

## Values and Prospects of Extended Education: A Critical Review of the Third NEO ER Meeting

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In 2014, the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Network on Extracurricular and Out-of-School Time Educational Research (NEO ER), a worldwide research network on extended education, was held in Seoul, with the topic of values and prospects of extended education. This paper aims to conduct a critical review on what was presented and discussed during the meeting to examine what institutional features and educational outcomes extended education have occurred and what will be happening to this area in the future. According to the presenters, extended education keeps increasing while the degree of popularity and pervasiveness varies across the countries and across the regions within these countries. The governments' policies and supports will be significant in shaping the roles and scope of extended education. In some countries such as Korea, it is considered to be on the institutionalization process competing with public schooling and shadow education. Given the pervasiveness and uniqueness in terms of its roles and activities, extended education is now becoming an important area of research.

### 1 Introduction

Education as a social institution has two different institutional characteristics. One is its persistence and resilience, meaning that the current system is a product of history and thus its institutional features and arrangements tend to remain unchanged despite the continued attempts to reform them (Tyack/Cuban 1995). The other is its evolutionary development aspect. It is now widely known that the education system is an open system which constantly interacts with external environments including economic conditions, political situations, and social needs. Furthermore, ongoing interactions with environments often leads to a new system hybridizing the old with the new and sometimes public needs with market interests. One example is *extended education*, which has been observed with the keenest interest by many researchers (Ecarius/Klieme/Stecher/Woods 2013). According to researchers (Bae/Jeon 2013), it is increasingly becoming institutionalized, playing a role of alternative educational arrangements and can be compared to public schooling and shadow education.

This paper aims to investigate values and prospects of extended education. Considering its implementation with a variety of names and patterns across the countries, the current paper focuses on what has been presented and discussed at the meetings of the Network on Extracurricular and Out-of-School Time Educational Research (NEO ER), which is a worldwide research network with researchers and experts in

the area of extended education. Particularly, a critical review will be made of what was presented at the 3rd meeting of NEO ER held in Seoul, the theme of which was *values and prospects of extended education*. Before doing so, NEO ER and its activities are reviewed taking into account the research trend. Finally, the paper suggests implications for future research.

## 2 NEO ER and Its Activities

NEO ER, an international research network in the area of extended education, was formed in 2010 along with its 1<sup>st</sup> meeting at the Giessen University, Germany. A catalyst for the advent of NEO ER was *the International Seminar on Supporting After-School Programs* held in Busan, South Korea, in 2007 where many international scholars and experts shared experiences and knowledge on extended education. The theme of the 2010 Giessen meeting funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research was '*Extended Education: An International Perspective*.' Participants from eight countries – Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, and the US – presented the current situations, practices, and outcomes of extended education in their home countries. A product of the meeting was the book *Extended Education: an International Perspective, Proceedings of the International Conference on Extracurricular and Out of School Time Education Research* published in 2013 (Ecarius et al. 2013). Another contribution was the launch of *the International Journal for Research on Extended Education* (IJREE), which may be the unique international journal in this area – the 1<sup>st</sup> volume was published in 2013. During this movement, debates were made on how to uniformly and scholarly name a variety of extended education – e.g., all day schools in Germany, afterschool programs in Korea, out-of-school time activities in the US, etc. While considering the scope, contents, and institutional features of these activities, the conference participants agreed to employ the terminology *extended education*. However, further discussion may be necessary on what extended education means and covers.

In 2013, the 2<sup>nd</sup> NEO ER meeting – funded by the University of Giessen – was held again in Giessen. The topic of this conference was *Extended Education and Social Inequality*. Many participants (Bae 2013; Huang 2013) suggested evidence indicating that extended education contributes to improving equality of education particularly by offering additional educational opportunities to disadvantaged children and youth. Other experts (Stecher/Preis 2013), however, pointed out that there may exist the possibility for extended education to function as a vehicle for educational inequality and social reproduction because low income students cannot afford the expensive programs.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> NEO ER conference was hosted by Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, in 2014 with the support of the Korean National Research Foundation and the Korean After School Study Society. With the theme of *Values and Prospects of Extended Education*, presentations were given about the cases of eight countries – Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, Switzerland, Germany, England, Japan, and the US.

### The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting at Giessen and the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting at Sungkyunkwan



Source: Photos taken by Benjamin Mäßer, Anna Klerfelt

## 3 Values of Extended Education

### *Characteristics of Extended Education as a New Educational Phenomenon*

Throughout all the sessions of the Seoul conference, the in-depth discussions were mainly about the concept and key characteristics of extended education. Many participants showed a keen interest in what institutional features it has and what kind of functions it plays. Particularly, greater attention was paid to whether extended education differs from other kinds of educational practices and thus it can be an area of research to be studied.

With regard to this issue, Bae and Byun (2014), introducing the case of Korea, made it clear that extended education is distinguishable from public schooling and shadow education in many aspects. According to them, extended education, known as afterschool programs in Korea, has been emerging as the third educational institution that forms the nation's education system with the other two institutions – public schooling supported by the state and shadow education run by private, for profit institutions. Specifically, they mentioned that it offers a wide range of educational activities based on students' needs and is free from the national curriculum that the regular curriculum of all public schools has to follow. It was said that it is mostly taught by market-proven instructors at public places such as school buildings and community centers and thus it may offer quality but relatively inexpensive programs, which low income and rural students can afford. In addition, it was argued that extended education differs from shadow education of which the goal is to create profits by providing programs, mostly for the preparation for tests, which aim to respond to clients' needs in their own building and facilities. Like shadow education being institutionalized worldwide (Baker/Mori 2000), extended education also seems to be on the process of institutionalization in the Korean society.

To explain extended education in Sweden, Klerfelt (2014) presented the Swedish school-age educare center which about 83% of all children aged 6–13 years old attend. According to Klerfelt, its mission is “to create coherence in children's everyday

lives (p. 20)” and educational activities at the centers include not only ‘education’ but also ‘care and play’. She particularly emphasized the process of meaning making as a part of children’s activities at the centers and pointed out that this kind of unique activities which may not be subjects-based learning activities at schools needs to be preserved.

Extended education is also widespread and continues to be increased in Germany. According to Stecher (2014), while providing a wide array of programs and activities to students, extended education, particularly all day schools, became an integral part of the general education system in Germany. In his presentation, he defined extended education as follows.

Activities and programs which are pedagogically intentionally designed and organized to facilitate learning and educational processes of children and adolescents not completely covered by school curriculum based learning and which aim at fostering academic achievement, success at school, or in general to accumulate cultural capital in the broader sense (Stecher 2014, p. 72)

Stecher and his colleagues also pointed out that extended education differs from the regular classroom teaching and learning in that:

- in some countries they are not taught by teachers (in the stricter sense),
- there is in general no performance assessment with grades,
- they are often organized in mixed-aged groups,
- they are usually subject to a low level of curricular requirement, and
- they often offer children and youths more freedom of choice than school (Ecarius et al. 2013, p. 8).

### *Social and Educational Outcomes of Extended Education*

Undoubtedly, the greatest number of empirical studies has been conducted by US scholars and institutions to examine educational outcomes of participation in extended education, which is generally called afterschool programs in the US (e.g., Afterschool Alliance 2008). Huang and Tanaka’s work (2014) presented at the 2014 meeting is an example. Conducting the cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses of large data sets on afterschool programs in California, they found positive outcomes of afterschool participation on student outcomes below. In order to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of after school programs they suggested a theoretical model.<sup>1</sup> The model consists of three factors – structure, process, and outcomes of the programs. The outcomes are divided into academic and youth development parts – academic outcomes are measured by variables of test scores and school attendance, while youth development outcomes are measured by variables of aspirations, fitness, behavior, positive social norms, and expectation of students.

Regarding the case of Switzerland, Schüpbach (2014) also found the positive effects of extended education participation on math and language achievements as well as socio-emotional developments in students. She added that intensive attend-

<sup>1</sup> The Harvard Family Research Project (2008) also provided the outcomes of after school participation with four categories – academic achievement, social and emotional development, prevention, and positive health and wellness outcomes. In the German context, Fischer and Klieme (2013) suggested an evaluation model for extracurricular activities in the school.

ance and/or attendance in high quality programs led to a positive impact on the growth in math performance and socio-economic development of participants. Interestingly enough, however, no compensatory effects were found on math and language achievement for low income students.

Unlike the comprehensive studies of Huang and Tanaka (2014), Cheng's (2014) study was to examine the impact of participation in extended education programs on math performance of disadvantaged students. The extended education math programs that he examined were specially designed, employing remedial math learning materials, math tutoring programs, etc. Comparing the results of pre-test and post-test, he found the positive impact of afterschool participation on learning outcomes of disadvantaged students. Considering Schüpbach's work which showed contradictory results above, international comparative studies may be necessary.

Finally, the extended schools in England presented by Dyson and Kerr (2014) drew a lot of interest among participants. Employing the perspectives and national policies of the UK government, they explained two trends in extended education in England. The first is well described by "extension of the role of schools as means of tackling social and educational inequalities (p. 88)," while the second indicates that "all schools should offer access to extended provision as part of a fully integrated network of local child and family service (p. 89)." Highlighted was the case about one school serving the Waterside area, a typical disadvantaged zone in the North of England. They showed the model of the Waterside children's community theory of change, as a case of schools involved in activities for students, their families, and the communities "beyond their core business of teaching the curriculum (p. 87)".

#### 4 Prospects of Extended Education and Future Research

Extended education keeps increasing while the degree of popularity and pervasiveness varies across countries and across the regions within the countries. As shown in the case of England (Dyson/Kerr 2014), the government's policy and supports will be significant in shaping the roles and scope of extended education in future. In some countries like Korea, extended education is being considered to be on the institutionalization process competing with public schooling and shadow education (Bae/Byun 2014). Similarly, Klerfelt (2014) pointed out that although the collaboration between the school and extended education is important, its unique roles and activities should be kept. In this sense, 'schoolification' of extended education, blurring the line between two different institutions, will be problematic. Finally, given the pervasiveness and uniqueness in terms of its roles and activities, extended education is now becoming an important area of research.

During the Seoul meeting, suggestions were given for future research. First, given the nature of extended education that is implemented with diverse functions, for various student populations, and in a variety of ways, further studies can be conducted to clearly define extended education. It is also necessary to examine its institutional characteristics and the relationship to public schooling. Second, future studies may be conducted to investigate the evolutionary development aspect of extended education. In some countries, there is a clear distinction between extended education



and shadow education, while in other countries, there is not yet. Third, participants suggested the importance of the international comparative research. Future studies may be conducted to find the current situations, the scope and target groups, and educational outcomes of participation in extended education in various societies. Finally, all participants were agreed that NEO ER as an international research network should play an important role in doing so.

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