Editors' Preface

As announced in the last issue of the IJREE, this issue doesn't have a main topic section and does include only free contributions.

The seven contributions of this issue encompass a wide array of topics and new research developments in the field of extended education in different countries, and they comprise research projects based on qualitative data, as well as projects based on quantitative data.

The first article by *Lena Boström*, *Assar Hörnell*, and *Marie Frykland,* which combines quantitative and qualitative data analysis, deals with the question of whether or not staff members at Swedish leisure time centers perceive these centers as effective learning environments. They find, among other things, that the physical environment – in some cases small and outdated equipped rooms – is not sufficiently suitable to the purpose of learning.

Jesica Siham Fernández, *Angela Nguyen*, and *Regina Day Langhout* describe in a Californian case study the use and the outcomes of concept-mapping as a participatory method for empowering elementary school-aged children in an after-school program. One conclusion to be drawn from this research is that concept-mapping can foster children's "critical and structural analyses development".

Lars Holm reports on an ethnographical research on Danish all-day schools. He shows how the implementation of all-day schooling influences the "'actors' every-day-life" and how it "generates new discourses and struggles over values and concepts in education" within a local residential area.

The outcomes of school-based after-school programs on Japanese children's and adolescents' social and emotional development stand in the center of the article by *Fuyuko Kanefuji*. Based on quantitative data, she shows that after-school classes foster, for example, 'empathetic understanding of others' – a prerequisite dimension of social competencies. But this outcome is only to be found for the children participating frequently in the after-school classes.

Joshua F. Lawrence, *Briana M. Hinga*, *Joseph L. Mahoney*, and *Deborah Lowe Vandell* as well deal with the outcomes of after-school activities. They show, on the basis of a longitudinal quantitative dataset from the USA, that children participating in designed summer enrichment classes widen their vocabulary knowledge significantly – if they are enrolled in these activities consistently over the period of three years.

"Contexts of Tinkerability" within an after-school program are described by *Lisa H. Schwartz*, *Daniela DiGiacomo*, and *Kris D. Gutiérrez* as contexts of learning for children and for undergraduate students who are becoming teachers. They show that the 'design discourses' which develop between children and undergraduates during the project change the undergraduates' perspectives on learning processes and the teacher's role within these processes.

In the seventh and last article in this issue *Kym Simoncini*, *Jennifer Cartmel*, and *Amy Young* report on how Australian children think about afterschool care. They show that afterschool care in general is perceived by the children as a place for developing "skills and competencies, make new friends as well as promoting and protecting play."

All in all the articles proof that activities and programs in the field of extended education are effective in order to improve young peoples' opportunities for learning and thriving. Additionally some of the articles show that extended education programs do not only affect young people but teachers and the whole community as well.

As we do in every issue we would like to encourage authors from all countries and all research areas to submit papers to the IJREE. We are looking forward to your papers.

Because of the limited space and the purpose of publishing as much of the papers as possible we forwent the review section this time. For their editorial support to this issue we'd like to thank Joanna Bennett, Marie-Luise Dietz, Lisa Röhrig, and Goya Kaufmann.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of the IJREE.

Sabine Maschke and Ludwig Stecher