

Extended Education: Professionalization and Professionalism of Staff

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Extended education or out-of-school time programs, such as afterschool programs in the United States or South Korea or *Ganztagsschulen* [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 *Ganztagsschulen* 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, Demirkasımoğlu, 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 *Ganztagsschulen* [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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