves to interpret and put into practice guidelines written for a different activity.

Given the widespread criticism and the context of LtC learning environments, it is important to examine what the policy documents express about learning environments in LtCs. The concept of a learning environment was not part of the curriculum for primary schools, pre-school classes (LGR 11), or the LtCs (Skolverket, 2011); nor were concerns for the quality of LtCs (Skolverket, 2007). In contrast, the con-

cepts of environment, school environment, and work environment were explored in the curriculum plan (Skolverket, 2011).

The curriculum plan (Skolverket, 2011) had no concrete pedagogical connection to the LtCs as an arena for learning. By contrast, the curriculum included LtCs, their staff and the LtC objectives in an abstract sense. However, various implicit formulations can be linked to the learning environments for LtCs. For example: teaching can never be the same for all students; students should develop their opportunities to communicate; play is very important for students to acquire knowledge. Under the heading, ‘A Good Environment for Development and Learning’, the curriculum emphasizes the importance of ‘a vibrant social community that provides security and a willingness and desire to learn’ (p. 10). Its aim will be to create the best conditions for students’ education, thinking and knowledge development’ (p. 10).

The National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2015) made a series of more recent references to the LtC learning environment. It stated that the premises must be appropriate in terms of size, design, air, light, and sound, but also for good educational activities and processes. It also said the environment should provide space for different kinds of activities; on the other hand, a natural integration with a school is not always desirable. Premises and the outdoor environment should be ‘transparent and facilitate contact between staff and children’ (p. 21). Also, the students should learn about the local environment and its resources. In addition to the leisure activities, the learning environment should offer varied elements, such as music, the visual arts, design, drama, and excursions. Furthermore, it states that learning environments in the LtC should be founded on the concept that ‘children’s development and learning takes place at all times and in all contexts, and is characterized by the perception of students as active co-creators of their own development and their own learning’ (Skolverket, 2007, p. 23). Ample space should be provided for the students to be involved and to have influence.

The steering documents conclude that the LtC should provide practical training in democracy, equality, and other values. Therefore, the environment should be transparent and facilitate contact between staff and students. Its design and size should admit suitable levels of air, light, and sound, giving students and staff the possibility to communicate and develop a vibrant, secure community that promotes the desire to learn. Students should also be active co-creators of their own development and learning (SFS, 2010:800, SFS, 2011:185).

## Socio-cultural and Didactic Framework

To describe and develop an understanding of the LtTs’ perceptions of the Swedish LtC’s internal learning environments we use a general didactic theory, and socio-cultural theory as framework. Considerations for general didactic aspects entail an interest in the teacher’s “responsibility for teaching objectives and content” (Kansanen et al., 2011, p. 44), which implies “a focus on the teaching process” (p. 32) and “its related elements and circumstances” (p. 44). The starting point in general didactic theory makes it possible to study the realisation arena from the LtTs standpoint. The



knowledge discourses of schools and LtCs differ, and the didactics of the LtC is sometimes referred to as potential didactics (Saar et al., 2012), partly because of its dualism and process orientation. Here, we apply the term “general didactics”, since we mean that there is a general didactic core in leisure-time operations (cf. Kansanen et al., 2011). Against this background, it is important to study the internal learning environment as one of the basic frame factors of the LtC.

We use the socio-cultural theory in order to explain the relationship between the general didactic aspects and LtTs attitudes. Socio-cultural theory emphasises the connectedness between participation in social practises and intellectual and physical tools.

The individual acts on the basis of their own knowledge and experiences, and of what one consciously or unconsciously perceive[s] that the environment requires, permits, or makes possible in a given activity (Säljö, 2000, p. 128).

This provides opportunities to understand, identify, and examine the content of learning and its pedagogical implications, which specifically can provide understanding regarding the work and value patterns among LtCs from several perspectives (Johansson, 2011).

Three key aspects can be linked to the socio-cultural perspective: mediation, context, and power. Mediation highlights how LtTs perceive the individual phenomena and events they encounter, through the intellectual and physical tools they are encouraged to use in those situations and the wider context in which these phenomena and events are included, for example, with respect to the frame factors. In this context, general didactic theory is valuable in a planned and thus professional way for analysing the operations, in terms of overall objectives, framework factors, and practical work (Uljens, 1997; Jank & Meyer, 1997).

Our study will specifically pay attention to LtTs’ practise-oriented focus on the premises of the centres. Physical, cognitive, communicative, and historical contexts are therefore particularly relevant for analysing how teachers think about pedagogical activities in different contexts (Säljö, 2000). The relevance lies in that teachers and students, as well as the activities they gather around, are also part of the physical environment, logical thinking, and interpersonal relations, along with comparisons between “present and past”.

Power is exercised in cases where individuals or groups perceive themselves as being prevented or kept away from the possibility or premise of acquiring an adequate perception and understanding of the world. In this context, power is actualized when LtCs’ activities and the personnel’s planned activities are hampered by the outside world in some way, such as the premises.

With the help of general didactic theory, and socio-cultural theory, combined with the analysis of LtTs attitudes concerning the premises in relation to the steering documents, we can better and more efficiently analyse one of the critical aspects of the Swedish LtC.

## Method and Aim

The aim of this study is, as earlier mentioned, to describe and analyse the perceptions of leisure-time teachers concerning the Swedish LtC internal learning environments that is the premises, in relation to the steering documents. The research will answer the following questions:

- 1) How do LtTs describe premises in LtCs, which form a significant part of the internal learning environment?
- 2) How do LtTs describe the LtCs learning environments in relation to cooperation with the schools?
- 3) How do LtTs perceive the existing conditions for the LtC to correspond to the intentions in the steering documents dealing with good internal environments for development and learning?

This study is based on a Web survey, sent in winter 2013 to all members of the Swedish Teachers' Union registered as LtTs with a higher education, approximately 11,000 people. Approximately 20% of these were dropped because they did not work in LtCs. After a reminder responses were received from 4,043 people. The response rate was 36%, which can be considered as satisfactory. In table 1 the key sample characteristic is presented.

*Table 1.* Demographic information

		N	Percentage
Answers		4043/11000	36 %
Gender	Female	2904	79,6%
	Male	742	20,4% <sup>1</sup>
Working in LtC	0–5 years	490	13,7 %
	6–10 years	436	12,3%
	11–15 years	771	21,5%
	16–20 years	541	15,1 %
	21–25 years	578	16,1 %
	26–30 years	402	11,2%
	31–35 years	280	7,9%
	more than 35 years	125	3,7 %
Sections at the LtC	1	977	27,6%
	2	824	23,3%
	3	688	19,4%
	4	566	16,0%
	5	275	7,8%
	6	210	5,9%
How many children in each department?	less than 20	138	3,7%
	21–40	307	7,7%
	41–60	443	12,6%
	61–80	466	13,2%
	81–100	462	13,1%
	101–120	588	16,7%
	more than 120	1176	33,4%

The questionnaire's introduction describes the study and notes participation is voluntary and anonymous. It consisted of 21 questions (see Appendix 1) about the learning environment in LtCs. The first three questions concern background variables such as gender, age, number of teaching years, school size and educational level. These are followed by 18 questions about different aspects of the learning environment. Some questions are multiple-choice, while others provided space for relatively long written statements. Thus, the survey generates both numerical and descriptive data. This is a follow-up of another sub-study (Boström et al., 2015), which found that there were not sufficient or functional premises and that the lack thereof suppresses some learning activities. The sub-study reported here analyses authorities and collective base available in the school (Andersson, 2013; Hjalmarsson, 2010). The first question asked about LtC learning environments in general, the second asked for specific descriptions of the LtC premises, the third described different activities in different rooms and the fourth was about rooms for different age groups.

The design of the questionnaire is based on a systematic operationalization of the theoretical concepts (learning environments, and leisure-time pedagogy) that guided the study, results from previous research in the field, and aspects of LtC environments we deemed relevant. The study considered the Research Council's rules for good ethical research in the humanities and social sciences (Hermerén, 2011).

The goal of data analysis was to highlight both the manifest content of the answers, that which is directly expressed in the texts, and the latent content, detailed interpretations of the text. The methodological approach was qualitative content analysis of open answers to four questions. In the analysis, we systematically and incrementally classify data to identify patterns and themes and describe and highlight specific phenomena. The content analytical model enables us to construct and refine distinct categories, narrowing them as appropriate.

A directed content analysis is characterized by a more structured process (compared with an unbiased encoding) where the initial coding is based on theories or previous research. This form of content analysis are for example a way to compare results from previous research, as well as a way to discuss the results from different theoretical perspectives (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Qualitative content analysis can be divided into three stages: selection of the focus texts, coding, and interpretation of results (Auhiva, 2008). During the second step, problems can arise with connotative interpretations, requiring expertise; involving at least two researchers minimizes this. Researchers need to continuously discuss the survey's key issues and balance their respective categorizations to achieve consensus (Krippendorff, 2004) and build credibility and generalizability of the results, method, categorization, and analysis.

We read the entire text repeatedly to be able to see the whole picture, picked out meaningful themes relevant to the query requests, then condensed, coded, and categorized our results to reflect the core message. The categories represent the manifest content. We gave quotations respondent (R) designation in parentheses, followed by a number (Rx).

We estimate internal validity high because we have tried to operationalize the relevant concepts and theoretical framework. The credibility is considered high since the research process is transparently described and the aim and research questions are answered. The process of dual measurement improves its credibility. In the par-

tially qualitative approach, researchers interpreted the results independently and then discussed the plausibility of each other's interpretations. The generalizability seems to be high because this is a comprehensive survey. However, we are aware that the empirical material could be analysed and interpreted by other methods. The Web survey could have been extended to other and further questions. The results show that we have made new findings, and new implications can therefore be demonstrated.

## Results

The following section presents the teachers' descriptions of LtC premises and their analysis of how those premises meet the requirements set out in the steering documents, and the LtT attitudes about the LtCs premises in relation to cooperation with schools. The result is divided into following sections; Inequality and LtC/School relationships.

### *Inequality in Sweden Against Premises*

Two of the research questions concerned the LtTs' perceptions of the premises and their relation to steering documents. As these issues are tangent to each other, we give a thematic response to them entitled inequality. Generally speaking premises in LtC can cover various types of smaller rooms, such as movement rooms, cushion rooms, table tennis rooms, building rooms, rest rooms, workshop rooms, studios, dance and music rooms, and theme rooms. Rooms can also be divided into different 'corners': doll's corners, reading corners, table games corners, cosy corners, and corners for Lego, Kapla, craft and dressing. Halls and other larger rooms also exist. This category is divided into three themes; insufficient, sufficient and good premises.

The descriptions of LtCs' premises are approximately one-third negative, eg. insufficient premises. Complaints can apply to both old and new buildings. They include overcrowding in the cloakroom, a lack of room for peace and quiet and for major leisure-time activities, general difficulty with activities, poor ventilation, and insufficient room for movement: 'Totally improper for the business at hand. Cramped and noisy rooms' (R2331). Respondents' descriptions show a perceived low quality of LtC premises. They provide clear descriptions of how the steering documents cannot be followed due to the design of the premises. LtTs point out that it is difficult to meet the goals of "good communication and a vibrant social community" (c.f. LGR 11) within the available premises. Many LtTs see the ability to create an optimal learning environment for the students in these existing premises as a utopian dream, and thus important goals of the policy document cannot be fulfilled. Some LtTs describe the LtCs as providing "storage of children" rather than providing good learning environments. However, many answers show that staff do put the students' safety first and so meet the policy documents "security requirements".

Other respondents testified to inadequate and dysfunctional premises:

Boring! Rigid, institution-like bars on the windows due to the burglary risk and partly in a basement with a smaller window. Bright, very corridor-like space that is difficult to manage. Run-down, worn and poorly furnished. The room is used for pre-school during daytime. A small, poorly fitted cloakroom which is totally inadequate. No common entrance with the other departments, crowded and problematic. Old squalid lavatories and too few of them. (R1562).

The empirical data also include descriptions of premises customized for LtCs but still overcrowded. 'I think the premises are too small to pursue leisure activities with such large groups of students. It doesn't much matter how many educators we have, if there's not room for the students!' (R450). The premises are suited to the activities but not to the size of the group. The descriptions make it clear many premises are being changed or improved. Some are housed in temporary buildings, others are about to be, and others are waiting for redevelopment. Such internal environments are described as debilitating for both teachers and students.

One-third of the descriptions were fairly neutral, sufficient premises, with accounts of the number of rooms, split between school or pre-school and the LtC, and descriptions of the activities housed in different rooms, 'Three fairly large classrooms and a larger kitchen, a small workshop and two small spaces for Lego and ballgames. To some extent, one can sit in the hallways too' (R889).

The remaining third were positive, *good premises*: 'well-suited for leisure-time activities, even though we are in school' (R965). The next comment is about an integrated LtC and school and one feels that the premises are well suited to the number of students. It is important that the LtCs and students can participate in the design and layout of the premises.

Large spacious rooms. Several separate rooms for crafts, others for peace and quiet, and role play. Ample space. Extensively adapted for play. Students have been involved in design. Furnished as required, for the group size and equality (R3401).

This describes a creative and effective physical learning environment. Some LtCs in pre-school premises have few problems with material, overcrowding and furnishings: 'Good premises. Pre-school and LtC departments share a site, but it works well' (R2006). The most positive descriptions of LtC premises are of those not integrated in the school premises but using independent, separate premises.

In summary, the LtC premises in these descriptions vary widely, ranging from fully integrated into a school or pre-school, partially integrated or completely independent. Our results show that according to the LtTs the LtCs which are in independent buildings seem to offer students a better learning environment in the premises, compared to those integrated in school buildings. The buildings also vary from turn-of-the-century buildings to new buildings, from open floor plans to custom 'squares' that each LtC group originates. Some are worn out and dysfunctional, while others are newly constructed with easily accessible activities. All in all, though, a lot of LtTs find their premises undersized: the word *overcrowded* occurs very frequently in the descriptions. Thus, the intentions of the steering documents which prescribe space for the students' individual needs and participation are not fulfilled for many LtCs, according to the LtTs.

### *LtC – School Relationships and the Perception of Adequate Premises*

Another factor emerging in our empirical data was that LtCs that share school premises have difficulties using LtP and fulfilling the intentions of the steering documents. How the needs of the schools prevail in relation to the LtC's premises is clearly described and leads to what is called "schooling", namely that the LtC is highly affected by the structure of school. This is shown in three themes; common classrooms, borrowed spaces and the attitudes of students.

Although two-thirds of LtTs, according to our data, indicate they have special rooms for different activities, the structure of the school is perceived as pervasive. Many LtCs use sports halls, craft rooms, home economy kitchens, music rooms, libraries, and corridors. In some cases all activities are in the same room, for example reading and eating. This has led to comments about the need for continuity and the lack of flexibility in the internal environment. When both integrated and non-integrated LtC activities take place in the classroom, respondents point out the difference:

It's hard to provide a good environment in a school building that is also used for as an LtC, due to tables and chairs in the classrooms. Premises used solely by the LtC, are easier to set up and give a better environment for the children, a quieter atmosphere (R2341).

LtCs differ from schools but easily become entwined in the school and its environment: 'As for the premises, I think it is beneath contempt having to be in a classroom!' (R1542). In addition, LtTs perceived that using common areas restricted creativity in many cases, in different ways: 'We can never save anything made by the students during the day and there is no homely atmosphere' (R1542). Some argue that the needs of the school dominate and they struggle to fit suitable LtC activities into classrooms with tables and chairs. As one respondent describes '... it is not LtC adjusted. We are guests in the school' (R452). The feeling of 'borrowing' premises designed for schoolwork is prominent.

Although 46% of LtTs indicate there are special rooms for both older (10–12 years) and younger students (6–9) (Boström et al., 2015), some problems remain. LtTs think it's often difficult to interact with schools about classrooms, since LtCs and school have such different needs. It is difficult to influence the internal environment of classrooms, no materials may be used between LtC visits that may distract school students during their lessons. There are many comments that the needs of the LtC are secondary when it comes to the shared premises. The observations described frustration and a powerlessness to influence the learning environment in the school: 'The premises are not at all suited for leisure-time activities. During the holidays, we can take over, rearranging and adapting rooms and surfaces to what kids want' (R250). Descriptions such as 'sharing' and 'borrowing space' from school are used frequently. The school's activities seem to have prevailed on the internal learning environment: 'Classroom environment with tables. No opportunities to save work from the day before and everything has to be taken away every night' (R452).

Putting school and LtCs on the same premises is also problematic from the students' perspective. 'As you can imagine, they look like a "classroom"' (R65). Students do not want to be in the classroom when they have finished school for the day,



just as adults do not want to spend their free time at work. You therefore need to find both what is common and what distinguishes between the two forms, focussing on the needs of students when sharing premises. 'Difficulties lie with how LtC and school activities differ, when we interact with school. Therein lies the big challenge, to find the right balance. And remember that the LtC is children's free time' (R2589).

LtC activity should stimulate learning in a different way compared to school, according to many answers in the survey. This is really important for students who are unsuccessful in school. Many responses said that LtC activities should provide learning in a different way to that in school, especially for those children who do not enjoy school, or do not succeed there. A large part of LtP involves informal learning, but the influence of the available premises means that for a majority of students, it will often be the same kind of learning in the LtC as in school. One LtT gave this comment:

How much fun is it for children who do not enjoy school to move on to an LtC in the same premises and in addition to work with the same type of exercises, like homework, using the same methods as in school? More of the same - but not better ". (R 566).

From the students' perspective, the school premises may even be counterproductive for lifelong learning. LtTs ask themselves how they can meet the intentions of the curriculum, to work with informal learning and to pursue their own specific LtP, using shared premises.

In conclusion, LtC premises exhibit a very wide variation in rooms, physical solutions, and activities. However, overcrowding is common and many premises are in need of major improvement. There should be space to store the work of students overnight. In some cases, all traces of activity are taken away every day. No material can be left in place because it distracts the students during school lessons. Priority is given to the needs of the school, rather than those of the LtC, which prevents the LtC from achieving their goals in many cases, and can in some cases be counterproductive for student learning.

The results in this study are evidence that premises, especially those that are integrated into the school, seems to be an obstacle to fulfilling the intentions of the policy documents.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The final chapter analyses the findings in the study in relation to previous research and policy documents. This is followed by our conclusions, pedagogical implications and our ideas for further research.

### *In-depth Criticism*

Many LtCs have lost their purpose-built premises and moved into traditional teaching premises. This article, based on steering documents and previous research, de-

scribes the perceptions of LtTs concerning Swedish LtC premises as a learning environment for the students.

The steering documents are based on the goal of turning democracy, equality, and other values into concrete action (Skolverket, 2011). This requires premises with security, good communication, and a vibrant social community, which promotes the desire to learn. Such an environment is the foundation for constructive learning, (Andersson, 2013; Evanshed, 2012), enables individual learning (Björklid & Fischbein, 2011) and is a prerequisite for meaningful activities (Qvarsell, 2013). Many LtCs, however, are based within a school and research shows that differences in status between the LtC and the school can frustrate LtTs (see e.g. Andersson, 2013).

Our data on how LtTs describe LtC premises reveals a large variation. Some are fully integrated, some partially integrated, some independent of school and preschool (cf Boverket, 2015). Even planning differs radically from one to another. The substantive and pedagogical quality of premises also varies widely, from obsolete and dysfunctional to newly constructed and designed for suitable activities. Many LtTs say their premises are undersized for their number of students.

“Schooling” of the LtC seems to prevent, in many cases, the creation of good internal learning environments. The location of LtCs within school premises has created problems. They seem to benefit from a relatively sedate individuality, while both older and younger children show a strong need to combine intellectual and physical and individual and social activities. The learning environment is therefore in many ways not optimal for an LtC based at a school, with large groups of students and few premises specialised for the LtC. The premises called ‘good’ are the ones that make it possible to combine the needs of younger students for simple play with the needs of older students for more complex leisure activities.

In a socio-cultural sense, this is a case of a power relationship where the LtTs perceive themselves prohibited from creating well-functioning premises. The implication is that LtCs activities depend on the school. The school and the teachers set the framework and, therefore, prevail over traditional LtC activity and LtTs (cf. Andersson, 2013). One clear theme in the descriptions of the LtTs is the problem of two different activities accommodated within the same premises. Most LtCs are housed in school premises, which creates problems with too few special rooms for special activities. Many LtTs feel the absence of their own base: the premises are not suited to their planning, materials, and activities. Previous research shows that LtTs attitudes and interactions are crucial for the development of the students’ self-reliance, social relationships and social order (Hippinen Ahlgren, 2013; Knoop, 2012; Saar et al, 2012).

This study confirms, with greater depth and precision, previous research and the evaluations of school authorities. The structural conditions for good work are suboptimal (see Hansen Orwehag, & Olsson, 2011). The School Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen, 2010,) speaks of flaws in staffing, group size, internal environment and organization’ and says that the LtC does not achieve the intent of the steering documents. Criticism is also directed at municipalities which do not take full responsibility for the environment, group size, staff education, and monitoring of policy documents’ goals, and guidelines. This study indicates that, according to many LtTs it seems to be difficult to implement the goals of the policy documents with regard

to the creation of good learning environments. It also appears that the format of the LtC becomes similar to that of the school with its formal learning. This will of course also affect the didactic basis of the LtP.

### *Conclusions*

Since previous research on LtTs' environment unequivocally pointed to the importance of students' learning (Ahlgren, 2013; Jensen, 2011), meaning (Qvarsell, 2013) and social development (Ihrskog, 2011), we ask ourselves what consequences sub-standard physical environments may have on society in the long run. In Hippinen Ahlgren's (2013) words, 'What becomes of the child in the existing environments?' Maybe their time in the LtC is counterproductive, despite all the good intentions in the governing documents? How can the staff work in a difficult environment in which they often cannot use their specific expertise?

Against this background and because this comprehensive survey shows large differences in the quality of LtC premises, we want to raise the question of national equality. Activities for younger students seem divided from those for older students, which may bring with it an inequality between age groups. The school's premises invite more passive and individual activities to the detriment of both age groups. The young are hampered in their need for physical movement and combinations of individual and social activities. The older students are at risk of having both their school environment and their schoolwork extended into their leisure time. Against this background, we conclude that students in the LtC are forced into adult behaviour when it comes to distinguishing recreational activities from school activities in the same premises but at different times of the day, and this before many children's age-specific mannerisms have had the opportunity to challenge both personal and social boundaries. The study shows that the LtC seems to have started to reproduce the (environmental) logic of 'traditional teaching premises' and to ignore their own (environmental) potential, which is even prescribed in specific steering documents (cf. Skolverket, 2011; SFS, 2010:800).

### *Educational Implications*

One important implication of this study is that politicians and municipalities should consider taking more responsibility for the application of existing guidelines for LtCs' learning environments. Since the guidelines are clear in the policy documents, they should be simply implemented. In other words, the premises need to be reviewed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In addition, LtTs should have the opportunity to achieve the goals and guidelines of the policy documents. Leisure centres have, after all, a good potential to supplement school in terms of learning.

## Further Research

An important area for further research would be to deepen the analysis of the empirical material with a quantitative content analysis. Another research area would involve the children who use recreation and hearing their voices concerning the premises within schools, or independent centres, and the impact on their desire for learning and development.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1. The questionnaire of the web-survey

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_

2. Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

3 Gender

Male  Female

4. What is your highest completed education?

Secondary School  Upper secondary school  College/University  Other

5. How long have you been working in the business?

0-5 year  6-10 year  11-15 year  16-20 year  21-25 year  26-30 year  30-35 year  35 -

6. How many departments are there at your LtC?

1  2  3  4  5  6

7. How many children are enrolled in total?

-20  21-40  41-60  61-80  81-100  100-120  140-

8. What are the facilities like at your LtC? Try to describe them with five to ten sentences! \_\_\_\_\_

9. How does the learning environment look like at your LtC? \_\_\_\_\_

10. If you wish to comment any of the above statements, please do so here. \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Have special "rooms" been created at your LtC, for instance studios and reading room?**

Yes  No  Don't know. Please explain! \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Are rooms for both older (10-12 year) and younger children (6-9 year)?**

Yes  No  Don't know. Please explain! \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Is the learning environment used for visualizing and promoting informal learning?**

Yes  No  Don't know. Please explain! \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Is the outdoor environment used to promote informal learning?**

Yes  No  Don't know. Please explain! \_\_\_\_\_

**15 a). What are the LtC' intentions behind the current learning environment?  
Give some concrete examples. \_\_\_\_\_**

**b). What thoughts are the basis for the design of the current  
learning environment? \_\_\_\_\_**

**c). How consistent are your personal beliefs? \_\_\_\_\_**

**d). Are there plans for changing the learning environment? \_\_\_\_\_**

**16. Who is responsible for developing the learning environment at your LtC? \_\_\_\_\_**

**17 a). How is your leadership in the learning environment? \_\_\_\_\_**

**b). How would you like your leadership to be in the learning environment LtC? \_\_\_\_\_**

**18. What type of expertise needed among staff in order to create good  
learning environments in leisure? \_\_\_\_\_**

**19. Are there special premises for the activ "free play"?**

Yes  No  Don't know. If YES, how and when are they used? \_\_\_\_\_

**20. Have you developed common learning environments in collaboration  
with the school? If so, describe this. \_\_\_\_\_**

**21. Is LtC a complementing to school in different subjects?**

Yes  No  Don't know. Please, explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

**22. Please write a few final thoughts! \_\_\_\_\_**



# A Web Survey on Learning Environments and Staff in Swedish Leisure-Time Centres as a Starting Point for a Nordic Research Network and International Cooperation

*Ann-Katrin Perselli, Gunnar Augustsson & Lena Boström*

## Leisure-Time Centres in Sweden

The Leisure-Time Centres (LTCs) are well established in the Swedish community, with their roots in the work cottages of the late 1800s, where children learned hand-crafts as a preventive measure, as they often had to support themselves on their own. In the early 1900s, work cottages became more caring and after-school centres were established (Rohlin, 2012). These after-school centres developed during the 1960s into LTCs. The after-school operations at LTCs are still today voluntary and are aimed at younger school children (6–12 years old). In Sweden 444,400 children attend LTCs in the school year 2014–2015 (Skolverket [National Agency for Education], 2015a, 2015b).

But in spite of the large number of children attending them, it is not uncommon for LTCs to struggle with both limited resources and authorities who do not understand how LTCs operate. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen, 2010, 2012; see also Lorentzi, 2012) has sharply criticized how LTCs fulfil their mission. The Schools Inspectorate stated that LTCs in Sweden have, among other things, a tendency to emphasize the care of the children at the expense of their learning, on account of limited resources. Further, the Schools Inspectorate pointed out that LTCs do not adequately follow up and analyse their operations to the extent necessary to develop their operations and make them better correspond to the curriculum goals.

According to the Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen, 2012), the municipal authorities responsible for schools often lack insight into the importance of LTCs' educational role for children who would otherwise be at risk of alienation or other problems. Without this understanding, the responsible authorities prioritize conventional schools and formal education ahead of LTCs. Even concerning overhaul and

control of the quality of the LTCs, with the aim to improve their quality, several municipalities made relatively little progress (Skolinspektionen, 2012).

It is hence remarkable that LTCs are such a relatively small research field in comparison with the research on compulsory and upper secondary schools, though over the last few years the research on LTCs and leisure-time teachers (LTTs) has gotten an impetus (see also Klerfelt & Haglund, 2014). Therefore, it is important to do research on LTCs and their operations, both to understand and to spur their development.

## Leisure-Time Centres in the Nordic Countries

Searches in the database ERIC show that LTCs as a research field in the Nordic countries are relatively new. The number of scientific articles from each Nordic country is relatively low, and they have mainly been produced since 2010.

Of the Nordic countries, it is probably Denmark's LTC system that is closest to Sweden's (described above). In *Denmark*, children can attend an LTC or leisure club in a similar way as children do in Sweden. It is teacher trained staff who operate the Danish facilities. In *Norway*, the authority is responsible for the LTC operations. There are LTCs for schoolchildren in grades 1 to 4, but the staff do not need to have any teacher training to work in the LTCs (Andersson, 2013). The Norwegian LTC operations focus on childcare and providing meaningful leisure time (Kunnskapsdepartementet [Ministry of Education and Research], 2014). In *Finland*, like Norway, there are LTCs for children up to grade 4. Even Finland does not require the staff to be teacher trained, but in contrast to Norway, associations, churches, and municipalities run LTCs, which they do on a voluntary basis (Andersson, 2013). LTCs are a relatively new phenomenon in *Iceland* (Pálsdóttir, 2012). During the 1970s, Iceland started the first LTC on a voluntary basis. Icelandic LTCs are run by the municipality, but they can also be run by other authorities, such as the Sports and Recreation Council. Icelandic LTCs do not require any teacher training of those who wish to work at one (Pálsdóttir, 2012).

## Initiation of a Survey on the Learning Environment in the LTCs and the Competencies and Leadership of the Staff

Our interest in research into LTCs started in 2011 when we discovered that there was a shortage of contemporary overall information and knowledge about LTCs. At that time, important questions about the LTC model – including the appearance of the LTC learning environments, how LTCs support children, and how LTTs handle and use leadership in their work – were quite unexplored.

When the current Swedish teacher-training programmes started in 2011 they were supposed to be based on contemporary research. But compared with the other

teacher-training programmes, there was very little contemporary research on LTCs and the new curriculum to establish a teacher-training programme for LTTs (the so called Teacher-Training Programme with Aim Towards Leisure-Time Centre). The field of knowledge concerning the new curriculum and LTC operations was undeveloped and new research was greatly needed. The link to contemporary research is essential if the new teacher training is going to rest on a solid scientific basis, which was the demand from the government to the universities.

To get a current overview in the present situation for the Swedish LTCs, a Web survey was constructed using the Netigate software (Netigate, 2014). In early 2013 the Web survey was sent to all employees at LTCs in Sweden (about 11,109 persons). It was distributed by the Teacher's Federation via a link in an e-mail. Responses were received from 4,043 persons (36% of those contacted). Altogether, the respondents represented 289 of Sweden's 290 municipalities. The questionnaire consisted of 21 questions on two main topics: the learning environment in the LTCs and the competencies and leadership of the staff. Some of the questions could be answered only by set responses, while others were open-ended questions allowing written statements.

Up to now the analysis of the web survey already resulted in relevant papers (Boström, Hörnell, & Frykland, 2015; Boström & Augustsson, 2016; Augustsson, 2016) and further papers are in preparation (e.g. Perselli, Hörnell, & Frykland, 2016).

## Starting an International Research Network

In order to develop the research further, a request was submitted to the Faculty Board of Mid Sweden University for funds to start an international research network. The purpose of this application was to obtain resources to investigate the possibility of pursuing cooperative research into LTCs and LTC pedagogy among Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. We visited Iceland and Denmark to establish contacts for further research, and these contacts in turn have visited us to plan further cooperative research. The starting point of the discussions was the above-mentioned web survey and the knowledge that the data might provide.

There is much we can learn from each other's experiences with and knowledge of LTT teacher training and work on LTCs in the Nordic region. Today, our research network consists of a multidisciplinary team of eight persons: from Sweden, Lena Boström, Gunnar Augustsson, Assar Hörnell, and Marie Frykland (Mid Sweden University) and Ann-Katrin Perselli (Linnaeus University); from Denmark, Frans Ørestad Andersen (Aarhus University); and from Iceland, Kolbrún Þorbjörg Pálsdóttir and Steingerður Kristjánsdóttir (University of Iceland). There are also plans to seek participants in Finland. Presently the research network involves the following disciplines: education, leisure pedagogics, library and information science, political science, psychology, and sociology.



## Further Research and Next Steps

The research network aims to understand and explain how LTTs perceive the policy documents and implement them by giving children meaningful leisure time and space for participation and stimulating their learning and development (cp. Skolverket [National Agency for Education], 2011). In our view LTTs are under conflicting pressures regarding the policy documents and implementation of the content of the documents. Illuminating this situation can enable new knowledge of how LTTs interpret their mission, practice, and motives. Based on this assumption, we intend to study the organizational strategies that are used to interpret and transform the government-stated mission and values of LTC policy documents. Other issues of interest are the factors that set the frames for LTTs' work and the physical and intellectual tools used to manage them in the practical work.

Further research should give emphasis on comparative studies. For example, the new Swedish curriculum's first two chapters are intended for LTCs. However, these chapters are written from a school perspective, which entails an orientation of LTC operations for more formal education. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen, 2010) emphasizes that legislators leave a complex challenge of interpretation and implementation to these teachers as they try to interpret and transform their mission. Therefore it is important to explore how values and mission in the policy documents are interpreted and put into practice in LTCs from a Nordic perspective.

An important area for further research would be to deepen the analysis of the empirical material with a quantitative analysis. There are also more data to get out of the Swedish Web survey.

Perselli has started to analyse the Web survey data with the aim of studying how information technology and information and communication technology are used in LTCs. When an LTC is a part of the school, the headmaster ought to provide the LTCs with modern and usable equipment. To follow up this subject Perselli will conduct interviews to widen the data and to compare with the Web survey data.

Another research area will be to involve the children who attend LTCs and hear their opinions concerning the premises within schools or at independent centres and how it impacts their desire for learning and development. This research subject would be very interesting in a comparative study between the Nordic countries.

International exchanges of ideas and results, which we have described in this article, becomes important if it can provide a basis for the development of the quality of LTCs' operations, and thereby support children's learning and development.

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## Documenting and Assessing Learning in Media-Rich Informal Environments

Jay Lemke, Robert Lecusay, Michael Cole & Vera Michalchik. Cambridge: MIT Press. 2015

*Reviewed by Paige Mustain (University of Oxford)*

The new MacArthur Foundation funded report *Documenting and Assessing Learning in Media-Rich Informal Environments* (2015), by leading scholars in human development and learning from the University of California, San Diego and Stanford University's Center for Teaching and Learning, helps us reframe the way we assess and understand learning in media-focused and informal environments. The authors offer a model of assessment for informal learning programs with an overview of various methods, approaches and recommendations for good practices in project assessment while also identifying needs for improved assessment techniques. Their proposed model is called the outcomes-by-levels model for assessment which outlines at least ten valued outcomes for learning at the project, group, and individual levels. With the sustained interest and proliferation of technology-centred education initiatives, both inside and outside of school, the report equips other scholars and education stakeholders with a useful framework for answering the pressing call for more evidence-based reviews of how effective and sustainable these initiatives are.

The central point made in the report is that “the scope of valued learning outcomes for informal learning activities should include social, emotional, and developmental outcomes as well as content knowledge and should include learning by groups and whole projects as well as by individuals” (p.89, emphasis in original). The authors are encouraging a more holistic conceptualisation of learning assessment that considers socio-emotional and development outcomes through an evaluation of learning at three distinct but interconnected levels of analysis (individual, group, and project). Learning at these three levels are linked and in order to understand learning at one level one needs to understand what is happening at the others. Specifically in the context of informal environments, the authors write that comprehensive models are necessary “because the valued outcomes of informal learning tend to be less predictable and much more diverse than those of formal education” (p.5).

The report is organised into four sections: introduction, review of the literature on assessment of learning in informal settings, highlights from expert meetings, and

conclusions and recommendations. A majority of the report is dedicated to the review of selected and representative research projects, giving readers an overview of various methods and approaches in informal learning settings and providing recommendations for good practices in project assessment. The review focuses on (1) after-school programs (2) community center programs (3) museum-based programs and (4) online communities and forums. The levels of analysis (individual, group, or project), valued-learning outcomes and methods are outlined for each study.

Following the review of literature and research projects, the authors discuss highlights from three expert meetings where twenty-five senior researchers discussed project design and development, assessment and outcomes, and external evaluations of programmatic initiatives from a range of informal learning environments. Given the fact that learning and development are long term processes and recognising that communities are multi-faceted, heterogeneous entities, the authors argue that "...efforts to fully assess the effects of learning experiences must be based on longitudinal, ethnographic records, such as collections of material objects and semiotic products with in-progress versions over time" (p.84, emphasis in original).

Among the many helpful insights and recommendations put forth, the report's most useful contribution is its proposed outcomes-by-levels model, especially in conjunction with the ten general types of valued outcomes. This is a critical resource for anyone evaluating the learning and development that is taking place in informal environments. The model is comprehensive enough to account for the diverse interests of the learners participating in these programs. In line with their comprehensive reconceptualization of learning outcomes, the authors argue that there needs to be special consideration of the institutional contexts, history of the program, and community included in the assessment. This is especially vital when considering the issues arising from the one-size-fits-all policies that continue to be produced which fail to see that sociocultural and situational barriers are often the reasons for ineffective policies in this area.

As a technology and education researcher, I found myself looking for more in terms of how the assessment of learning differs between media-rich and non-media-rich, informal environments. Despite the report focusing on media-rich learning programs and projects, the media element is decentred here. The authors do offer useful insights on ways technological resources can be used in the documentation process, such as computer-assisted learning games. However, we are missing a discussion on the role media plays in shaping these informal learning environments and the impact this has on the learning that is taking place. With this being said, the authors do note in their recommendations that each project needs to be assessed based on its specific context and aim, meaning those involved in these media-rich learning environments would presumably take the media element into account in their assessment. However, there is no direct engagement with its role or how learning in media-rich versus media-free environments might be assessed differently; this warrants attention in a future report.

While there is a rich history of learning assessment research in traditional school-based structured learning environments, there is a surprising dearth when it comes to learning assessment in informal media-rich environments. It is indeed surprising

when you consider the staggering number of media-centred after-school programs and community-based education initiatives that have been established in the past decade and which are continuing to grow at an unprecedented rate. The authors provide us with an extensive bibliography in Appendix B that includes research done for these programs, illustrating just how widespread they are. This makes it even more critical that there is a model in place to document and assess learning in these spaces. Ultimately, this report is a timely and necessary resource for anyone in the field of education or involved in community-based research, including educators, scholars, and policymakers. Given their reach and continued growth, we need to take seriously the learning outcomes and sustainability of these initiatives. This report gives us a much-needed framework and direction to start answering the field's more impending questions.





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