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Principals' Perspectives on Pupils' Social Learning in Swedish School-Age Educare

Kristina Jonsson

Abstract: This article aims to investigate social learning in the Swedish school-age educare (SAEC) from a number of principals' perspectives. An abductive approach has been adopted to analyse the data from individual interviews with seven principals in school-age educare. The results are understood through an interactionist perspective, with Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bioecological system theory as a raster, which gives a didactic view on the principals' governing of the SAEC. Three themes were identified in the principals' perspectives, which are *the core aim of the work in the SAEC*, *the staff's approach* and *pupils' democratic learning*. The results suggest that the perspective of the principals is characterized by having the pupil in focus.

Keywords: school-age educare, social learning, principals, system theory

Introduction

The aim of this article is to investigate social learning in the Swedish School-Age Educare (SAEC) from the perspective of principals. In Sweden, the SAEC is integrated with compulsory schools, it is regulated by the same legislation, The Education Act (SFS 2010:800), and the activities are guided by the same curriculum (Swedish National Agency for Education [SNAE], 2019). SAEC centres also share premises with schools and the same principal most often leads them. The Swedish Education Act (2010:800) states, that to become a principal, it is required to have pedagogical insight, gained from both education and experience. Also, the principal must attend The National School Leadership Training Programme as soon as possible, and the programme must be completed within four years from entry into possession of service.

The core content of the SAEC activities is specified in the curriculum (SNAE, 2019). The activities are termed *educational programme*, with a pronounced role to complement pupil's learning in school. This indicates a knowledge-based focus, which has grown in recent decades (Haglund, 2009; Hjalmarsson, Löfdahl Hultman & Warin, 2017; Närvänen & Elvstrand, 2014). Nevertheless, the curriculum emphasises a practice with focus on social learning, such as group-related activities and pupils' sense of security and wellbeing. In the section of the

SAEC, the work to enhance pupils' peer relations is further emphasized. However, the curriculum does not entirely clarify the assignment, that states that care, development and teaching should constitute a whole (SNAE, 2019). Thus, there is room for interpretation in the curriculum, which may cause uncertainty in implementing the practice. The SAEC teachers are on the one hand required to supplement pupils' knowledge-based learning in school, and on the other hand required to work according to a curriculum that highlights social knowledge. Thereby, according to Lager, Sheridan and Gustafsson (2016), a tension between an individualised quality discourse and the social pedagogical approach is revealed.

Additionally, there is an organizational expectation on SAEC teachers to participate during the school day, which Andersson (2014) describes as a grey area in their work, as well as a structural difficulty. When SAEC teachers participate in school, their main responsibility to manage after-school care and activities is affected. This is an obstacle in the assignment, for which, according to Andersson (2014), management has a lack of understanding. Concerning the management, Jonsson and Lillvist (2019) express the importance of the principal as a pedagogical leader, especially regarding the guidance of the staff in developing the work in the SAEC. Alongside with the above described uncertainty in the assignment, this can be a conceivable problem, since a certain amount of understanding may be required to be able to organize and guide the staff to develop the work with social learning in the SAEC. This places the focus on the principal's perspectives of the work in the SAEC, since it is the basis both for how to organize the SAEC and how to be a pedagogical leader.

Although the research on the SAEC has increased in recent years, there is a gap in terms of the principals' perspectives. Therefore, according to the aim of this article, a number of principals' views of social learning in the SAEC are investigated. The research question is as follows: *What characterizes the principals' perspectives of social learning in School-Age Educare?*

Social Learning

Social learning can be considered as the process, in which a pupil is provided the opportunity to develop social competencies, by the interaction with others. As explained by Fallis (2002), social learning means to acquire social skills and social knowledge, by communicating and by taking active part in the current context. Social skills comprise abilities that are necessary to participate in functional, social interaction, such as to understand rules, and to relate to moral and values. Further considered to be parts of social skills, are behaviors related to relational making, for instance impulse control and problem-solving ability (Saracho & Spodek, 2007b). Also included in social learning, is socially acceptable attitudes, which Saracho and Spodek (2007c) explain as to have a friendly approach to others. Similarly, Bronfenbrenner and Evans (2000) highlight outcomes of social learning, as the long-range commitment to the well-being of others, extending from social settings, such as child-care settings, to the well-being of the society as a whole. Additionally, guidance and feedback on their acts, help pupils to learn and understand their surrounding environment and their relation to it, as well as they learn to understand themselves (Saracho & Spodek, 2007a, 2007b).

Possibilities and Impossibilities for Everyday Life: Institutional Spaces in School-Age Educare

Karin Lager

Abstract: This project aimed to investigate through empirical analysis the possibilities and impossibilities for everyday life in the institutional spaces of school-age educare. The data consists of twelve weeks of fieldwork in twelve settings and group interviews with staff teams in each setting. Through empirical analysis of the variation in institutional spaces, the results highlight the importance of academically educated staff, stable staff teams, dedicated rooms, available material, and time to plan and prepare their work as the distinctive features that co-construct possibilities and impossibilities for children's everyday lives.

Keywords: school-age educare, fritidshem, everyday life, institutional space, multi-sited ethnography

Introduction

This project aimed to investigate possibilities and impossibilities for everyday life in institutional spaces in Swedish School-Age EduCare (SAEC). Institutional spaces are co-constructed by the socio-material aspects in an institution where human to human relations and materiality are co-working (Alvesson & Empson, 2007, Massey, 1994). SAEC settings are co-constructed by the people who work there, the children, rooms, material to engage the children, by time and by the relationships within the setting as well as the relationships to other institutions such as the school and the children's families. Depending on how these aspects are co-constructed, different institutional spaces for everyday life are offered. My interest is the empirical variation in institutional spaces (Alvesson & Empson, 2007) and how distinctive features co-construct possibilities and impossibilities in relation to children's agency and the identity of a SAEC setting.

In the Swedish Education Act (SFS 2010:800), children's everyday lives in Swedish SAEC are articulated as meaningful leisure beside education and teaching. The interest in investigating institutional spaces in SAEC is grounded in several steps taken to strengthen policy for SAEC in the last 20 years. In line with educational reforms of children's learning and development, SAEC was integrated with compulsory school in 1996 and after that the national curriculum has been revised several times to encompass SAEC (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2016). These steps have all increased the intended learning outcomes

for SAEC with an emphasis on learning and teaching. At the same time, during these 20 years there have been numerous economic cuts made to structural conditions for SAEC. Different reports have presented statistics on growing child groups, dropping teacher/child ratios, fewer teachers with academic degrees, poorer conditions in rooms and of material (The Swedish School Inspectorate, 2018). This article contributes an empirical analysis of the way today's greatly changing SAEC are constructing children's everyday life.

Even though research in this field is increasing, there is still limited knowledge and empirical evidence of the everyday lives of children in SAEC today, where almost 500,000 children between the ages of 6-13 years are in attendance. Consequently, the intention is to investigate possibilities and impossibilities for everyday life in institutional spaces in Swedish SAEC through empirical analysis. The following research questions are posed:

- What distinctive features co-construct everyday lives in SAEC?
- How are children's agency and the SAEC identity constructed in SAEC?

Previous Research

Place and space regarding children in pedagogical settings has been investigated from different perspectives. Ellis (2004) and Green and Turner (2017) use the term place to describe when children add meaning to spaces. Moss and Petrie (2002) use instead space to highlight the complexity in child services and how these spaces are filled with social relations, perspectives, intentions, and power relations. In line with Moss and Petri, Clark (2010) argues that pedagogical institutions for children are rich in symbols, routines and rituals, where children are engaged in everyday tasks.

Smith and Barker (2000) report how children attach meaning to spaces and resist the adult domination by adding their own meaning to spaces and using them in un-intended ways, which impacts children's everyday life. Evaldsson and Corsaro (1998) highlighted children's collective processes in terms of relations in everyday life when they investigated children's play and disputes. In line with them, Hurst (2019) argues for giving space for waiting to promote children's relational work in SAEC.

Research in Swedish SAEC indicates the shifting focus on education in policy and the poor conditions in practice. Andishmand (2017), in her ethnographical study of three different socioeconomic areas, reports inequality in SAEC and big differences in children's leisure, due to large groups of children and poor staff conditions. Haglund (2018) reports, using a narrative approach, how poor conditions for personnel and insufficient time for planning are limiting children's possibilities in their everyday lives. Elvstrand and Lago (2019) examined the recurrent activity of choosing what to do in the afternoons and indicate that choices are more limiting than free, based on what teachers value as important activities for children. Lago and Elvstrand (2019) report that children are neglected in SAEC free spaces, which makes SAEC a space for exclusion and even bullying, depending upon whether teachers participate in activities. Haglund (2016) discusses the fact that the tradition in SAEC work takes a peripheral position to children's play. He questions whether the teachers are resisting educational trends by highlighting children's social play and development of relations. Johnsson and Lillvist (2019) examined social learning in SAEC

Let the Right One in: Sports Leaders' Shared Experiences of Including Refugee Girls and Boys in Sports Clubs

Peter Carlman, Maria Hjalmarsson, Carina Vikström

Abstract: This study investigated how gender and sports capital are expressed in sports leaders' talk about sports for young people with a refugee background. Empirical data were derived from four focus group interviews representing 21 sports club leaders in Sweden. The leaders defined boys and girls as distinct groups but also as groups within which there are differences. Compared with the boys, the girls were presented with lesser possibilities to participate in sports. According to the leaders, the differences in the group of girls rested on that the sports culture in the girls' country of origin, which may be more or less permissive for girls to be engaged in sports, whereas differences within the group of boys were understood in terms of bodies and mentalities.

Keywords: gender, sports capital, sports leaders, migration

Introduction

In the last few years, the Swedish government has increased the funding for sport initiatives directed towards children and youngsters. Some of these initiatives have been aimed at providing these target groups possibilities for more sports within the school context by using external actors from the sport movement (Regeringskansliet, 2017). Other initiatives have served the purpose of integrating the new arrivals in Swedish society through their participation in sports (Riksidrottsförbundet, 2016). The present study focused on one of these state-funded integration efforts that has received extra grants to create opportunities for new arrivals to be introduced to sports clubs (Socialdepartementet, 2015).

Politicians in Europe seem to share a strong belief in sports as an integration arena (Agergaard, 2018). This trend was evident in Sweden in 2015 when the great refugee wave reached the country, and around 160 000 people came to seek shelter. Among them were 70 000 children and young people, half of whom were unaccompanied individuals (Migrationsverket, 2016a). The increasing migration induced the government to investigate how society could contribute to integration, and civil society was seen as a potential site. The Swedish Sports Confederation/Riksidrottsförbundet (RF) thus received an increased grant in the same year to create opportunities for new arrivals to engage in sports club activities (Socialdepartementet, 2015), which implicitly target sport leaders as central integration ac-

tors. The RF (2016) commented that ‘the Government recognises the power of sports and has allocated grants to enable the sports movement to integrate the new arrivals’.

Often, sport is viewed as something positive for all children and youngsters, for both the individuals and the society, and the specific efforts described hold a strong normative notion of sport as an almost unquestionable means for supporting the holistic development of all children and young people. Nonetheless, research has emphasised the historical connection between sports and masculinity, which has led to the dominance of sports role models, thereby negatively contributing to a lack of female role models (Meier, 2015). As Szto (2015) puts it, ‘sport itself is a product of power relations’ (905). In a study of girls’ debuts in alternative sports programmes organised in collaboration between the school and the sports movement (Carlman & Hjalmarsson, 2018), the girls described that the leaders normalise gender oppression and thereby uphold gender stereotypes. The boys were described as acting as if they are superior in relation to the girls and ascribing certain physical and personality characteristics to the girls. Other studies have discussed sports as an arena on which young participants might suffer emotional harm (Stafford, Alexander, & Fry, 2015) and on which destructive leadership might develop (Jacobs, Smits, & Knoppers, 2017). The idea of the almost emancipatory potential of sports was shown through a sports projects aimed at supporting certain groups, primarily girls, in different aspects (Hayhurst, Giles, Radforth, & The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society, 2015). Although such efforts are probably based on the best intentions, they also hold notions of boys and girls as distinct groups, which contradicts our understanding of femininities and masculinities as being created, recreated, and challenged in talk and other actions. Furthermore, we argue that the valuation of children and youngsters’ sports capital is crucial for their comprehension of sport as a context accessible for them and for their willingness to participate. This study investigated how gender and sports capital are expressed in sports leaders’ talk about sports for young people with a refugee background in the context of sports clubs which recently have received extra government grants to create opportunities for new arrivals to be introduced to sports clubs. Informed by Smith, Spaaij, and McDonald (2018), we state that sports leaders are very important for creating structures enabling the integration of participants with a refugee background.

The Swedish Government’s grant was primarily aimed at integrating new arrivals, but based on the experience gained in the study, the project also came to include children and young people who had been here longer than 2-3 years, that is, individuals no longer targeted by integration efforts or included in the definition of new arrivals (Migrationsverket, 2016b). Therefore, the term refugee or refugee background is used in this study. It refers to ‘a person who has fled a country, because of a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds of race, religion, social belonging to a specific group or political persuasion, of which he/she is a citizen, and who cannot or will not return to the said country because of the fears mentioned above’ (UNHCR, 2018). A refugee background functions as an umbrella term and encompasses all children and adults who have been forced to leave their country of origin irrespective of how long they have been in Sweden. From the start, the project was called an integration project. Later, the initiative came to be called the inclusion project instead. Therefore, in this article, the term inclusion will henceforth be used when talking about the project. Nevertheless, when the text handles processes of how young peo-

Passing the Mic: Toward Culturally Responsive Out of School Time Leadership

Ishmael A. Miller

Abstract: The aim of this study was to explore the application of culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) in an out of school time organization (OST). This was accomplished by analyzing how the actions of leaders both enabled and constrained CRSL. Research was conducted with Inspire Mentoring an OST organization that provides mentoring services to approximately 90-120 high school students of color from freshman through senior year. Approximately 60% of the mentors identify as people of color. The data collected for this qualitative case study occurred over 6 months and included: 6 semi-structured interviews with executive leaders and adult mentors, 5 observations of organizational meetings and community workshops, and reviewed documents from Inspire Mentoring. The leadership practices observed were analyzed using the behaviors of CRSL. This study suggest that positional OST leaders should become more connected to their community understanding longstanding inequities, interrogate their own worldviews, and work in tandem with minoritized youth and community members to address cultural youth development needs.

Keywords: out of school time, culturally responsive school leadership, youth leadership, case study

Introduction and Research Question

During my interview with the Executive Director of Inspire Mentoring (IM) Diana Bond (Asian American Woman), she claimed that the minoritized youth in her organization “have a voice and that students are primary”. Minoritized youth are young people of color that have been historically marginalized by society and institutions in the United States (Khalifa, 2018). Diana’s assertion piqued my interest because the minoritized youth that her mentoring organization serves have been described as the farthest from educational justice. Routinely the target of disproportionate discipline and Out of School Time (OST) organizations with deficit ideologies, these youth typically have the least voice and agency (Baldrige, 2014). As my interviews with people associated with IM continued, a more nuanced picture of Diana’s statement came to light. I believe a form of Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL) was occurring that engaged this community in empowering ways.

OST organizations like school clubs, summer camps, and after school programs that serve minoritized youth can be sites of youth development in the areas of cultural development, identity development, critical consciousness raising, and civic engagement that can lead to transformation of inequitable socio-political systems that effect their lives (Kwon, 2013; Ginwright and James, 2002). Youth development could be defined as a “process of growth and increasing competence” between childhood and adulthood (Larson, 2000 p. 170). However, the OST literature notes leadership practices that negatively affect youth development through leaders asserting deficit-based ideologies and trying to assimilate minoritized youth into middle class United States values (Baldrige, 2014; Halpern, 2002). Commonly, OST leadership practices have reproduced racial inequities for minoritized youth by having undertrained staff, narrowly focused programs, and a scarcity of programs located within their community (Woodland, 2008; Halpern, 2000; Weitzman, Mijanovich, Silver & Brazill, 2008). The persistent racial inequity produced by OST leaders suggest exploring culturally responsive forms of leadership to better meet the youth development of minoritized youth.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) suggests that educators should adapt their style of teaching to address the cultural learning and social needs of children (Gay, 2018). Gay (1994) found that culturally responsive development can enable ethnically/culturally diverse youth to stay connected to and build upon their values, knowledges, and ways of moving through the world. Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL) derives from the concept of CRP, but instead focuses on a leader’s ability to shift all aspects of educational organizations to respond to minoritized students developmental needs (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016). Research on CRSL has typically focused on leadership practices of principals, instructional leaders, and teacher leaders to influence change within the contexts of K-12 schools (Khalifa, 2018; Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis; 2016; Marshall and Khalifa, 2018). CRSL’s ability to understand and address the cultural needs of minoritized youth may provide a framework to transform OST leadership practice. Thus, this study explores how two OST leaders Executive Director Diana Bond and Director of Programs Alex Champion a (White Male) at Inspire Mentoring (IM) in a diverse metropolitan region of the Western United States are changing their leadership practices to become more culturally responsive. The research question is:

1. RQ1: How is this OST leadership team exhibiting behaviors of Culturally Responsiveness?

This article begins by critiquing research on leadership practice within the OST field. Assessing OST leadership practice will explicate the ways in which color-evasive values lead to dismissing the cultural needs of minoritized youth. Next, the theoretical framework will examine Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL). Subsequently, there will be a description of the organization and research methods utilized. Lastly, the article will conclude with findings and implications for practice and research. The findings from research question one suggests that positional OST leaders should become more connected to their community understanding longstanding inequities, interrogate their own worldviews, and work in tandem with minoritized youth and community members to address cultural youth development needs.

University-Supported Networks as Professional Development for Teachers in School-Age Educare

Lena Glaés-Coutts

Abstract: One of the most valued types of professional learning for teachers are forums that allow them to share their practices with other teachers. This paper examines how university-based learning networks support the professional development needs of teachers in School-Age educare. University-supported networks provide a more informal approach to professional learning and allows the teachers in School-Age educare to connect with other teachers in their field. The network further provides the participants an opportunity to be an active part of the research that is conducted at the university and a platform for developing a collective agency.

Keywords: Network, professional learning, School-Age educare, teacher agency

Introduction

School-Age Educare in Sweden

The Swedish elementary school system is unique in that it is designed to provide a wrap-around system of both education and care. The Swedish public education system is founded on the principles of democracy, equality and equity and “The Education Act (2010: 800) stipulates that the school system aims at pupils acquiring and developing knowledge and values” (Skolverket, p. 5). In Sweden, a majority of students also attend the before- and after school section of the elementary school system known as *Fritidshem*, or School-Age educare. This section of the education system fulfills an important role of the Swedish school system by providing group and situational based learning that stimulates the growth and development of students in grades one to six. While not compulsory, School-Age educare remains an important component of Swedish schools, and its mandate to complement and support student learning has become an important pillar of the public school system. In contrast to before- and after school programs common in other countries, the teachers who work at the Swedish School-Age educare centers are required to have an undergraduate degree in teaching School-Age educare. The requirement for licensed university-educated teachers is rather unique in the world as only Sweden and Denmark requires teachers to have an undergraduate degree (Dahl, 2014). To meet this demand for university-educated

teachers, Swedish universities offer a three-year undergraduate teacher program focused on teaching how to develop the needs and interests of School-Age educare children. In the university program, the student-teachers gain an understanding of how to interpret and implement the curriculum, as well as how to teach social skills in an informal setting. Since 2012, the students who graduate from this teaching program are further qualified to teach an aesthetic subject such as music, sports or arts, in the regular elementary school program.

In 2017, almost 500 000 students between the ages of 6 and 12 were enrolled in School-Age educare in Sweden, which is more than the total enrollment of students in the secondary school system (Skolverket, 2010). This means that over 84% of Swedish School-Age children spend a significant part of their school day at School-Age educare. This has, in turn, led to an increased need for educated personnel at the School-Age educare centers. While the number of schools offering School-Age educare has virtually remained the same for the last decade or so, the number of children enrolled has increased by close to 40%. Today, as many schools attempt to fill the teaching positions, principals often have to resort to hiring staff with other qualifications in childcare and similar qualifications, resulting in a situation where only one-quarter of the staff at School-Age educare is qualified with an undergraduate degree (Skolverket, 2010). More qualified teachers are needed to fill this growing demand, as there are now more children per teacher in School-Age educare than in the past. This change in the children-teacher ratio has come about mostly due to cuts or re-direction of educational funding.

The current curriculum document now include core content for the School-Age educare program, along with specific goals in the areas of Language and communication, Creative and aesthetic forms of expression, Nature and society as well as for Games, physical activities and outdoor excursions. This means that, more than ever before, there is a need for qualified staff to assure the curriculum is correctly interpreted and translated into practice. The demand for well-educated staff also places an emphasis on providing professional learning for all who work as teachers at the School-Age educare centers.

In Sweden, the term *kompetensutbildning* is used in describing teachers' professional development or professional learning. While similar in context to the English term professional development, the Swedish word puts a higher emphasis on the development of competencies, rather than the professional aspect of improving one's profession. For the purpose of this article, the term professional learning will be used to describe all types of learning associated with enhancing and developing the skills needed for the teaching profession. Although School-Age educare is an important part of the Swedish public school system, there are often fewer opportunities for teachers who work in this program to develop their professional skills and knowledge. While many school boards actively promote and support teacher professional learning, the teachers at School-Age educare can still find themselves excluded from the formal professional development opportunities that their colleagues in K-6 attend. One type of professional learning that contains elements of both formal and informal professional learning is belonging to a professional network as they are grounded in a constructivist view of how adults learn and grow professionally. We know that networks provide different types of learning and support depending on their form and function, and while research on various types of networks can be found, there is currently no information on how networks organized by universities can support profes-

STEM Learning Ecosystems: Building from Theory Toward a Common Evidence Base

Patricia J. Allen, Zoe Brown, Gil G. Noam

Abstract: An innovative system-building initiative known as the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice (SLECoP) is transforming U.S. STEM education through cross-sector partnerships between schools, afterschool and summer programs, libraries, museums, and businesses, among others. Although logic models exist to describe how SLEs can make positive contributions toward youth STEM learning in theory, it is unknown how individual SLEs are motivated or equipped to collect the evidence needed to demonstrate their value or abilities to solve the problems they were formed to address. The present study describes the results of a 34-item qualitative survey—completed by leaders of 37 SLEs from four U.S. regions—designed to understand where SLEs are in their evaluation planning, implementing, and capacity-building processes. We found that most SLEs were championed by the extended education sector, and all were highly motivated to conduct evaluation and assessment. Most communities reported a willingness to create a shared vision around data collection, which will help researchers and practitioners track, understand, and improve STEM quality and outcomes in and out of school.

Keywords: STEM Learning Ecosystems, common measures, evaluation, assessment,

STEM Learning Ecosystems: Building from Theory Toward a Common Evidence Base

In everyday life, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—the subjects collectively known as STEM—capture our sense of wonder. Excitement for STEM sweeps the media during major astronomical events like an eclipse or major breakthroughs like 3-D printed human organs. Yet, inspiring that sense of excitement about STEM among young people in formal educational settings—with the hopes of developing fluency in STEM, building STEM skills, and making STEM majors and careers attractive—is a significant challenge in most countries (OECD, 2010, 2019).

International research has consistently found declining attitudes toward STEM between childhood and adolescence (Potvin & Hasni, 2014a), with fewer students electing to pursue university majors and careers in STEM areas over time (National Science Foundation, 2010). In the U.S., as well as many other industrialized countries, there are also significant

concerns about adolescent mathematics and science literacy and performance, with many students unable to achieve a baseline level of proficiency (OECD, 2019). STEM interest, motivation, and performance are connected to college and career readiness, and evidence from many countries suggests that these outcomes are diminished, at least in part, by a “negative experience of STEM at school” (Joyce & Dzoga, 2012). An international review of STEM outcomes concluded that “...the perception that students have of science might in fact be weakened or held back by the perception they have of ‘school science’...” (Potvin & Hasni, 2014b, p. 99). These concerns have led to a more holistic approach to STEM education, which can be seen through the formation of systems, including the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice (SLECoP). The SLECoP is changing the belief that STEM learning belongs to one institution by creating interconnected systems to provide diverse STEM learning opportunities (Traphagen & Traill, 2014). However, shared measures and an evidence base is necessary to show the value of such systems to solve the problems they were formed to address (Grack Nelson, Goeke, Auster, Peterman, & Lussenhop, 2019).

The present study examines how the SLECoP embeds evaluation and assessment approaches into its strategies and explores the role that the extended education sector plays in this effort. We begin with a brief review of extended STEM education in the U.S. and the SLECoP. After presenting our research questions and methodology, we summarize key results from a national survey designed to understand where SLEs are in their evaluative planning, implementing, and capacity-building processes. Our conclusions focus on how the extended education sector can be a driving force in the creation of a common evidence base that can track, understand, and improve STEM quality and youth outcomes.

Extended Education and STEM Learning Ecosystems

The importance of educational opportunities occurring outside of the formal school day has increased dramatically in the U.S. over the last decade due to shifting priorities and policies (Afterschool Alliance, 2015). These extended education contexts—which are referred to in the U.S. as out-of-school time (OST) programs—include extracurricular activities at all-day schools, afterschool activities, youth clubs, museum and library programs, and so on. OST STEM learning experiences are attended voluntarily and allow hands-on engagement with a variety of STEM activities in a fun way that sparks curiosity and excitement (Afterschool Alliance, 2015). Considering the different international approaches to extended education, STEM-focused OST programs in the U.S. are characterized by a “hybrid approach” that falls somewhere between free play—reminiscent of programs in countries like Finland and Sweden where children often direct their own leisure time activities in afterschool settings under the supervision of adults—and academic “cram schools”—similar to structured and rigorous programs found in Japan, Taiwan, and Korea that focus on academic achievement to reinforce learning from the traditional school day (Noam & Triggs, 2019).

Providing quality opportunities to explore STEM content outside of formal school settings removes the academic pressure and fear of failure that can contribute to STEM disengagement, even among bright and motivated students (Potvin & Hasni, 2014a). It also supports positive youth development—including fostering quality relationships with peers and adults among other social skills—by offering a safe place for children to learn and play

The Professional Life of Leisure Pedagogues at Austrian All-Day Schools

Gerald Tritremmel

Keywords: extended education, Austrian all-day schools, leisure pedagogues, training

Introduction

Research on all-day schools in Austria is rather scarce (National Education Report, 2018). The first pilot projects of open all-day schools in Austria took place during the late 80s and early 90s and they each developed differently. Although schools were based on the same legal regulations, all-day schools developed in varied manners due to organizational forms, staff situations and school structures (Hofmeister, 2012).

The demand and necessity of all-day schools and the increasing acceptance in society has led to an expansion of all-day schools in Austria. There are many pedagogical arguments for all-day schools, yet controversial discussions still exist. The crux is how successful an all-day school is and this is determined by the fact that all-day schools can only be successful if they accommodate the pupils' needs. There is no doubt that the pedagogical personnel play an important role in reaching the high expectations of all who are involved in the system (Kohler, 2016).

Although the pedagogical staff in Austrian all-day schools is predominated by teachers, more and more non-academic experts for leisure education constitute the support staff at all-day schools. The result is that pedagogues with varied qualifications and authorizations are employed within this system. The School Organization Act (SCHOG) makes it possible for the employers to use staff in the leisure time sessions, who are more in line with subjective qualifications:

“42 (2a) ... for the leisure time the necessary teachers, educators for the learning aid or leisure pedagogues are to be appointed. For leisure time, other suitable persons may also be appointed to perform the tasks in the leisure time section on the basis of special qualifications.”

An important mission of all-day schools is to offer children access to extracurricular experiences that can motivate and excite their interests; this means that all-day schools should not simply be longer school days. This demands special training for the professionals who collectively represent the skill sets needed (Vandell, & Lao, 2016).