

Research on Extended Education Around the Globe? A Brief Examination of the First Five Issues of the IJREE

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The emergence of the term 'extended education'

After school programs, out-of-school time programs, leisure time activities, extra-curricular activities, all-day schools – there are many terms used to refer to non-curricular, yet educationally based time spent by children and young people beyond the 'school gates'. Although it is not a new phenomenon to extend pupils education in this way, the extent of government investment into this area has been growing since the turn of the millennium. Examples of such initiatives include the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program in the United States that started in the 1990s (James-Burdumy et al., 2005), the Investitionsprogramm "Zukunft Bildung und Betreuung" (IZBB) that started in Germany in 2003 (Zickgraf & Zickgraf, 2009) and the initiative to foster extended services in England, starting in 2005 (e. g. Cummings, Dyson, & Todd, 2011).

These developments, which occurred globally, were the start of a network that aimed to bring together specialists in this field to share ideas, research and practices. An international conference held in Giessen, Germany in 2010 was the formal starting point for the development of this Network on Extracurricular and Out-of-School Time Educational Research (NEO ER) (Ecarius, Klieme, Stecher, & Woods, 2013; Bae, 2014).

During this inaugural conference it became increasingly clear that the terms "extracurricular" and "out-of-school time" did not cover the full scope and variety of activities under the heading 'non-formal services' within the different countries that initiated the network activities: England, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. A second issue for participants was the lack of an appropriate publication platform for the exchange of ideas and research.

Researchers from 14 different countries have so far been published. In 2013 the IJREE's authors came from Germany, Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. In 2014 in addition three new countries, Taiwan, United Kingdom and Spain, were involved. Five additional countries were included in 2015 – Australia, Denmark, Finland, Japan and Norway. Although the IJREE is still in its early stages of development it already covers a remarkable range of different countries and perspectives. It is becoming a truly 'international' journal. Several parts of Europe, and also selected parts of North America, Asia and Australia are involved. However, there are no researchers publishing in the IJREE from South America and Africa as of yet.

Prospects and future challenges

A challenge for the researchers in the field of extended education is to develop a comprehensive global network. There are researchers concerned with extended education in countries so far not included and the aim is to try to link with these people sharing ideas and research. The IJREE and the NEO ER seem to be appropriate platforms to bring these people together. It will need the continued engagement of IJREE's editors and NEO ER's participants (including the IJREE authors) to reach out and link with relevant researchers, who are not currently affiliated to NEO ER and encourage them to contribute to the journal and the network. In a short space of time the IJREE has started to build a solid reputation as an international journal focused on sharing research and ideas on extended education.

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