Exploring the idea of an Outdoor Primary School
– from the perspective of West European Outdoor Education Professionals

Stina Drexler

Supervisor: Margareta Grahn
Examiner: Marta Koc-Januchta
Abstract

As past research has found benefits of outdoor education and the current global society is facing a decline in access to beneficial natural spaces due to urbanization (Keniger, Gaston, Irvine & Fuller 2013), the aim of this master thesis research project was to explore the idea of an Outdoor Primary School, a way to provide children the access to beneficial natural spaces. In order to explore this idea, Professional Outdoor Educators (n= 61) were interviewed and asked to fill out a survey about the following aspects: outdoor and indoor spaces, learning activities, curriculum and challenges related to an Outdoor Primary School. There was a wide range of results showing that an Outdoor Primary School is a way to incorporate beneficial ways of learning, such as project-based learning, experience-based and practical learning, social learning, play and student-centered learning in formal schooling. Including learning content and activities that can aid children’s development such as food, animals and sustainability is also possible in an Outdoor Primary School as shown below.

Furthermore, an Outdoor Primary School is an institution that can be equipped with beneficial learning environments, such as natural environments, a vast space, spaces for cooking, growing food and keeping animals, quiet zones, play zones and opportunities for creating, building and crafts.

These results go in line with previous research about Outdoor Education and related fields, suggesting that an Outdoor Primary School both holds challenges but also is a possible model to bring together many beneficial ways of learning that are already being practiced today.
Glossary

Natural environment = outdoor places including living elements, both green environments with vegetation, but also other places holding nature and life, e.g. “blue” water environments or animals

OE = Outdoor Education

Children = people aged 0-12 years old, some teenagers between 13-20 years can also be meant in case their developmental status is more like a child than a teenager

Teenager = people aged 13-19 years old, some young adults that are a few years older can also be meant in case their developmental status is more like a teenager than a young adult

Experiential / experience-based / practical / hands-on learning = is an approach that includes an interaction between the human and a real-world setting or object that stimulates the humans senses, followed by a reflection about it, “We do something (experience) then we reflect on it (thinking); ‘experience’ is a necessary precursor to how educators plan for and facilitate the thinking” (Quay & Seaman 2015, 41)

Student-centered / inquiry based / child led learning = learning that is based on students acting and taking decisions for themselves or the group (in case they work in groups), these can be decisions as in choices among different alternatives what to and how to learn or decisions e.g. inside a game that predetermine how the group will continue

Project-based / cross-curricular / thematic learning = a cross-curricular approach to learning, wherein one project e.g. water, different subjects e.g. math, literature and history are included, a project has a start and an end point but can greatly vary in duration, methods used in a project can greatly vary and can be performed by single students, groups or entire classes with either a lot of preparation from teachers or more child led

All citations, either from literature or the data collected are written in italics
# Table of content

1 Introduction
   1.1 My perspective as the author of this thesis 1
   1.2 Aims & Contribution 2

2 Theoretical background
   2.1 What is Outdoor Education? 3
   2.2 The existing concepts of Outdoor Education in formal schooling 4
   2.3 Effects of learning outdoors on children 9
      - 2.3.1 General benefits of experiential learning 9
      - 2.3.2 Academic benefits 10
      - 2.3.3 Psychological benefits 11
      - 2.3.4 Social benefits 13
      - 2.3.5 Student-centered learning 14
      - 2.3.6 Teacher-student relationship 16
      - 2.3.7 Community & Place-student relationship 16
      - 2.3.8 Physiological benefits 17
      - 2.3.9 Environmental benefits 18
      - 2.3.10 Holistic understanding of connections 19
      - 2.3.11 Fostering a new joy of learning 20
      - 2.3.12 Surrounding become the second teacher 21
      - 2.3.13 Gender in Outdoor Education 21
      - 2.3.14 Benefits for troubled children 22

3 Aim & Research Questions 23

4 Methodology
   4.1 Questionnaire 24
   4.2 Interviews 26
   4.3 Data analysis 29

5 Sample
   5.1 Survey Sample 31
   5.2 Interview Sample 32

6 Results and their analysis 36
   6.1 Teachers 38
   6.2 Class construction 39
   6.3 Curriculum 40
   6.4 Enough preparation? 41
   6.5 Parents 41
   6.6 Politics & Community 40
   6.7 Weather 42
   6.8 Learning activities 43
      - 6.8.1 Everything 43
      - 6.8.2 Student-centered learning 44
      - 6.8.3 Experience-based & Practical learning 45
      - 6.8.4 Project learning 46
      - 6.8.5 Use the surroundings in learning 46
      - 6.8.6 Social learning 47
      - 6.8.7 Play 48
- 6.8.8 Quiet zones / moments 48
- 6.8.9 Other special learning activities / methods 49
6.9 Sustainability 50
6.10 Food 51
6.11 Animals 52
6.12. Safety & Health 52
6.13 Materialistic Challenges 53
6.14 The school campus 54
- 6.14.1 Surroundings 54
- 6.14.2 Spaces outdoors 55
- 6.14.3 Equipment outdoors 55
- 6.14.4 Spaces indoors 56
- 6.14.5 Equipment indoors 56
- 6.14.6 How it should be indoors 57
- 6.14.7 Toilet 58
- 6.14.8 Get the outdoors into the indoors 58
- 6.14.9 Less is more 59

7 Discussion 60
7.1 What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective? 60
7.2 What kind of and which learning activities do they regard as especially useful? 61
7.3 How do they see the curriculum for this school? 63
7.4 Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine? 64
7.5 Which other aspects are they thinking about when asked about the Outdoor Primary School? 66
7.6 A critical perspective on an Outdoor Primary School 67
7.7 An outlook into the future 67

8 Conclusion 68

9 Literature 69

10 Appendix 79
10.1 Screenshot of the first email sent to respondents 79
10.2 Questionnaire Screenshots 80
1. Introduction

In this first part of the thesis, I will give information about the background of this thesis and its aim. I will furthermore present what contribution this thesis can make to improve education and the societies wellbeing.

1.1 My perspective as the author of this thesis

I am aware of the fact that scientific texts are not neutral objective products, but rather have a subjective imprint by the author, due to his*her certain background and opinion. An author can only strive for objectivity but will never reach it. This is the reason why I want to shortly show my perspective at the beginning of this master thesis.

Being a person with a great love for the nature and all kinds of outdoor activities, engaged in sustainability topics in every day life, Outdoor Education naturally appeals to me. Being a pedagogue and a primary school teacher, I always wanted to integrate these topics that are so dear to me into my profession. Growing up in Germany, I heard about forest kindergartens again and again and an association of idealistic people starting their own primary school was never new to me, as it happened and still happens a lot in my home country. My idea of founding a primary school myself was born even before I started studying Outdoor Education and as soon as I got into it, I knew that being outdoors was the missing part of the school I had developed in my head over the years. When the master thesis came along, I knew that I wanted to use it to explore this idea more, as I had read some studies about outdoor kindergartens throughout the first course and was convinced that research could help me to understand and develop a possible Outdoor Primary School further and bring it into the minds of people.

As I am not a native speaker of English myself and have never lived in an English-speaking country where language gets an additional cultural and social dimension, conducting an entire study in English was new to me. Especially when interviewing two English native speakers, I was watching out for idioms or other constructions that could be culturally coined which I might not understand, I believe that there were none, but it is possible that I just didn’t realize they were there as I couldn’t understand them. I believe that this is an important factor that must be kept in mind while reading my master thesis.
1.2 Aim & Contribution

According to Bronfenbrenners (1979) ecological theory, the school is one of the main factors of child development, just along with the relatives and the neighborhood. The school itself does therefore represent an immense potential for governments and the civilian society to influence child development in a positive way and educate confident, socially skilled, creative and resilient citizens that embrace a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. In order to obtain these development goals, the school itself has to be structured in such a way that it supports this development in any possible way. If an Outdoor Primary School can do this job better than the already existing indoor primary schools is a question yet to be answered.

Research has though shown that being in natural outdoor environments is beneficial for humans (references: see following chapter), but at the same time, an increasing urbanization has brought people away from the outdoors (Keniger, Gaston, Irvine & Fuller 2013) and an earlier onset of compulsory schooling compared to earlier years¹ has brought children more and more into institution buildings. In order to bring children back into these beneficial environments, schools and kindergartens can do their part.

In order to develop a theoretical concept for an Outdoor Primary School later on, I have conducted an explorative study about this possible school. I did this by conducting interviews with Outdoor Education Professionals and by letting them fill out a survey. The results of survey and interviews can be a guideline for a theoretical concept and design of an Outdoor Primary School and are being summarized in this study.²

This study explicitly aims to explore the possibilities, challenges and possible outdoor and indoor designs of an Outdoor Primary School, by asking the following five research questions:
- **What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective?**
- **What kind of and which learning activities do they regard as especially useful?**
- **How do they see the curriculum for this school?**
- **Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine?**
- **Which other aspects are they thinking about when asked about the Outdoor Primary School?**

---

¹ In Sweden for example, the “preschool class” became obligatory in 2018: https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/forskoleklassen
² Primary school is in this study being defined as grades 1-6 (ages 6-12), although this deviates from the system in most countries. The decision to define it this way came along by seeing that primary school takes only 4 years in some countries, but 9 in others – 6 years seems like a good middle value and also goes well with childrens’ biological development regarding the fact that there is a turning point from childhood to the teenage years around the age of 12.
The results from the collected data could on one hand contribute to the research describing currently employed outdoor concepts for primary school students (e.g. udeskole in Denmark) by making it possible to compare their concepts to my outcomes. As an Outdoor Primary School is a rather new idea and has neither been explored in research nor much in practice, this research work can on the other hand help the discourse about education in adding a new perspective. It can also inspire people to put the theoretical outcomes into practice and start an Outdoor Primary School in order to bring children back into the beneficial natural environment. By doing that, children of the future can not only enjoy more experiential and multi-sensory learning (see chapter 2.3.1) and therefore build stronger memories (see chapter 2.3.1) and profit from more occasions for gaining independence (see chapter 2.3.3), but also a ground for developing social skills (see chapter 2.3.4). Furthermore, they will benefit physiologically (see chapter 2.3.8) and their risk for sickness will decrease (see chapter 2.3.8). This could be very profitable for welfare countries governments as well, as their spending on medical treatment could decrease due to better child health. Furthermore, more knowledge about and practical examples of Outdoor Education could inspire the development of prevention programs, using the outdoors in connection with the socio-ecological model of health and wellbeing (see Carpenter & Harper 2015).

In all these ways, I suggest that an Outdoor Primary School could contribute to making the population healthier both physiologically and mentally, as well as building its social skills and therefore a nation more peaceful and less troubled financially due to medical costs. It can also support environmental stewardship among students and their social surroundings (see Lawson, Stevenson, Peterson, Carrier, Strnad & Seekamp 2019 for how children can contribute to their parents environmental concern) and thereby support both environmental citizen groups in their demands for e.g. more nature protection laws or financial subsidies for sustainable alternatives and the government in teaching the general population to engage in a more sustainable consumption behavior.

2 Theoretical background

In this part of the thesis, I will define Outdoor Education, show its connection to formal schooling in Europe, its challenges and its benefits for children’s development³ and the global society.

---
³ For a quick overview, see Dillon, Rickinson, Teamey, Morris, Choi, Sanders & Benefield (2006)
2.1 What is Outdoor Education?

Outdoor Education in itself is a relatively new field, especially when looking at its connection to formal education which I will focus on but is historically closely related to non-formal education e.g. environmental education, adventure education, the scouting movement and even the friluftsliv phenomenon (as defined in Gurholt 2015). A lot of effort is needed in order to define Outdoor Education and differentiate it from its related fields, as it can even include their characteristics, also when it is applied to formal schooling. One example that shows how hard the differentiation is, is environmental education. As environmental education is also often done outdoors and is a part of some national curricula, it can easily be seen as Outdoor Education and one would not be wrong with this classification.

One outstanding characteristic of Outdoor Education though is that it can easily be connected to any formal schooling and any national curricula, this is only partly true for the other related fields, as their content is rather limited on certain topics by definition. Outdoor Education does though only mean the method and place of learning but doesn’t provide a certain curriculum or content per definition, it is open for any subject and can be done with any content. A lesson on gravity in a middle school physics classroom or an English lesson in primary school, they can easily be turned into an Outdoor Education experience by conducting the lesson on e.g. the school ground. So does that mean that we could just remove the walls and the roof of the classroom and continue what we did indoors on the blackboard? Certainly not!

The most important part of Outdoor Education besides the location is that it is based on experiential learning (as defined by Quay & Seaman 2015 and Beard 2015). Experiential learning can be distinguished from other “education” in that it always includes a direct encounter with the object of learning, might it be that the student turns into the object of learning in a historical role play or that the student gets to touch, see and smell the object of learning. After these moments of ‘being’ and ‘doing’ when the student interacts with the real world via his*her senses, a reflection is always included in the learning process (see Quay & Seaman 2015), where students could e.g. write a short text in which they connect their feelings during the role play to another one they had one week earlier about a related object of learning.4

Experiential learning is a part of all the above mentioned related fields as well and that is what makes it so hard to separate them. When we look at the history of Outdoor Education and its’ related fields, it becomes easily visible that it is exactly this common basis in experiential learning that connects them: the start of these approaches can be dated back to Dewey’s works and the early years of the

---

4 See chapter 2.3.1 for more details about experiential learning
The question whether Outdoor Education is a stand-alone discipline is not easy to answer. Dyment & Potter (2015) and Potter & Dyment (2016) made an attempt and concluded that Outdoor Education has the potential to be a discipline but is in many ways not recognized and valued in society.

In order to summarize the reply to what Outdoor Education is, I want to highlight its key characteristics:

- experiential learning
- outdoor environments
- applicable to any content and to non-formal as well as formal education

In order to give a round picture of Outdoor Education, I want to finish with the definition written by the National Centre for Outdoor Education at Linköping University which my Master program was based on:

“Outdoor Education is an approach that aims to provide learning in interplay between experience and reflection based on concrete experience in authentic situations.

Outdoor learning is also an interdisciplinary research and education field, which involves, among other things:

- the learning space being moved out into life in society, the natural and cultural environment,
- the interplay between sensory experience and book-learning being emphasised,
- the importance of place being underlined.” (NCU 2004)

2.2 The existing concepts of Outdoor Education in formal schooling

In the recent past, Outdoor Education has been connected to formal schooling, outdoor preschools or forest kindergartens have already existed for a few years, especially popular in Scandinavian countries and German-speaking countries (Bentsen, Mygind, Randrup 2009a, Kiener 2004, O’Brien 2009, William-Siegfredsen 2011) but also plenty in the UK or Czech Republic (see Michek, Novakova & Menclova 2015 for an overview) for example. Even some primary schools are influenced by this idea, providing an outdoor day per week (udeskole in Denmark: Bentsen, Jensen, Mygind & Randrup 2010, Bentsen & Jensen 2012). Outdoor School Days and Outdoor Preschools are also being practiced outside of Europe (see e.g., Knight 2013 for an international overview, MacEachren 2013 for Canada,
Zink & Boyes 2006 for New Zealand), but as the focus of this study is on the western European context, I focus on presenting its practice and benefits in countries in this cultural space.

An Outdoor Primary School, where learning primarily happens outdoors has though not become a known concept in Europe so far, even though small initiatives in Rome and Zürich have just started one. There is also a school in the US that provides education primarily outdoors and schools in Taiwan and Indonesia that conduct “only” a major part of the lessons outdoors. No research has been conducted in these institutions so far. These are just a few examples and there are certainly more institutions and individuals in the world that are trying to bring in more Outdoor Education into formal schooling. I will though focus on the outdoor preschools and the outdoor school day in this chapter, as these two have been a part of research and are a more widely known concept.

Outdoor preschools (or forest kindergarten, forest school, Waldkindergarten in German, skovbørnehave in Danish) with their origin in the 1950s in Denmark are nowadays a widely spread education model in Europe and have been included in research in the last years (Michek et al. 2015). By spending the entire day outdoors, they give room for outdoor play to children up to six years of age. The usual practice of outdoor preschools is that they only go indoors in case of extreme weather conditions (e.g. thunderstorms, heavy storms), so that they also experience rain and snow as a normality during their outdoor play. Many of these preschools don’t even have a concrete building but use a simple wooden house or caravan as shelter. These practices can differ to a certain degree though. A common practice in outdoor preschools is that “learning is play-based and, as far as possible, child-initiated and child-led” Knight (2009, 17).

Like Fjortoft (2001) and Gill (2014) describe, play in natural outdoor environments supports children’s motor skill development more than play in indoor or paved outdoor areas. Studies found that children playing in natural outdoor environments score higher results in many skill tests: Grahn, Martenssons, Lindblad, Nilsson & Ekman (1997) compared children and found better results in motor skills (see also Lettieri 2004 for gross motor skills), concentration and sick leave days, as well as more diverse and creative play (see also Moore & Wong 1997) and less conflicts for the children playing in a natural environment. Kiener (2004a) found better creativity results for forest kindergarten students than for conventional ones. Gorges (2000) and Häfner (2003) researched how well ex-forest kindergarten students are doing in primary school compared to those previously attending a regular kindergarten. Both researchers found better social skills (see also Gill 2011), creativity and

---

6 https://www.trackerspdx.com/forest-school
8 https://www.greenschool.org/
concentration skills for the ex-outdoor preschool students, Häfner (2003) additionally found better motivation and cognitive endurance. Better self-control and self-confidence was found by Gill (2011).

Outdoor school (or forest school, udeskole in Danish, uteskole in Norwegian) is a far less widespread phenomenon where primary school children (and sometimes also secondary school students) regularly spend a day outdoors (weekly or bi-weekly) during lesson time, it “comprises a range of activities, and there is often a focus on practical and direct experiences while specific subjects and themes within the written curriculum are being covered” (Bentsen, Schipperijn & Jensen 2013, 561). This has mostly been described and studied in Denmark (see Bentsen et al. 2010 for an overview of its extent and dissemination), Norway and the UK and positive outcomes were found: Mygind (2007) and Gronningsaeter, Hallas, Kristiansen & Naevdal (2007) found more physical activity of Danish primary school children during outdoor days than during indoor days. O’Brien (2009) found an improvement in motor skills for British children. Mygind (2009) and O’Brien (2009) found out that the regular outdoor day supports social relations among children. Herholdt (2005) found more inquiring and explorative language use during outdoor days. O’Brien (2009) discovered a positive effect on the development of language and communication skills. Jacobsen (2005) found that the outdoor days provide more opportunities for student-centered learning and becoming absorbed in learning (see also O’Brien 2009 for concentration). Sahrakhiz (2017) examined teachers’ speech during outdoor and indoor teaching in a German primary school for immediacy and distance and found out that there are significantly more markers of immediacy in outdoor teaching. O’Brien (2009) showed that outdoor school day practitioners in the UK gained new perspectives on the children they taught because of the different environment they were in. In her thesis work, Berglund (2016) asked Swedish secondary school students about their experiences with outdoor school days and got positive feedback from the students.

In order to get the full picture of the outdoor school days, it is also important to look at the barriers that teachers practicing outdoor school days see. Bentsen et al. (2010) asked teachers about these. Their results (see graph 1 below) were that financial barriers were seen as the biggest ones, followed by “lack of acquaintance with udeskole” and “non-flexible timetables” while the lack of interest from parents and pupils, safety, rule and weather were the ones that teachers perceived as the most minor barriers among the 19 measured ones.
So far, we can see that the existing models of Outdoor Education, either primarily outdoors or regularly outdoors, are a good alternative to the conventional indoor learning practices and support child development in many areas. But why is there a need for an Outdoor Primary School? Is a regular outdoor day not enough? As Fiennes, Oliver, Dickson, Escobar, Romans, Oliver (2015) show in their report, long-lasting programs are more effective than short interventions:

“ Longer programmes tend to be more effective than shorter ones. This fits with practice-based knowledge that length can allow for a more intensive and integrated experience and is obviously important given the pressure to cut length in order to reduce costs.” (Fiennes et al. 2015, 17)

Hattie, Marsh, Neill & Richards (1997) showed how positive effects from an adventure and bushcraft intervention disappeared over time by comparing follow-up data to immediate post-intervention measurements. An Outdoor Primary School with continuous outdoor lessons could therefore be a solution to this problem.
2.3 Effects of learning outdoors on children

Research has not only looked at children in outdoor preschools and outdoor school days, but also shown that being outdoors is profitable mentally, socially and physically for all humans (I will primarily focus on children here though) from all over the world and that experiential learning which goes hand in hand with outdoor lessons is a very efficient way of learning.

As mentioned above, experiential learning is being defined as a way of learning that includes a direct encounter with the learning objective in which the student uses his*her senses to interact with the real world and later on reflects about this encounter.

2.3.1 General benefits of experiential learning

Why do children remember something better that they have explored with more senses and their body than something they only heard about?

“According to Jordet (2010), the embodied and multisensory experience of the outdoor environment stimulates the interaction between distributed brain areas and consequently robust long-term episodic memories are produced.” (Fägerstam 2014, 2)

Amin, Jeppsson & Haglund (2015) state that even mind-related cognitive processes are actually based on knowledge structures that result from physical experiences with the body and that so called mental imagery is being generated by the same mechanisms in the brain as the ones for perception and action.

During experiential learning, the body and the senses play a tremendously important role, as they provide for the establishment of a connection between the inner world of a person and the outer world. Using the body and the senses for learning, that’s an advantage in terms of memory, as just shown.

As already mentioned, multi-sensory or experiential learning is a part of Outdoor Education and that implies that Outdoor Education does benefit the creation of memories as well. But how do we really know how an experience can stick to a human memory?

“What seems to take their place in memory are pieces of a whole that have connections to an episode or to other related bits and forms, semantic and syntactic, linguistic, imagery, and emotions.” (Nelson 2013, 99)
According to Nelson (2013), we rather remember pieces of a whole. This means that the more approaches we offer the child towards the object of learning, the more and better it will remember. That is explicitly done by multi-sensory experiential learning.

Another reason is that according to Nelson’s (2013) Social Theory of Memory Development (SToMD), the child can remember experienced situations in social contexts before it is able to remember anything else. Experiencing seems to be the most basic and first thing we humans do, it seems to be the one most rooted in ourselves. Opposite to that, language and the way of thinking it requires and causes in our brains, is something that humans have to learn once they grow up, it always will be a more novel skill than the one relying on experience. This gives us an idea about why experiential learning might be a more suitable way of learning than the traditional language-based indoor classroom learning.

2.3.2 Academic benefits
Due to the benefits of experiential learning discussed above, we can assume that academic performance gets better in line with memory. A few researchers have looked at students’ academic performance and found positive outcomes for children and youth immersed in Outdoor Education (Keniger, Gaston, Irvine & Fuller 2013). In Davies, Jindal-Snape, Collier, Digby, Hay & Howes (2013) review, increased creativity was found for students who were taken outside during lesson time. Fiennes et al. (2015) review and Ting & Siew (2014) among others found improved processing skills in natural science, Ting & Siew (2014) also found increased scientific curiosity. In his review, Gill (2014, 18) found that students who participated in school gardening activities had a better scientific learning and healthier eating habits that students who didn’t. He furthermore found out that environmental knowledge increases from more experience in and with green environments.

Improvements in academic performance of reading, math, science, social studies and writing were documented in the study of the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation (2000) and improved performance in standardized test-scores, grade-point average, willingness to stay on task, adaptability of different learning styles and problem-solving ability were documented by Leiberman & Hoody (1998). In a review by Kuo, Barnes & Jordan (2019), it is being shown how nature encounters in general promote learning and how different factors lead to this result. It has also been reported that impulse control and self-discipline (see also Taylor, Kuo & Sullivan 2002 for self-discipline), two important impact factors for children’s academic performance, increased when being in natural environments (see the review by Kuo et al. 2019).
2.3.3 Psychological benefits

Being outdoors also profits children psychologically. A child at around the age of 4-6 starts having an autobiographical memory system (AMS from now on), which Nelson (2013) points out as shaping the self-concept of the child for a long time, based on the experiences made. This means that the experiences the child can make in formal schooling through experiential learning can shape the child’s self-concept. That’s where an immense resource lies for taking care of the psychological health of children through education, something that thus far has not been integrated into national curriculums to a satisfying extent. But why should Outdoor Education give better results in this aspect? First of all, Outdoor Education is based on experiential learning. And it’s exactly the experience with something in a real-life context that influences the child’s self-concept, not reading about this something in a textbook that comes into their lives free of context. Bentsen & Jensen (2012, 206) interpreted outdoor schooling according to Jordets (2008) definition as

“[…] a reaction to ‘context-free’ schooling, education and learning. He wanted theoretical, practical and aesthetic approaches ‘to walk hand in hand’, ultimately contributing to a better school, strengthening pupils’ learning outcomes and improving their health and well-being.”

When children are outdoors and meet objects and people in reality, they do easily happen to do things that they were afraid of before and take risks (e.g. when balancing on a fallen tree or talking to a teenager) which they would not do if they would stay in their classroom. It can therefore be concluded that Outdoor Education challenges students to decrease their fears, to take risks and “to generate new understandings of what is possible.”, while it also “increases the likelihood that individuals will have the opportunity to work through and overcome difficult situations.” (Carpenter & Harper 2015, 63\textsuperscript{10}). While talking about Mezirows concept of transformative learning that he calls the “far-reaching type of learning”, Illeris (2007, 89) states that challenges and experiences are beneficial for personality development, as they have the power to change “[…] the organization of the learner’s self.” (Illeris 2007, 89). He states that these memories of challenging experiences and difficult situations can affect the personality development, because they are based upon the experience “of a crisis-like situation caused by challenges experienced as urgent and unavoidable.” (Illeris 2007, 89).

This educational approach of using challenges and risks for childrens personality development can also lead to preventing parents from becoming overprotective and risk-avoiding, which according to Knight (2015) & Higgins (2010) is an increasing trend in nowadays society. Raising children with less fear and more experience in dealing with risks has the potential to decrease the growing statistical amount of adults that suffer from fear disorders in the future.

\textsuperscript{10} for evidence regarding college students see Shellman & Hill 2007
But being outdoors has even another potential for young people: Wells & Evans (2003) found that contact with nature moderated the impact of stressful life events on children’s global self-worth and psychological distress. Talking about stress, it has also been proven that being in natural environments and also by just seeing them, both self-reported and measured stress levels decrease in humans (see the review by Kuo et al. 2019). Hartig, Jamner, Davis & Garling (2003) reported similar findings for young adults: blood pressure, anger and attention improved when being in natural settings, while they got worse when being in built urban settings. Roe & Aspinall (2011) measured the change in behavior (defined by mood (measuring energy, stress, anger and hedonic tone) and reflection on personal goals using personal project techniques) in 18 teenagers (average age 11) after being engaged in either a normal school or forest school. Greater positive change was found for days that the teenagers attended forest school.

Physical activity which is an integral part of Outdoor Education as well (see chapter 2.3. Physiological benefits) has a similar beneficial effect on the mental health of children, specifically on self-esteem (Ekeland, Heian, Hagen, Abbott & Nordheim 2004, Fiennes et al. 2015, O’Brien 2009), depression and anxiety (Larun, Nordheim, Ekeland, Hagen & Heian 2006). Depression was also found to reduce in adults after taking a walk in a green area (Mind 2007).

When looking at health and wellbeing from the perspective of the socio-ecological model of health and wellbeing, as described by Carpenter & Harper (2015, 60), we can see that Outdoor Education with its focus on “personal development, social engagement and community responsibilities.” supports all the shades of overall health of such a holistic model like the socio-ecological one is. When talking about resilience, the socio-ecological model even states “[...]that emotional and aesthetic experiences in nature are valuable aids for students to develop a sense of belonging or connectedness to nature.” (Fägerstam 2012, 12).

We can therefore conclude that Outdoor Education does not only contribute to psychological health in the classic sense, but also to more complex understandings of health, wellbeing and psychological disease prevention.

Another explanation why being in the outdoors can make people happier is the biophilia hypothesis (Wilson 1986), that states that all people as living beings are born with a love for other living beings, such as plants and animals and the natural living world. This theory has ever since its upcoming been used widely in research and approaches such as ecotherapy including animal-assisted therapy and horticulture therapy are in close connection to it. Sackett (2010, 136f) defines ecotherapy as:
• “the implementation of interventions aimed at improving psychological functioning through the use of green spaces”
• “allows counselors to practice outside of the box, moving away from the square room, 50-minute session and artificial lighting”
• “systemic and promotes the interconnectedness of all things”
• “Essential to ecotherapy is the belief that healing takes place in the context of relationships, including relations between human and nature.”

As ecotherapy wants to bring the benefits of the outdoors and the connection to nature to people suffering from psychological problems (see the review by Chalquist 2009 for its evidence), an outdoor school and a nature-inspired way of learning can bring the benefits to children and therefore work as a prevention method.

2.3.4 Social benefits

The just described mental state of children is intertwined with children’s social relations, as they are highly dependent at young age on relatives, care-takers, educators and peers. Therefore they need social skills to become more and more independent. Being and learning experientially outdoors does provide more opportunities for social encounters than indoor learning and therefore strengthens the child’s social skills (Hartmeyer & Mygind 2016).

One side of it is that when going outdoors and visiting places, students can meet new people in the new places, becoming more used to unfamiliar people. By connecting to unfamiliar people in the outdoors, their classmates and teachers daily, students have a higher chance to develop a sense of social community and therefore focus more on cooperation rather than competition. There are also more opportunities for students to interact with and work together with their classmates, as Outdoor Education uses a lot of group work (see Fägerstam & Blom 2013, 67), pair work and cooperative methods (see Jordets 2010, 34-35 model, as translated in Fägerstam 2014, 3). That students can actually improve their social skills through Outdoor Education has been researched about by many (see Gill 2011, Dismore and Baily 2005, Mygind 2005, Mygind 2009, O’Brien 2009, an overview is given in Keniger et al. 2013, 918). As Fägerstam & Grotherus (2018, 389) state that “Proper skills for cooperative learning are important for successful group work and are not possessed by everyone.”, it can be assumed that Outdoor Education can contribute to this important skill development.

As it takes place outdoors, it does furthermore provide more space for activities, giving room for each person to have their own space while the lack of space in indoor classrooms can easily lead to
conflicts among students. Cooperative behavior has been proven to be higher among school children when in natural environments (review by Kuo, Barnes & Jordan 2019).

Experiences in nature can also reduce anti-social behavior in children and school absenteeism, two important factors for the social learning environment in school classes (Coffey 2001, Moore & Cosco 2000).

### 2.3.5 Student-centered learning

Outdoor Education and experiential learning demand the student to act by him*her*self. It is very possible to just not listen during a traditional indoor lesson or pretend to write while actually drawing fun parks and spaceships in one's exercise book. Being distracted is not as easy outdoors or during experiential learning when the students are asked to take action.

This action-based approach which Outdoor Education offers makes each student's work more visible and puts the student in the position of the responsible person. If one student doesn't participate in a cooperative activity, it is easily visible, as it might lead to the whole project not working out. This provides the children with a real-life response and gives them immediate inherent feedback whether they were working on the task or not and whether they are contributing to the success of their social environment. In indoor classrooms, this feedback is usually exclusively given by the teacher and often hours, days or weeks later, if the teacher puts the effort to check out every student's work at all. There is a big difference between these two approaches regarding the “students feeling seen” consequences.

During experiential learning, the focus from the teacher and the book's instructions shifts toward the students and motivates them to keep working, as the need for it becomes obvious through the task and social interaction (see Fägerstam & Grotherus 2018, 389). Another contributive factor, the teacher-student relationship, is being described in the next section.

This way of student-centered learning can not only contribute to the students staying on task, but also to the general social atmosphere in the class, as Hartmeyer & Mygind (2016) describe, they found that pupil-centered tasks result in more cooperation and engagement in the class. Fägerstam & Grotherus (2018, 387) have similar findings: “The students mainly reflected on emotional support as a result from student-centred learning and not so much on emotional support from their teacher.”

In 2018, Barfod & Daugbjerg found that 52% of all observed learning incidents in Danish udeskole were so called inquiry-based learning activities, another name for child-led learning, they define inquiry-based learning as such:
“[…] inquiry encompassed a variety of practices in a constructivist pedagogical tradition, accentuating pupil activity and engagement. Besides this, the epistemological starting point concerned the democratic and critical part of inquiry, as the ability to solve unknown problems by thinking and reacting autonomously was emphasized. A key feature of inquiry was to develop a problem-based culture, allowing various ways to solve problems […] Other researchers within inquiry-based learning also underlined how pupils had to be offered necessary and meaningful choices during the process […]” (Barfod & Daugbjerg 2018, 2)

While inquiry-based learning can also be used for students working on their tasks alone, the above described cooperative activities are rather thought to be completed in groups. Both approaches can though be called student-centered or child-led, as the students activity determines the outcome of the learning incident and as there is freedom given to the student how to act and think. Furthermore it can be called student-centered as the focus is not on the teacher, which is usually not the case during traditional lecturing style indoor classroom learning.

Student-centered learning often involves playful activities. According to Elliott & Emmett (1997), natural outdoor areas provide flexible and manipulatable materials which makes them so suitable for children’s play, Fjortoft (2001) highlighted the high functionality and affordance of natural outdoor areas. In Gills (2014, 19) literature review about the benefits of children’s engagement with nature, he found many playful activities in Outdoor Education and came to the result that the “more playful” the engagement style was, the more benefits were found for different aspects, such as “Physical activity”, “Scientific Knowledge” and many more (see Table 1).

**Table 6. Studies, benefits and engagement styles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>“More playful” engagement style</th>
<th>“Less playful” engagement style</th>
<th>Both, or unclear engagement style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for the environment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental and emotional health</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected to nature</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific knowledge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of place</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 from Gill (2014, 19) showing that a more playful engagement style results in more benefits for children
In Hartmeyer & Mygind (2016)’s study on outdoor school days (udeskole), they found that play led to an improvement of social relations inside the class. Even though play itself is a topic consistently looked at in research on Outdoor Education, it has traditionally been underestimated in education research. Dowdell, Gray & Malone (2011) state that the acceptance of the importance of play has increased due to new theories but that its value is still misunderstood.

2.3.6 Teacher-student relationship

In the outdoors, the teacher and the student have different opportunities to meet and cooperate compared to the indoors. As there is a place in the classroom that is exclusively designated to the teacher, traditionally in the front of the classroom, possibilities for meeting and cooperating are already limited by the classrooms design. For indoor teachers, it is often difficult to keep an eye on all students, as some sit far away from the teachers’ desk. Opportunities for using cooperative methods in classrooms are often restricted as well, as space is not sufficient. When working with experiential learning and Outdoor Education, there are neither walls that limit the possibilities, nor are there designated seats. Teachers can participate in the activities on the same level as the children and move freely around and meet individual children while they perform their tasks. If an issue comes up, the teachers do even have the chance to talk to a student privately standing at a distance from the other students not disturbing them during their work and neither having to leave the room.

These opportunities allow for a different teacher-student relationship compared to the one that is possible in the indoors. Research has even shown that teacher-student-relationships improved when lessons were held outdoors (see Fägerstam 2012, Jordet 2007, Bentsen et al. 2009a). Sahrakhiz (2017) examined teachers’ speech during outdoor and indoor teaching in a German primary school for immediacy and distance and found out that there are significantly more markers of immediacy in outdoor teaching.

2.3.7 Community & Place-student relationship

As already mentioned in chapter 2.3.3, students of Outdoor Education have more chances to meet unfamiliar people in new places than the ones learning in traditional indoor classrooms.

Establishing connections with the surrounding community and learning from it is also being called place-based education (see Fägerstam 2012, Gruenewald 2003). Through going out and meeting (non-)professionals in their own communities, students have an increased chance to learn first-hand about things (e.g. learning about bread from a baker) and see the environments these things are usually in (e.g. bread in a bakery). This doesn’t only contribute to the students understanding of their
own community but also to their social connections inside the community (e.g. when meeting the baker on the vegetable market later on).

Place-based learning can also lead to the students inhabiting a place. I define it as not only frequenting a place regularly, but also understanding its natural and cultural history, context, connections, possibilities and connecting to this place emotionally. Inhabiting a place empowers people to become active members of society that can shape and protect their places according to their ideals.

Creating these meaningful connections between people and the places they inhabit is a goal of Outdoor Education as well. Through these connections and an understanding of places, students can form their local identity and later on a regional identity, a continental one and finally a global identity. But in order to reach these goals, it is important to realize that “If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, then let us allow them to love the earth before we ask them to save it.” (Sobel 1996, 39) as cited in Gruenewald (2003, 8). And this is exactly what Outdoor Education wants to bring back: time for establishing the connection to places, to the earth.

If we don’t do so, Knight (2015, 247) warns that “[...] if children do not develop a love for and a respect for nature at a young age they will fuel the environmental crises in the future.”.

2.3.8 Physiological benefits

As the name suggests, Outdoor Education can add the benefits of being outdoors to a persons’ health and wellbeing (Bell, Hamilton, Montarzino, Rothnie, Travlou & Alves 2008, for primary school see Mygind 2007). But it’s not only about fresh air and the sun vitamin D3, it’s about the physical activity as well and that happens more in Outdoor Education settings than in indoor ones (Kuo, Barnes & Jordan 2019 and Trapasso, Knowles, Boddy, Newson, Sayers & Austin 2018). As Faskunger, Szczepanski & Akerblom (2018) said, the benefits of physical activity that he found in reviews and other research are:

- increase fitness
- increase muscle strength
- counteract uneasiness/anxiety
- improve bone health
- counteract risk factors concerning cardiovascular disease
- improve self-perception
- improve motor skills” (Faskunger et al. 2018, 29)
These benefits do certainly not only apply for people profiting from Outdoor Education, but for each person conducting physical activity in the indoors and outdoors. As the design of outdoor environments invites people to move and give them more space to do so (see Mygind 2007 and Gronningsæter et al. 2007 for primary school children, Fiennes et al. 2015), the outdoors can increase these benefits of physical activity and help prevent people from suffering from first world sicknesses like e.g. obesity, heart issues, high blood pressure, joint problems and back pain (Higgins 2010, Dannenberg, Jackson, Frumkin, Schieber, Pratt, Kochtitzky & Tilson 2003), but also from handicaps like myopia which have only recently been found out to result from too little time spent in vast natural spaces (Dirani, Tong, Gazzard, Zhang, Chia, Young & Saw 2009 for teenagers, Guo, Liu, Xu, Tang, Lv, Feng & Jonas 2013, Wu, Tsai, Wu, Yang & Kuo 2013, Wu, Tsai, Hu & Yang 2010).

“In light of the range of health benefits of physical activity, it seems probable that stimulating and encouraging the use of greenspaces could improve long-term population health and reduce the incidence of chronic medical conditions (e.g. coronary heart disease, obesity, diabetes, strokes etc).” (Higgins 2010, 7)

While Outdoor Education is nowadays mostly seen in the context of education of younger generations, these health benefits make it very obvious that it should also be integrated into adult and senior education and care.

But there is even another side to it: the physical skills which are also often referred to as the gross motor skills. In order to improve these, regular movement is needed. It has been found that children in outdoor kindergartens have better gross motor skills than children in indoor kindergartens (Lettieri 2004, Kiener 2004). In their reviews, Fiennes et al. (2015) and Gill (2014) found that eating habits among students became healthier after participating in Outdoor Education, particularly gardening activities. This is another aspect of physiological benefits that Outdoor Education can contribute to.

2.3.9 Environmental benefits

Encounters with nature in early life can play an important role in raising people that are aware about environmental issues and are ready to take responsibility for their actions (Higgins 2010, Christie & Higgins 2012, Lohr & Pearson-Mims 2005, Gill 2011, Gill 2014), however this correlation is supported by many but not all studies and has also shown to be non-significant in some cases (Fägerstam 2012),
it can therefore not be understood as a causal relation yet. A model to explain possible casual relations and correlations is offered by Kollmuss & Agyeman (2002).

Outdoor Education does provide students with time for encounters with nature, but not only that: one of Outdoor Educations topics is the environment and the nature itself (Gruenewald 2013, Öhman & Sandell 2015). Outdoor Education and environmental education are because of their close connection often even mistaken to be the same. Through learning about their natural environment, children can become aware about the effects that people and nature have on each other and furthermore start to see that the society around them doesn’t behave nature friendly (e.g. when finding plastic trash in a forest). Through participative Outdoor Education methods (e.g. experiments of trying to compost plastic and a trash collection morning) students can increase their understanding of their own responsibility for their environment.

At this point, I want to remind the readers that Outdoor Education is not only about rural places and the nature, it is also about urban places and cultural learning. Urban places, culture and especially mainstream culture do have an impact on awareness about environmental issues as well. Higgins (2010) describes that modern life is complex in general, also because we are separated from complex production processes of the goods and services we use. He states that they can be invisible to us but play a role as they have impacts on the environment and our social structures.

In order to understand such complex processes as the one of the production of the goods and services we use, Outdoor Education in the tradition of pluralistic environmental education (see Öhman & Sandell 2015) can be of a great help to make visible which cultural practices lead to these environmental and social issues. Visits of food production sites, role plays making the inequalities and environmental consequences of the food-producing business visible and explorations of alternatives, such as visiting ecological farms, growing own fruits and cooking a soup made of local vegetables over a self-built fireplace can contribute to students understanding of environmental issues and show them ways to engage in sustainable alternatives. These educational experiences can facilitate the application of the explored alternatives in students own everyday lives and thereby make their social surroundings adopt a more sustainable lifestyle as well (see Lawson et al. 2019 for how children can influence their parents environmental concern).

2.3.10 Holistic understanding of connections
Outdoor Education can help students to develop a holistic understanding of intra- and interdisciplinary connections in practice and theory. This can happen through the already described
place-based and experiential learning that Outdoor Education is based upon. By experiencing different and similar aspects of different and similar places and phenomenons, students can see and experience connections in their surroundings. As Outdoor Education aim at putting new discoveries in the context of its environment, students will not learn isolated facts but see how one thing influences the other, this is often being called project(-based) learning as well. Coming back to the above mentioned learning experience about bread-making, studying bread-making without talking about flour, grains and agriculture would not happen in Outdoor Education, as it always aim at providing an understanding of the topic in a real-world-context. This approach ultimately leads to a better understanding on the students’ side, Wilensky & Reisman (2006) explained that for biology and said that the traditional biology teaching is segregating different levels of the subject. It is though actually needed in order to explain biological phenomenons to look at the connections between these levels.

That this way of holistic learning really helps students was described by Fägerstam & Grotherus (2018). Students in their study reported how helpful the outdoor lessons were to see the real world relevance of textbook math. They therefore advised:

“Since one of the challenges with mathematics education is students’ difficulty in transferring textbook knowledge to a real-world context, shifting some of the lessons from the classroom to the outdoor environment might be a relatively easy way to help the students to develop such skills.” (Fägerstam & Grotherus 2018, 388)

2.3.11 Fostering a new joy of learning

It is a common phenomenon that students get tired of school and lose their initial joy of learning after a few years of formal schooling. Fiennes et al.s (2015) literature review and O’Brien (2009) showed an increased motivation for learning in students immersed in Outdoor Learning. As shown in a recent review by Kuo, Barnes & Jordan (2019), as well as by Fägerstam (2012), Fägerstam & Blom (2013), Fägerstam & Grotherus (2018) and Mygind (2009), Outdoor Education is perceived as more enjoyable than indoor learning by students and can therefore give them a new perspective on learning when moving from the indoors to the outdoors. Ting & Siew (2014) found that student’s curiosity for science increased when moving outdoors. That engagement of learning in the outdoors doesn’t decline after a short time is shown by Mygind (2009), who conducted a study on a three-year-long outdoor schooling project.

Another contribution to a new way of learning is the so called Attention-restoration theory, it has been proven that being in nature or just seeing living natural elements improves attention among people of all ages (see the review by Kuo, Barnes & Jordan (2019) for an overview of its dimensions).
This way of education can have a lot of impact on the lives of people, especially those wired of formal schooling which is a common phenomenon now a days. It is important to renew their relation towards education.

2.3.12 Surroundings become the second teacher
When holding lessons outdoors, the teacher has a great helper: the surroundings themselves. This takes pressure away from the teacher that is otherwise asked to perform an educational show all by him*herself. The open structure of outdoor environments invites students to explore, ask questions and use their skills and especially science knowledge. In an indoor classroom, the teacher needs to initiate all these processes. An outdoor environment can also help the students learn things that are hard for a teacher to describe indoors, such as feeling cold, how a paper boat floats and sinks on water, gravities effects or how to make a fire and how to find the most well-protected place during heavy rain fall. Already the alternative pedagogues Montessori and Freinet (Braches-Chyrek & Röhner 2016) said that the room is a pedagogue as well.

2.3.13 Gender in Outdoor Education
Gender is a topic of educational research that also plays a role for Outdoor Education and it has been shown that Outdoor Education is one of the fields of Education that is least progressive when it comes to gender equality:

“Evidence of the male-dominated nature of the outdoor field persists despite advances by women and girls in outdoor participation. Gender role socialisation continues to be a factor in unequal power relationships in outdoor programmes and leadership positions for adult women, while feminist critiques of teaching and learning in the outdoors point out its gender-privileged nature.” (Warren 2015, 360)

This disadvantage of Outdoor Education does for sure play a role, but it has also been shown that Outdoor Education has the potential to increase a part of gender equality. Trapasso, Knowles, Boddy, Newson, Sayers & Austin (2018) based their research on findings that boys are more likely to engage in beneficial “moderate to vigorous physical activity” (Trapasso et al. 2018, 1) than girls. When evaluating forest school outdoor days, they found the differences to be lower between boys and girls in motivation for physical activity and that outdoor school days lead to more physical activity for both groups. Furthermore outdoor school days lead to an increase of happiness for both groups.
2.3.14 Benefits for troubled children

A study on disadvantaged preschool children was conducted by Yilidrim & Özyilmaz Akamca (2017) these children didn’t have access to education in their every-day lives, their motor skills, linguistic skills, social-emotional skills and cognitive skills improved significantly (p-values constantly being below 0.001) after being immersed in a ten-week preschool education rich in outdoor activities.

Looking at children with Attention Deficit Disorder, a US-based research group found out that they can focus better than usual after being active outdoors (Faber-Taylor & Kuo 2009, Taylor, Kuo & Sullivan 2001, Kuo & Faber-Taylor 2004, Gill 2014). When they were in greener environments, their focus improved even more.

A study done on primary school age boys with an autistic spectrum disorder and their mothers showed that forest school evoked experiences of friendship, risk-taking, learning outcomes and successes for them (Bradley & Male 2017).

Students who experienced general behavioral problems in indoor classrooms were observed to improve in self-esteem, self-control and removing themselves from conflicts in the outdoors (Swank & Shin 2015 for gardening, Swank, Cheung, Prikhidko & Su 2017 for nature-based group play therapy, Maynard, Waters & Clement 2013, Ruiz-Gallardo, Verde & Valdes 2013).

These results show that there are many implications in research that Outdoor Education has a great potential not only for privileged children but also for the ones living under harder conditions and can be included in both rehabilitation and formal learning, as well as special needs education.

I conclude that Outdoor Education is an allround-talent, as its benefits are so many and cover so many different aspects of living and learning. Why this is the case can be explained by the above mentioned biophilia hypothesis and the Social Theory of Memory Development, but also by the natural multi-sensoric character of learning. Another approach is just to look back into the historical living environments of the human being and their habits, their ways of learning and their every day lives, which were more experience-based and more connected to nature than nowadays.

There is yet one shortcoming to the otherwise allround-talent of Outdoor Education and this is the topic ‘Inclusion of people with disabilities’. As Crosbie (2015) says, the inclusion of people with disabilities has not been a big topic in Outdoor Education, even though there were a few organizations working with them. He criticizes that these did though often focus on people with disabilities that were quite similar to people without disabilities or only employed specialist approaches, people with disabilities that require specialist equipment were not included. This topic provides a challenge for Outdoor Education and will therefore also be a challenge for an Outdoor Primary School.
There are more studies looking at more aspects of children’s well-being and learning that show that Outdoor Education and learning is a better alternative to indoor learning and can profit both individuals and the whole society. Due to lack of space, I will only list some more studies at this point: Pretty, Peacock, Sellens & Griffin 2005, Pretty, Peacock, Hine, Sellens, South & Griffin 2007, Kuo & Sullivan 2001, Kaplan 1973, Kaplan 2001, Catanzaro & Ekanem 2004, Moore, Townsend & Oldroyd 2007, Maller 2009, Mygind 2009, Dismore & Baily 2005, Mygind 2005, Keniger et al. 2013, Jordet 2007

Furthermore, it would be useful to look at literature and theories about school founding, as this is also a topic involved in this thesis. Additionally, a theoretical background about school buildings, teachers and more general aspects of schools would be very useful as well in order to fully explore a possible Outdoor Primary School. As this is a thesis in a Master on Outdoor & Sustainability Education, the focus is on Outdoor Education though and due to lack of space, no further theoretical background is included.

3. Aim & Research Questions

The aim of this study is to explore the idea of an Outdoor Primary School from the perspective of European Outdoor Education Professionals.

Even though the intention of this study is rather explorative, I structured it by focusing on five main research questions:

-What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective?
-What kind of and which learning activities do they regard as especially useful?
-How do they see the curriculum for this school?
-Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine?
-Which other aspects are they thinking about when asked about the Outdoor Primary School?
4. Methodology

Throughout this study I used qualitative methods, survey research including a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis for data evaluation. I started the research project by sending questionnaires and then interviewed people. I chose to start with questionnaires because I wanted to find out what people name and talk about in the questionnaire replies and then have the chance to ask questions and deepen the content in the interviews as a second step. It was a way for me to verify if the interview questions I had prepared in the beginning were going to be useful. It turned out that they still made sense even after knowing the replies to the questionnaires.

The participants of this study participated voluntarily and were all adults above the age of 20, they were furthermore informed at the beginning of the interview that they were not obliged to reply to all questions asked and could end the interview at any time. The questionnaire held this option as well, as they could always close the questionnaire on their computer. Names were not recorded at any moment and maximum anonymity was aimed for throughout the entire study. The recordings made during the interview were only saved on my computer and phone and not shared with anyone else. The interviewees all consented verbally to being recorded and to the file being saved on my devices.

4.1 Questionnaire

I decided to use survey research as it is being used “to answer questions about people’s opinions on some problem or issue” (Mills & Gay 2016, 210). And this is exactly what I wanted to find out: What are the opinions of European Outdoor Education Professionals about an Outdoor Primary School? The usual criticism against survey research that “If researchers consider the opinions of only those who responded, they may draw very wrong conclusions about the populations feelings” (Mills & Gay 2016, 210) didn’t seem like an argument against using it for my study, as the purpose of my study is explorative and as I don’t ask for arguments pro or contra a topic.

I used a questionnaire\textsuperscript{11} with mostly open questions. I chose open questions due to the explorative and qualitative intention of this study, as it is being said “that it permits greater depth of response and insight into the reasons for responses” (Mills & Gay 2016, 212). Surely, I wanted the respondents to reply in as great depth as possible. Another reason for the open questions was that I wanted to find out about their own imagination of an Outdoor Primary School and therefore wanted to “avoid leading questions” (Mills & Gay 2016, 215). Closed questions seemed quite ‘leading’ to me in this case, as they would rather have put my thoughts and ideas into their minds.

\textsuperscript{11} Using the software: https://www.soscisurvey.de/
Survey participants were recruited via email. I sent the questionnaire to outdoor educators I knew personally and searched the internet for Outdoor Education associations and institutions and copied their email addresses from their websites, later on sending them emails with a link to my questionnaire and the wish to share it with other outdoor educators they know. In this way, I personally chose the potential survey participants, as I personally chose to which institutions I would write. That means that I personally had a big influence, but it is a common way practiced in research, called ‘purposeful sampling’ (Harsh 2011). My influence has though to be taken into consideration when looking at my sample and data. I would have liked to contact a bigger variety of institutions, but this was restricted due to not understanding websites in many countries linguistically or acquaintances in such countries not sending me anything. Another constraint was time: for instance, one I had figured out how to find email addresses of forest kindergartens on the website of the Czech association and once a polish friend of mine had gotten back to me with a link, my questionnaire running time was over and I needed to start analyzing my data. If I was to do this again, I would plan a longer timeframe for the search of institutions so that the variety of countries represented would be bigger and not mostly restricted to my own language skills.

The online questionnaire mostly included open questions, but also some closed questions (mostly about the respondents’ demographics). I will first list the open ones and then the closed ones. At the beginning there is an explanatory text about the purpose of the study in order to make participants understand what is expected from them during the questionnaire.

Open Questions:

According to you, what would be important to consider for the planning of the outdoor space of the school?
According to you, what facilities should be present in an indoor space? How should it be situated in the outdoor space?
According to you, what would be important to consider for the planning of the teaching style in the school?
According to you, what learning activities are suitable for this school?
According to you, what could be the challenges due to the full outdoor concept?

The participants were asked to answer these open questions by naming three words/sentences.

Closed Questions:

How old are you?
Which gender do you belong to?

---

12 A screenshot of the email is provided in the appendix
13 Screenshots of the survey are provided in the appendix
In which country do you mainly work with/ study about Outdoor Education?

To which of the following groups do you belong? (Minority groups in Western Europe)

How are you professionally connected to Outdoor Education?

The question “Would you send your own child(ren) to the school you just imagined?” was asked at the very end of the questionnaire.

Comparing the questionnaire questions to the research questions, it becomes visible that they are very similar. I chose to ask very similar questions in order to make sure that I would get answers to my questions. It might have been useful as well to go for a more open approach and just decide to ask people one general question like “How would you imagine an Outdoor Primary School”. This might be more suitable to really show what they instinctively think about. I was afraid that people would only talk about one aspect, e.g. how the campus should look. That’s why I decided to ask them about different aspects separately.

It has to be taken into consideration that the majority of the questionnaire participants are not native speakers of English but filled out the survey in English. This might lead to unintended expressions and might have led to people not finishing the questionnaire, as they experienced linguistic difficulties. The questionnaire was opened 169 times overall, but only 61 people filled all the questions out. One reason for this low rate might be the linguistic difficulties.

Quantitative measurements were only needed for the demographic data of the sample, I used the Software Jamovi for that and created the graphs within the Word Software. As the cause was descriptive and the scales used nominal, I didn’t perform any statistical tests.

4.2 Interviews

Interviews as a research method are being criticized “to think that people attach a single meaning to their experiences? May not multiple meanings of a situation [...] or of an activity [...] be represented by what people say to the researcher” (Silverman 2013, 201). When I thought about this critique I realized that it doesn’t apply to my study, as my study doesn’t intend to interpret peoples meanings of experiences, situations or activities. I do only intend to collect opinions about how Outdoor Education Professionals could imagine an Outdoor Primary School and do not even intend to interpret them.

When I found a table by Patton (2015, 432ff) listing different interview approaches, I could not immediately decide which approach is really suitable for my study. I wanted to stay rather neutral and didn’t intend to interpret the answers of my interviewees, so “the traditional social science
research interview”\textsuperscript{14} Patton (2015, 433) seemed like a good fit. The social constructivism approach of interviewing\textsuperscript{15} also made sense to me, as I knew that interviewees would make meaning because of how they perceived me and the intention of my study which was an influence in itself (Patton 2015). In the end I believe that it is a mix of both approaches but dominated by the traditional social science research interview.

When thinking about what kind of interview would be suitable for the purpose of my study, I quickly decided on semi-structured interviews, as they seemed most suitable for an explorative approach with fixed research questions. They didn’t come along with the uncertainty of unstructured interviews which might have been more suitable for an explorative study with less specified research questions “used when researcher does not know enough about phenomenon to ask relevant questions” (Merriam & Tisdell 2016, 110) and were not as restrictive as highly structured ones which are rather useful “in qualitative studies usually used to obtain demographic data (age, gender, ethnicity, education and so on)” (Merriam & Tisdell 2016, 110). A semi-structured interview immediately seemed like exactly what I had in mind, because I needed rather specific data from all participants, namely answers to the questions I had and because I still wanted to give them time to name everything else they believe is important. Furthermore also because I wanted to use the questions flexibly (see table in Merriam & Tisdell 2016, 110).

I conducted eight semi-structured interviews for a deeper qualitative exploration of the topic with people from different perspectives, after they filled out the survey. Interviewees were acquired through the survey, as it contained a page asking for interviewees at the very end.

During the semi-structured interviews, I asked the interviewees about their thoughts about following aspects of a possible Outdoor Primary School:

- Start question: How do you ideally imagine an Outdoor Primary School?
- What kind of concept can you imagine?
- What do you believe is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school?
- What kinds of and which activities do you see as especially useful?
- What should be included in the curriculum? Should it follow the national curriculum with additions or have its own curriculum?
- Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can you imagine?

\textsuperscript{14} According to this approach, the researcher should not interpret what is said by the interviewees and should behave rather neutral during the interview. This approach believes in neutrality and objectivity.

\textsuperscript{15} This approach assumes that the interview itself is a ‘performance’ and based on the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. In this view, reality is a product of the human mind, values and relationships and objectivity therefore not possible.
I decided to put a rather open question at the beginning to see what the interviewees think about first, this is in line with literature about the design of semi-structured interviews:

“generally it’s a good idea to ask a relatively neutral, descriptive information at the beginning of the interview [...] this information lays the foundation for questions that access the interviewee’s perceptions, opinions, values, emotions and so on.” (Merriam & Tisdell 2016, 125)

There was only one person that replied to my other questions as well after just being asked the start question. For all the other interviewees I asked each of the following questions separately. I did this in a differing order, trying to connect the question to what the interviewees just talked about. In line with literature about semi-structured interviews “a set of questions, but these are used only as a guide, and departures from guidelines are not seen as a problem [...] but are often encouraged.” (Silverman 2013, 204) I sometimes asked additional questions than the ones listed above when I had the feeling to not have fully understood what the interviewees meant by what they just said or when I had the feeling that they had more to say about a certain topic.

The interviews happened partly live and partly via the software Skype online. The first interview was a live interview and the questions written on a piece of paper were lying on the table in between the interviewee and me. This was not the case during all other interviews. Therefore, this first interview can be regarded as not being equipped with equal conditions as the other ones. But the conditions varied quite a lot between the interviews anyway, as some people were interviewed live, some were sitting at home in front of their computers and some at their workplace. Due to different comfort levels in different languages, I couldn’t conduct all the interviews in English as planned but was asked to do it in the native language of four participants (one in Swedish and three in German). As I had to translate the excerpts later on, a shift in meaning might have happened due to my translation. When listening to all the interviews later on, I realized how differently I asked the questions in each interview, even though I always asked the same questions (in three different languages though, which already makes them quite different). I often explained my questions in more detail when I saw that the faces of my interviewees looked a bit clueless. Respecting this fact, I can’t even state that the questions were the same for all interviewees.

Furthermore, I knew four of the interviewees (50%) personally beforehand, which might have influenced their responding behavior. Regarding the variety of interviews and their conditions, it can be said that they were not equal in any aspect and their scientific value can therefore be doubted. But due to the explorative character of this study, this might not be as severe as it might be in other circumstances.
4.3 Data analysis

For the interview and survey analysis, I used thematic analysis, as my research endeavor is explorative, analytic induction for example was not possible, as it requests a hypothesis. Thematic analysis is based on finding themes among the entire data set. Especially because I had two different data sources, thematic analysis seemed suitable to me: by using it, you can make sure that data you analyze later can still influence the results as much as data you analyze earlier and you don’t have your mind set on a few categories that emerged during the analysis of only a part of the data.

Another reason why thematic analysis seemed reasonable to me was because it is very flexible, which is important when conducting an explorative study. Thematic analysis is also very useful for handling big amounts of data and allows the analysis to be rather superficial, as I had 61 survey respondents and eight interviews resulting in a big amount of data and as I intend to provide an overview for the reader, these characteristics of thematic analysis were what I had looked for. “it’s an excellent method for those new to qualitative research and particularly suitable for student projects” as (Braun & Clarke 2008, 178) said, when I read that, I felt even more that it was the right way to go for me. The reasons for that were that I had only done quantitative research so far and realized that qualitative analysis was more complex and demanded more personal decisions than my previous experiences with quantitative research. As I have just shown, this rather “open and allowing” character of thematic analysis can be your best friend when conducting an explorative study, but it has also been criticized in the research community for lacking interpretative power and for not giving enough space for individuals voices (see Braun & Clarke 2008). In the following table 2, I will provide an overview of strengths and weaknesses as seen by the researchers Braun & Clarke.
Table 8.2  Evaluating thematic analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility in terms of theoretical framework, research questions, methods of data collection and sample size</td>
<td>Is perceived by some qualitative researchers as ‘something and nothing’, as lacking the substance of other ‘branded’ and theoretically driven approaches like IPA and GT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible to researchers with little or no (qualitative) research experience; a great ‘starter’ qualitative method</td>
<td>Has limited interpretative power if not used within an existing theoretical framework; in practice analyses often consist simply of (realist) descriptions of participants’ concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatively easy and quick to learn, and to do, compared to other more labour-intensive qualitative analytic methods</td>
<td>Lack of concrete guidance for higher level, more interpretative analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The results of TA can be accessible to an educated wider audience (for this reason, TA can be an appropriate method for participatory approaches, where the participants have a role in the analysis of the data they help to generate, and is a useful method for applied research)</td>
<td>Because of the focus on patterns across datasets, it cannot provide any sense of the continuity and contradictions within individual accounts; also the ‘voices’ of individual participants can get lost (especially when working with larger datasets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot make claims about the effects of language use (unlike DA, DP or CA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 from Braun & Clarke (2008, 180) showing the strengths and weaknesses of thematic analysis

I already talked about how useful the strengths of thematic analysis are for my study, but when looking at the weaknesses of thematic analysis in the graph above, it becomes clear that they don’t matter much in the case of this study, as I was 1) neither intending to develop a theory, nor 2) interpret much, neither 3) provide a detailed insight into individuals opinions or the one of a small group nor 4) talk about language use.

In the survey some participants gave very short and general answers, sometimes even off-topic (e.g. surroundings, activities, variation, resources, teachers) which were hard to put in context, as no opinion was visible in these words. They were therefore sorted out and were not considered in the analysis of the results. It also happened that participants talked about a topic that was asked in the question before in a later question (e.g. “a place to put muddy clothes” when asked about teaching styles). This didn’t create any problems as topic blocks where formed across questions during the coding anyway, but it has to be kept in mind that participants may have mixed up things sometimes and I might therefore have understood their expression from the perspective of the question asked, which they might not have meant though.

Using the Word and Excel Software, my thematic analysis happened in several steps. After sorting the survey answers into rough categories (around 3-4 per question asked) as an open coding, more
themes for each question were formed during a later focused coding and across-question-themes emerged. After this focused coding, the interviews were transcribed and coded with the themes that had emerged from the focused coding of the survey. Furthermore, I conducted an additional open coding of the interviews in search for more themes but couldn’t find any that didn’t fit into the already existing themes. I constantly questioned the themes that had emerged from previous coding and adapted them if needed. It did for example turn out that I had formed two themes about teachers during the open coding of the survey, which I later on during the focused coding merged into one theme. This resulted in 30 semantic themes. I coded these 30 semantic themes in themselves again, this can be seen by the different topics that I will describe inside one theme.

Looking at my data, I later on realized that I can merge many themes into one and create subthemes. After doing this, there were 14 semantic themes. These themes did though also come up due to the questions I asked in the survey and interview, this has to be kept in mind when looking at the thematical structure of my analysis. In chapter 6, the 14 semantic themes and their subthemes are being described.

In order to connect the analysis to the research questions, I provide the research question answered by the semantic theme described in the section in the title of the themes sections (see chapter 6.1-6.12.9). Another approach could be to structurize the analysis by the research questions. As some themes do though answer several research questions at the same time and as the purpose of this study is rather explorative, I decided to let the themes I identified dominate the analysis structure, following thematic analysis. This way, the reader can paint the picture of this possible school more easily in his*her mind and won’t be restricted by my research questions (see Table 2, “the results of TA can be accessible to an educated wider audience”).

5 Sample

This study focuses on asking a sample of practical outdoor educators, Outdoor Education researchers and Outdoor Education students. A total of 61 European Outdoor Education Professionals replied to my survey. Interviews were conducted with eight European outdoor educators. As all the people interviewed filled out the survey beforehand, they are included in the demographical statistics presented below. A more specific description of them will follow at the end of this chapter.

Another aspect of the question of who the study is about is the people that are being talked about. As the topic is a primary school, the discourse was held about children in Western Europe aged six to twelve and their schooling, learning and overall development. This study doesn’t give these people a voice though, as only education professionals were interviewed. This surely can be interpreted as a
weak point of this study and I can state that this study does therefore not account for the full complexity of the design of an Outdoor Primary School, as it doesn’t include the students voices.\textsuperscript{16}

5.1 Survey sample

The age span of the sample (n=61) is 20-69 years, as can be seen in graph 2 below, a diversity possibly representing the actual age span of the entire population of professional educators, education researchers and education students that work with Outdoor Education. The distribution that can be seen among my respondents (more than 50% being under 40 years old) does for sure not represent the actual age distribution of all outdoor educators though.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{axis}[
    width=\textwidth,
    height=0.5\textwidth,
    ybar stacked,
    ymajorgrids=true,
    bar width=8mm,
    legend style={at={(0.5,1.25)},anchor=north},
    ylabel=How old are you? (in \%),
    symbolic x coords={20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years, 50-59 years, 60-69 years, 70+ years},
    xtick=data,
    nodes near coords,
    nodes near coords align={vertical},
]
\addplot coordinates {
(20-29 years, 19.7) 
(30-39 years, 32.8) 
(40-49 years, 21.3) 
(50-59 years, 23) 
(60-69 years, 3.3) 
(70+ years, 0)
};
\end{axis}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textit{Graph 2: age span of respondents}

There are more females in the sample (70.5 %), not making this study representative of the entire population of professional educators, education researchers and education students that work with Outdoor Education. 29.5 % of the respondents said that they were male and no one chose the non-binary option.

In total, 54 out of 61 respondents (88.6%) don’t belong to any minority group, as can be seen in graph 3 below. Only the other seven (11.4%) respondents belong to minority groups. This does for

\textsuperscript{16} Sahrakhiz, Harring & Witte (2018) describe childrens perceptions of learning outdoors versus learning indoors and Sahrakhiz (2018) the teachers perspective
sure not represent the entire population of outdoor educators, researchers and students, but it shows that the sample of this study has some diversity when it comes to life’s preconditions, as it includes people from at least five different minority groups.

To which of the following groups do you belong?

- other minority group: 0
- handicap: 0
- psychological disease: 0
- People of Colour: 0
- religious minority: 1
- spent childhood (partly) in orphanage/foster home: 1
- immigration background: 2
- chronical disease: 2
- non-heterosexual: 3
- none of these: 54

Graph 3: Minority groups among the respondents

40 out of the 61 (65,6 %) respondents work in preschool environments, 22 (36,1%) in non-formal education, other environments are represented far less, as can be seen in Graph 4 below. 32,8% of all respondents work rather theoretically with Outdoor Education, namely 8 researchers and 12 students, but as this was a multiple choice question, they might at the same time be involved with practical work as well and therefore have a broader perspective on Outdoor Education. There are only six respondents (9,8%) involved in primary school. Regarding the fact that this study is about primary school education, this percentage is quite low and the results may look different if only Outdoor Educators working in primary schools were asked.
How are you professionally connected to Outdoor Education?

Very obvious in graph 4 below, the cultural and geographical focus is on the Western European context, I can therefore not claim that my collected data represents European Outdoor Educators, but only Western European Outdoor Educators\(^\text{17}\). This small focus can be seen as a weak point of my study, as it only accounts for a small part of the global population. Looking at the diagram below, it becomes obvious that the majority of people comes from German-speaking countries (Germany+ Austria+ Switzerland result in 34 participants / 55,7% of all participants) and Scandinavian countries (Sweden+ Norway+ Denmark result in 15 participants / 24,6% of all participants). I can therefore state that this study is not representative for the entire western European context either, but heavily influenced by German-speaking and Scandinavian countries.

\(^{17}\) Western Europe meaning all European countries that were not a part of the USSR
5.2 Interview sample

The eight interviewees were both interviewed via Skype and in live sessions. They all had previously filled out the survey. A short overview of their backgrounds follows here:

- female, Ireland, age group 20-29, primary school teacher and English as a second language teacher, currently student of Outdoor Education
- female, UK, age group 30-39, outdoor teacher for 3-12 year olds in formal & non-formal education
- female, Sweden, age group 50-59, sports teacher for primary and secondary school and outdoor teacher for all ages (preschool until adults)
- female, Sweden, age group 60-69, preschool teacher with a focus on Outdoor Education, retired
- male, Switzerland, age group 30-39, outdoor preschool teacher
- male, Germany, age group 30-39, outdoor preschool teacher for 2-5-6 year olds, non-formal outdoor teacher for 6-10 year olds, ex-non formal outdoor teacher for teenagers
- male, Germany, age group 50-59, outdoor teacher for 3-16 year olds in a non-formal education facility
- male, Sweden, age group 60-69, ex-preschool teacher, teacher trainer in outdoor teaching, Outdoor Education researcher
6 Results

As already mentioned, the results are an outcome of the data collected from 61 responding Western European Outdoor Education Professionals.

In order to test the relevance of the answers the survey participants gave, they were asked if they would send their own children to the school they just imagined. As 93.4% replied with “Yes”, I assume that the qualitative data I collected in the survey can be taken seriously. Only 6.6% answered no.

When reading the analysis, it has to be kept in mind that I provide a glimpse into the data by providing between one to four exemplary expressions (written cursively in the following sections) from the data that I chose personally. As already said in the beginning of this master thesis, this text is not a fully objective scientific document, only striving towards objectivity but still influenced by the individual subject that the author is. Another author might have provided another structure and chosen other examples.

In order to connect the analysis to the research questions and to help the reader not to get lost in the big amount of themes and subthemes being described, I will provide the research question answered by the theme in the beginning of each themes section, as well as a graphical overview about the codes inside each theme. Codes will be called aspects in the following, as this word seemed more suitable to me to create a text about a theme that is widely understandable. For the same reason of showing the connections more quickly, I have underlined the codes/aspects inside the text so that the reader can find them when wanting to look back into the results while e.g. reading the discussion.

There are 14 themes, of which two have several subthemes, these two themes are therefore automatically the biggest ones (see Table 3). As they directly correspond with the questions asked during the questionnaire and the interviews and did though not come up due to the respondents but due to my questions, I do not count them in the following as single themes, but rather as fulfilling a structuring function in binding several subthemes together, which can also be treated rather independently.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Namings</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Subthemes</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a lot</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Everything, Student-Centered Learning, Experience-based &amp; Practical Learning, Project Learning, Use the surroundings in learning, Social Learning, Play, Quiet zones/moments, Other special learning activities/methods</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a lot</td>
<td>Learning activities</td>
<td>Surroundings, Spaces outdoors, Equipment outdoors, Spaces indoors, Equipment indoors, How it should be indoors, Toilet, get the outdoors into the indoors, less is more</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a lot</td>
<td>The school campus</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>Materialistic challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medium</td>
<td>Weather</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a few</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a few</td>
<td>Animals</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a few</td>
<td>Politics &amp; Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a few</td>
<td>Safety &amp; Health</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a few</td>
<td>Class construction</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a few</td>
<td>Enough preparation?</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3: list of themes, subthemes and approximate amount of namings per theme in comparison to other themes, a few = 20 namings or less, medium = 21-35 namings, a lot = more than 35 namings*

It has to be kept in mind that the design of this study was not quantitative, so the amount of namings does not mean the amount of participants talking about this topic. As each respondent had several lines to fill in the questionnaire and was free to take up the same topic as many times as wanted during the interview, it can easily happen that several namings actually stem from the same person, as this person took up the topic again and again or talked about it a long time regarding many sides of it. It would for sure be interesting to research this topic quantitatively later on, but the purpose of this study is purely explorative and qualitative.
6.1 Theme: Teachers

The research questions answered by this theme are:

*Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine?*

*Which other aspects are they thinking about when asked about the Outdoor Primary School?*

Teaching staff was both perceived as a challenge (teachers were talked about when being asked about challenges) and also characterized by the survey participants. They had some clear ideas on how teachers in an outdoor school should be.

The teachers education was named widely (25 namings), here aspects of pedagogical education and subject knowledge were named “keen practitioners being there to support learning”, “to find teachers with a wide range of knowledge”, “children are exposed to distractions, teachers should be trained on this”, many respondents also just said that good/prepared/well educated teachers were needed. An important part of teachers education that was named eight times were the outdoor skills and knowledge, such as knowledge about nature, Outdoor Education and skills from outdoor experiences “experienced outdoor people to guide them”.

The participants also talked about the teachers mindsets, one part was their professional philosophy, another one about comfort and love for/in the outdoors. When describing teachers professional philosophy (28 namings), respondents talked about their motivation, confidence, intentions, willingness, flexibility, respect “staff willing to think outside of the box”, “teachers that are willing to work”, “enough people with the right intend”. I conclude from the data, that the group of respondents wants flexible and motivated teachers that respect children as human beings, are willing to learn and think outside the box and have good intentions. When it comes to outdoor love and comfort (14 namings), the respondents talked about that they want teachers that love being outdoors themselves, have a connection to nature and feel good about teaching in the outdoors, even in all kinds of weather “engaged and well-educated teachers who really love being outdoors”, “finding good teachers who are strong enough to work the whole year outdoors”.

![Figure 1: aspects of the theme Teachers](image)
Another aspect that was raised by the respondents eleven times was the team. They characterized the teachers needed in this school as a team doing and being good at cooperation, taking time for reflection together and providing leadership without overpowering others “good staff support and time spent on reflection and planning”, “real leadership: without disrespecting others”. Respondents (seven namings) also talked about further training for teachers when being in service for the Outdoor Primary School. They did both see the challenge that there might be a lack of training opportunities, but also emphasized, that regular training should be a part of this school and that teachers should both be given this opportunity to stay up to date but also be willing to do so “give them possibility to develop themselves in their profession”, “adults who are at ease in nature and happy to emerge as teachers”.

An aspect named three times was that teachers should be engaged with creating the school, that they should both be involved in planning the place and the program “the teachers need to discuss beforehand what they need to have on the school yard to change the learning environment”, “so it feels that they are building the program as opposed to the program being put and they are being put in, but it has to be worked from the people themselves as they might have different strengths and weaknesses”.

6.2 Theme: Class construction

The research question answered by this theme is:

Which other aspects are they thinking about when asked about the Outdoor Primary School?

How the groups in the school should be constructed was an additional aspect that many respondents thought about. To mix students of different ages was wished for eight times “mixing the ages would be very useful”. Small groups were wished for four times, but none of the respondents defined what small meant to them. When it comes to the amount of teachers (five namings), which was wished to be higher than usual, they provided more details: there should be enough teachers so that “more one-to-one teaching time” would be possible, said two respondents.
I conclude from this, that groups smaller than usual European classes with more than one teacher and including students of different ages is being regarded as suitable for an Outdoor Primary School by Western European Outdoor Education Professionals.

6.3 Theme: Curriculum

The research question answered by this theme is:

*How do they see the curriculum for this school?*

![Figure 3: aspects of the theme Curriculum](image)

Respondents opted for following the national curriculum nine times which they said was possible, as it seemed adaptable enough to them “there are no barriers in the curriculum, but you need to underline some more”, “the curriculum actually support being outside” and because it was a safer way to go “there is also a little bit of an element of danger that you create children who are too different, so that then [...] they have a difficult time to integrate with the others in society”, “private curriculums are not monitored, that can be dangerous”. Other respondents were sure that it would be a better idea to create an own curriculum (five namings) for the Outdoor Primary School, reasons provided were that the national curriculum “is 100 years old and nothing changed since then” or because it “is better in order to highlight other competences”, “so that you can position yourself and have freedom”. Four times, respondents talked about that freedom was very important in this school and respondents opted twice for including a full-day-concept in the curriculum.
6.4 Theme: Enough preparation?

The research question answered by this theme is:

*Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine?*

![Image of a Venn diagram with circles labeled 'parents' and 'adjustment'.]

The challenging question “Will they be well-prepared enough for the next steps in life from this Outdoor Primary School?” is one that many respondents saw as a question that will pose a challenge to the school. Respondents thought that the parents (six namings) would worry about this question “explaining the parents that the children will be well prepared for high school”, “the fear of the parents that the child can keep up or study or become something good”, “The parents! It’s hard to convince them that knowledge is not connected to a certain school degree”. Respondents described this question more in general (six times), worried about adjustment, regardless of parents or who would be worried about that: “further education level (to study in higher degree in normal school will be hard for children to adapt themselves or not)”, “giving children the same level of knowledge as children in regular school get”, “make sure that they don’t fall into a hole if they change the school”.

6.5 Theme: Parents

The research question answered by this theme is:

*Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine?*

![Image of a Venn diagram with circles labeled 'convinced', 'how to work with them', and 'find'.]
When asked about challenges, many respondents thought about the students parents. To find the parents was already a challenge respondents imagined six times: “to find parents who think it’s better to be outdoors for schooltime”, “to find enough parents to start and take off with this project”. They expected that parents would be skeptical and needed to be convinced (16 namings): “good arguments for skeptical parents”, “resistance from parents”, “lack of knowledge and understanding from parents”. Respondents had five specific ideas how an Outdoor Primary School should work with parents: “a concept made by teachers and parents, they have to promote and support it”, “with parents that are difficult you need to have lots of meetings and inform the parents what is going on and why things are happening”, “take help of the parents”, “it is important to get the parents on the boat very early” and “teachers need to be very connected to parents”.

6.6 Theme: Politics & Community

The research question answered by this theme is:

Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine?

The surrounding society, mostly the political and administrational part of it was seen as another challenge for an Outdoor Primary School. Regarding the surrounding society, the respondents talked about how to convince it about the idea of an Outdoor Primary School (5 namings): “so in some way you need to go out and market it in a good way so that people understand what it is about, so that it is not like a sect or something”, “as a new institution you need to suffer from this pioneer role”, “get people involved and excited about the project, to get them convinced”. More administrational worries were laws and rules (14 namings) “all the governmental acceptance and finances I see as the first and biggest barrier”, “to be able to work with all the rules that exist: school inspections, governments, etc.” and respondents worried about insurance twice “you need an insurance”. Twice as well, respondents brought up specific ideas how to tackle this challenge: “you need to look at ad talk to other outdoor schools and educators”, “take help of the surrounding society”.
6.7 Theme: Weather

The research question answered by this theme is:

*Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine*

![Figure 7: aspects of the theme Weather](image)

The challenge that the weather poses was something that respondents named, their concerns regarded mostly the cold weather “you can’t learn if you are cold in wintertime” and general weather conditions “heavy weather conditions – you need a good plan B”, “weather conditions can be dangerous or very demanding”. The frequency of these two aspects was very similar.

6.8 Theme: Learning activities

All the following nine subthemes will answer this research question: *What kind of and which learning activities do they regard as especially useful?*

Two subthemes at the end will answer two additional questions as well.

6.8.1 Subtheme: Everything

The aspects of the subtheme Everything are:

![Figure 8: aspects of the subtheme Everything](image)

Many respondents said that everything was possible when asked about which learning activities would be suitable for this school. They talked both about that all subjects are possible to teach, as
well as that all activities would be suitable. There were even claim that “you can learn outdoors everything you can learn indoors” by three respondents.

6.8.2 Subtheme: Student-centered learning

The aspects of the subtheme Student-centered learning are:

![Figure 9: aspects of the subtheme student-centered learning](image)

Learning in the Outdoor Primary School should be rather child-led, democratic, independence-focused and individualized, said the respondents, but there should still be a clear structure. They explained the democratic way of learning (five namings), as a way where “adults are more like facilitators than teachers, that means involving them with everything, so they have to help with the cleaning and decide where the money is spent”, “some decisions are taken with the children and that they will be fully recognized”. This often goes hand-in-hand with a general child-led free working (34 namings) in alternative schools and is also described my the respondents widely as useful for the Outdoor Primary School: “let the children decide in what direction they want to research and learn”, “allowing the children to lead as much of their own learning as possible”, “explore by themselves and have their own learning goals”. Self-responsibility and independence (four namings) are a part of this child-led way of learning as well: “support students independence”, “self-responsibility should be in the hands of the children themselves”, “trust in children that they don’t need too many books to learn”. By employing a child-led learning, the focus is automatically more on the individual than in a traditional classroom and that is what the respondents (nine namings) wish for the Outdoor Primary School as well: “everyone is an individual, develops at their own time and their individualism should be treated as a gift”, “children are diverse and varied, so you have to offer a lot of styles and approaches”, “tailored to the individual”. In order to create clear guidelines (four namings) in the class, some respondents opt for providing a framework around this otherwise rather free and individualized way of learning: “free working [...] around that you need a fixed structure that repeats daily”, “child-led work but with a structure”, “enough freedom for children, but still clear guidelines”.

44
6.8.3 Subtheme: Experience-based & Practical Learning

The aspects of the subtheme Experience-based & Practical Learning are:

- Multi-sensory
- Movement
- Hands-on practical
- Explore/discover/experiment
- Experience
- Creating
- Other outdoor skills

Figure 10: aspects of the subtheme Experience-based & Practical learning

Many respondents suggested experience-based and practical learning activities for the Outdoor Primary School. Two body-focused ways were wished for: Multi-sensory learning was mentioned twelve times “learning with all physical senses”, “something to smell, to touch”, “perception experiences, body awareness, that can go into the direction of meditation”, as well as movement (13 namings) “study with body activity”, “learning in motion”, “sports and moving”. Many respondents (17 namings) imagined the learning in the Outdoor Primary School to be a hands-on practical learning “doing more with hands I think this is a big point that we also have to use that in a school would make a lot of sense”, “hands-on mathematics”, “practical learning with lots of experimental practices”. Closely connected to that, they wished seven times for experience-based learning: “activities centered around student experience”, “direct experience from landscape, both natural and cultural”, “learning by doing and experience”. Exploring, discovering and experimenting (12 namings) was also seen as an important part of this way of learning by the respondents: “experimental learning as a method”, “a lots of chance to explore and experiment”, “discovery learning”. That the children should create things themselves was an aspect the respondents talked about twelve times as well which “craftmanship”, “den building”, “creating art piece from natural materials”, “a construction area”. The last dimension of this experience-based practical way of learning that the participants named six times are outdoor skills such as “map making”, “fire, cooking, shelter and other survival skills” or “reading animals traces”. 
6.8.4 Subtheme: Project learning

Project-based learning was named widely by many respondents, sometimes also called theme or topic based learning “can see a mix of different subjects = topics”, “projects in groups to what is interesting to the group”, “subject-integrated thematical learning”.

Project-based learning aspires to regard a topic from many angles, e.g. “water in the environment, water in religion [...] you can work thematical”, the goal of this approach is to make the connections in the real world visible and how one thing influences the other.

6.8.5 Subtheme: Use the surroundings in learning

The aspects of the subtheme Use the surroundings in learning are:

Using the surroundings in learning is also very connected to experience-based and practical learning, but as it was widely named and the subtheme of experience-based and practical learning very big in general, I decided to let this be its own subtheme.

The respondents both suggested to use surrounding materials (13 namings) “following the seasons”, “usage of nature for learning (e.g. growing), “work with what the forest gives you”, “searching for connections between contents of different subjects like maths, history or languages in the surrounding environment would be fun” as well as surroundings places (7 namings) by going on excursions to them “visits to museums, archeological sites, history lessons on site”, “more excursions both in nature and culture”, “excursions into nature, field trips “.
6.8.6 Subtheme: Social learning

The research question furthermore answered by this subtheme is:

*How do they see the curriculum for this school?*

![Figure 12: aspects of the subtheme Social learning](image)

Social learning was an aspect that many respondents named when asked about suitable learning activities, but also talked about in general or when asked other questions. Learning social skills and maintaining positive relationships *inside the school* and the group was named fifteen times both in terms of among the children and also between the teacher and the children “good connection with teacher and group”, “room for group games”, “what is very important is that social skills should be more highlighted than methodical skills or knowledge transfer”. Having social connections to the *surrounding society* was named by ten respondents, both involving the society inside the school “more cooperation, more open schools, where the society comes into the school system”, “I think always in schools that you should involve the local environment” and going out into the society as a school were proposed “you need to go to the library and integrate the children into the community” “exploring the neighborhood, organizing common events of celebration”. Another aspect of social learning was the *international and intercultural* integration, this was named four times and regarded the exchange with and integration of people from other nations and cultures “international exchange if it can be built in, that the school could be internationally built – to use that actively”, “it’s also integration of students coming from other cultures”. One rather methodical aspect was named four times as well: *group work* “you can do a lot of group work, 2 and 2, 3 and 3 and also different groups all the time”, “group work should be short and varied to meet a range of different learning styles”.

Conclusion: A school that provides social learning, also by maintaining positive relationships among teachers and students, actively involved in the exchange with and integration of and in the surroundings society and international/intercultural world.
6.8.7 Subtheme: Play

The research questions furthermore answered by this subtheme are:

*Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine?*

*What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective?*

![Figure 13: aspects of the subtheme Play](image)

“That the children also get some spare time to be a child” was a question that six participants worried about: “that they get the possibility to play and relax also in nature, to have adventures”, “giving space for retreat”. More respondents opted for play as a part of the Outdoor Primary School, both in the form of unstructured free play “free play”, “an action room” and organized play: “moving around playing together with educational play”.

6.8.8 Subtheme: Quiet zones/ moments

The research questions furthermore answered by this subtheme are:

*What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective?*

![Figure 14: aspects of the subtheme Quiet zones/ moments](image)

Quiet zones timewise and placewise are being wished for by many respondents, they see two purposes in these areas: places and times for focused work (7 namings) without distraction “language and letters need to be done in a quiet space”, “possibilities for calm moments for focused
working” and for resting (12 namings) “an area to rest and calm down”, “rest zone where children who need a time out can sit by themselves”. Three namings also point out that it is important to have both these calm areas and also areas for moving and action “calm areas, areas where you can be more active”.

6.8.9 Subtheme: Other special learning activities / methods

The aspects of this subtheme are:

![Diagram showing aspects of the subtheme Other special learning activities/methods]

Many participants gave very specific ideas about what learning activities would be suitable for this school, these activities did not fully fit in the other themes, this is the reason why they are being described in this section. Four respondents wished to avoid frontal instruction: “no frontal lessons” but didn’t specify this further. Also four respondents talked about having indoor activities “if you were outdoors for 4 hours, I would definitely spend the last hour inside and maybe read a book so that we experience time inside as well”, “I think you need to be inside as well to actually learn how to behave indoors”. Many respondents did furthermore name subjects that they can imagine being taught outdoors, all subjects came up, most commonly named were natural sciences.
6.9 Theme: Sustainability

The research questions answered by this theme are:

What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective?

What kind of and which learning activities do they regard as especially useful?

How do they see the curriculum for this school?

Sustainability in the Outdoor Primary School was named widely, it appeared both when talking about building and transport to school, which should both happen in a way that it harms nature least “what I believe is important is a connection to public transport, especially to integrate sustainability into every day life”, according to the respondents and when talking about what is being learned in the school. That children and teachers should have and develop a connection to nature was brought up “the connection to life, to nature and for each other”, “staff-nature connection”, as well as the will to protect nature should be emphasized and awakened in the children “exploring the surrounding around school and think about how to take care of the environment”, “using things like Fridays for future in the teaching instead of fighting such good things”.

Figure 16: aspects of the theme Sustainability
6.10 Theme: Food

The research questions answered by this theme are:

*What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective?*

*What kind of and which learning activities do they regard as especially useful?*

*How do they see the curriculum for this school?*

![Image of aspects of the theme Food]

The production of food and its usage was a theme that came up again and again. When asked about learning activities and the design of the school campus, both food production “gardening”, “usage of nature for learning (e.g. growing your own plants, herbs)”, “growing areas” and its usage was spoken about “cooking and baking”, “grill/fireplace for cooking outdoors safely”, “cooking area, e.g. stove, “a kitchen so that you can cook yourself”, “lunchroom, kitchen”. Three respondents wished for a farm to be nearby: “it would be cool to have many learning places around, like a farm and a garden”, “farm with animals and cultivation to visit”. 


6.11 Theme: Animals

The research questions answered by this theme are:

**What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective?**

**What kind of and which learning activities do they regard as especially useful?**

**How do they see the curriculum for this school?**

Figure 18: aspects of the theme Animals

To have animals on the school ground was wished for by four participants “animals like goats or a dog or a horse for carrying the things through the landscape”, “animals (2x)”, “fireplace, garden, areas for the animal stables”, five respondents named animals when asked about learning activities “keeping of animals”, “I am a fan of animal assisted learning”, “Biology, especially botanic, entomology and animal”.

6.12 Theme: Safety & Health

The research question answered by this theme is:

**What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective?**

**How do they see the curriculum for this school?**

**Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine?**

Figure 19: aspects of the theme Safety & Health
Respondents both wished for a healthy place “stimulation, natural, pollution free environment”, “the health benefits come in with the unevenness, using your body, the health aspect comes in with the stress level with the green areas and the blue areas” and a safe one “the place would have to be selected carefully away from major roads, in a safe space”, that outside the space that it’s safe so that it’s also possible to have some freedom for them”. Emergency and injury management should also be thought through: “you have to have first aid courses, teachers need to be able to teach children what to do in an emergency”, “potentially dangerous wildlife, diseases spread by ticks and mosquitos”. Additionally, learning about health should also be a part of this school according to the respondents: “you have to include food, the health perspective”, “health learning”. A safe space was named ten times, all the other aspects three times.

6.13 Theme: Materialistic Challenges

The research question answered by this theme is:

Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine?

A widely named challenge was the one of finding the right place (eleven namings) “to have a big enough land”, “good surrounding”, “lack of relevant varied outdoor areas”. There were also nine namings, in which respondents were worrying about finances “what makes these projects difficult is money”, “to find a system that has enough money and power to survive when problems come across”, “have a financial back-up”. Seven times, respondents worried about clothing “children not being equipped properly for the outdoors”, “lack of clothing in different weather”. Three respondents saw IT usage and education as a challenge: “computers [...] can be difficult to use”, “how would you educate the children in computer skills?”, “how to deal with media – bring smartphones to school?”. 
6.14 Theme: The school campus

The research question answered by this theme and its subthemes is:

*What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective?*

They all regard the design of the campus, some subthemes are focused on the indoor space, some on the outdoor space and the subthemes at the end regard both spaces.

6.14.1 Subtheme: Surroundings

The aspects of this subtheme are:

Many respondents thought about the surroundings of the school when asked about the design of the outdoor and indoor space. They opted for the school campus to be far from the street “don’t have traffic and parking too close, think about the air quality”, “quiet surroundings, e.g. away from road”.

But the campus should still have access to public transport “infrastructure – preferably access via low carbon transport/ public transport”, “near public transport”, “near the city and near the forest”, “as far from the urban environment as possible, but also near to reach place without cars”. Access to green areas was most widely named in this theme: “space to go explore biodiversity, e.g. ponds”, “nice forest nearby the school”, “if you go from the school yard 100m or such, there is a park, that’s much better to use”.

![Diagram of subthemes: access green areas, access public transport, far from street](image-url)
6.14.2 Subtheme: Spaces outdoors

The aspects of this subtheme are:

- **green**
- **untamed**
- **variety**
- **water**
- **different zones**
- **big space**

*Figure 22: aspects of the subtheme Spaces outdoors*

The respondents had specific wishes about the different spaces on the outdoor campus of the school, the frequency of the different aspects was even. It should be green, seven respondents said “have green spaces with bushes, trees, stones, water”, “biological diversity or access to a variety of different territories” and their should be some untamed parts “but then there are some leftover bits and you can hide or wild area could also be like a nature reserve where things are allowed to fall as they want”, “as less manmade creations as possible so the children can feel they are in real nature”, “mostly untouched nature”. Six respondents also wished for water to be present “also good if there is some water, a collection of rainwater if nothing else”, “having a stream close by is great”. To have a place with variety “it should have a surface with ups and downs”, “differences: you got sand, you got earth, sort of trees and things” and different zones “I would imagine it having different zones, a wild natural area, a space to use different kinds of tools, maybe a creative space, quiet spaces for resting and reading, so lots of different areas to see different kinds of playing and learning”, “good learning environment- different spaces (2-5) for different learning tasks” was being asked for by the respondents as well. They also cared about the space being big “it would be great to have a vast forest space with many bases”, “outdoor a lot of space”.

6.14.3 Subtheme: Equipment outdoors

The aspects of this subtheme are:

- **building**
- **shelter**
- **fireplace**

*Figure 23: aspects of the subtheme Equipment outdoors*

The respondents imagined the outdoor space to have specific equipment: fireplaces, “fireplace” were wished for by four respondents. A shelter was opted for by many “protection accommodation when you have low temperatures”, “outdoor: sun/rain protection (writing on wet paper is not that nice)”.
Four respondents did furthermore wish for building material and areas for the children “adventure playground with hut building area”, “material for free design”.

6.14.4 Subtheme: Spaces indoors

The aspects of this subtheme are:

![Image of spaces indoors]

**Staff** space was imagined to be present indoors by four participants “an office for the administration”, “large meeting room”, “teachers lounge”. Space for playing, action and movement was also mentioned nine times “action room”, “water playground”, “a place for climbing”, “sports area”, “the younger children should have a play area”. Furthermore, spaces for creation were wished for four times, namely workshops, art area and construction area. A **library** or “reading corner” was opted for by six participants as well “library should be indoors cause it is better to maintain books, to place them outdoor you still need shelf to protect them from nature conditions such as humidity and sunlight”, “what we need indoors is a library”. A room for **changing** clothes was imagined as important “changing and storage rooms, if you got wet or dirty in an uncomfortable way so that you can change your clothes”, “we need practical spaces to dry the clothes, no expensive drying cupboards” by five times. A **classroom** was only named twice: “the classical classroom with tables and chairs”, “classroom”.

6.14.5 Subtheme: Equipment indoors

The aspects of this subtheme are:

![Image of equipment indoors]
The classical classroom furniture was important for the design of the indoor space according to some participants (13 namings) “chairs, table, heating, blackboard or something similar, “tables and chairs to set up and dismantle”, “a big interactive whiteboard”. Many participants talked about books: “books always have to be there”, “books, loads of books: reference books as well as story books”, “material and literature in the indoors”. Technical facilities were named six times and included heating, light, hot water, a sink and electricity. Computers and Internet were also placed inside by the participants (six times) “to connect outdoor and modern techniques is certainly useful to have internet access”, “computer and internet is perhaps better to have inside”. Some respondents had fifteen ideas about specific materials for the indoor space: “Montessori material would make a lot of sense, because they cover so many different things”, “play equipment made of ropes”, “musical instruments”, “simple tools to enable writing/ mark-making/ drawing, woodwork and making crafts, mathematical exploration, transportation/ pouring/ mixing.”, “possibility for a sitting place, e.g. log on the ground”, “drawing paper and pencils”, “boxes to store things”.

6.14.6 Subtheme: How it should be indoors

The aspects of this subtheme are:

A learner-friendly environment with a lot of variety was opted for by respondents six times “indoor space should have: learner-friendly environment”, “different height, differences to move and play”, “variety of physical features”. While respondents were concerned about having a small building (3 namings) “the house itself should be maximum two floors”, “low buildings with many doors wand windows”, “no big indoor buildings, the child should not need to go through four doors in order to reach the toilet”, respondents thought about the indoor space rather as a shelter ten times “shelter for rain and snow”, “I think in winter you should have a place to warm up”, “can be nice to have an indoor space in summer as well for shade”.

Figure 26: aspects of the subtheme How it should be indoors

A learner-friendly small building shelter
6.14.7 Subtheme: Toilet

The aspects of this subtheme are:

![Diagram](image)

Figure 27: aspects of the subtheme Toilet

That a toilet was needed was named widely, it was both wished for a compost toilet six times “biological toilets with privacy”, “compost toilet would be nice” and for general sanitary installations five times “so that you can hygienically get clean before you eat, there must be some possibilities”. Many respondents also named that the toilet should be indoors, most of them also just mentioned simple shelters as “toilet tent” or “compost toilet with roof and walls”, two respondents talked about the possibility of having it outdoors “we use a spade”, “children can use natural space as bathroom too but you should limit the area for that just in case for the safety and privacy”.

6.14.8 Subtheme: Get the outdoors into the indoors

The aspects of this subtheme are:

![Diagram](image)

Figure 28: aspects of the subtheme Get the outdoors into the indoors

When asked about the indoor space, participants presented that it was important to them that the outdoors would play a role in the indoor space as well. This was expressed by asking for the indoor space to be open towards the outdoors (seven namings) “every room should be openable towards the indoors and the outdoors, a very open thing”, “obviously big windows so that you bring the outdoor into the indoors”, “no discrete border between outdoor and indoor” by talking about its
location to be close to the outdoors (4 namings) “indoor and outdoor should be situated the same”, “next to outdoor space”, “at the edge of a forest to a meadow and to a field (with rocks like in Sweden)” or by wishing for natural materials (14 namings) to be present indoors: “some timber planks and pieces of tree trunks”, “fireplace”, “skins, trophies, footprints, pictures”, “a range of natural/semi-natural ground surfaces- sand, gravel, mud, grass, stone”, “playground objects such as swings, made from natural materials such as wood”, “at a central place and maybe everything out of wood”.

6.14.9 Subtheme: Less is more

The aspects of this subtheme are:

![Figure 29: aspects of the subtheme Less is more](image)

There was a trend towards using less in the data when it came to the design of the school spaces. Some respondents opted for small indoors (nine namings): “I think the kids need far less facilities than regulations under public law tell you”, “heated place with only basics like some benches and a table to draw something for short stay”, “inside that doesn’t matter too much, it can be a caravan at the edge of the forest, the least comfortable the better, focus on learning when I am indoors and finish it as soon as possible so that I can go outside again”. Respondents also described twice that less material is a good idea: “I don’t think you need a lot of equipment when you are outside, I think you are just meant to use what you have outdoors”, “just material which is really necessary – if you are outdoors, there is so much to learn”. Respondents also gave five specific ideas how to reduce indoor space or material: “I think in some way using public areas, public libraries is a good way to incorporate them during excursions and making a wider use of them. Because children can learn to find them themselves, whereas a school library you can’t go there during holidays, as it’s closed.”, “a clipboard replaces tables”, “school materials shelf: I think it could be located in both indoor and outdoor space depending on what materials you place it on”, “storage rooms distributed across the area, those rooms should be aside and used only to store the items, take them out and use them outside”, “reading area: just bring the books outside”.
7 Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the idea of an Outdoor Primary School from the perspective of European Outdoor Education Professionals. I was able to reach this aim with the methods used and the data collected, did though only collect data from western European Outdoor Education Professionals (see reasons above in chapter 5. Sample). Even though the intention of this study was rather explorative, I structured it by focusing on five main research questions:

-What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective?

-What kind of and which learning activities do they regard as especially useful?

-How do they see the curriculum for this school?

-Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine?

-Which other aspects are they thinking about when asked about the Outdoor Primary School?

Each research question could be answered by the qualitative analysis of this study, see chapter 3.

Results for each research question. In this discussion chapter, I will evaluate the results of each research question and give a broader perspective about it and its related topics, also in connection to results from other researchers. At the end of this chapter, I will furthermore add a critical perspective about an Outdoor Primary School and provide an outlook for the future.

7.1 What is important for the design of the outdoor and indoor space of this school in the OE professionals perspective?

The main results for this research question were that the surroundings of the campus should have natural areas but connected to public transport and that the campus itself should be big and offer a variety of spaces and natural environments as well. Furthermore the indoors should be small buildings and include the outdoors in its design. Participants also opted for the ‘less is more’ principle regarding the facilities. Another topic was that there should be opportunities for the children to create, build, do crafts and have play areas as well as quiet zones for focused working and resting, space for gardening, cooking and animals was mentioned as well. Furthermore shelters and fireplaces were wished for. For more details, see the results chapter above.

and social skills (Häfner 2003, Grahn et al. 1997). As mentioned in chapter ‘2.3.3 Psychological
benefits’ above, natural environments compared to built ones result in an improvement in stress
(Kuo et al. 2019), blood pressure, anger and attention (Hartig et al. 2003). That respondents wished
for green, untamed and water-rich placed with a variety is therefore not a surprise.

The wish for food production to be a part of the school goes in line with findings about horticultural
therapy, a part of ecotherapy that has been proven to be effective for adults (see the review by
Chalquist 2009). Swank & Shin (2015) for example also found children with behavioral problems to
gain self-esteem, calm and happy feelings and cooperation learning from a gardening intervention.
Fiennes et al. (2015) and Gill (2014) detected healthier eating habits for students participating in
gardening activities.

My findings for animals on campus go in line with the above described biophilia theory (Wilson 1986)
and positive outcomes of animal-assisted therapy and ecotherapy (Chalquist 2009). Furthermore
they go in line with Ballantyne & Packers (2002) results that among many environmental education
activities, primary and secondary school students both enjoyed the ones involving animals most.

Concluding on the just discussed findings, it seems that an Outdoor Primary School can hold an
immense potential to bring together many benefits of outdoor learning just by its natural design
including a variety of natural elements (animals, food, water, green areas).

Furthermore, space and material for building and creating was wished for. These activities can
enhance children’s creativity, which is an important part of child development (see Bungay & Vella-
Building and creating is an important part of children play as well. Areas for play were also wished for
by the respondents. A further discussion on play and quiet zones is included in the next section.

7.2 What kind of and which learning activities do they regard as especially useful?

The learning activities regarded as especially useful were project-based learning, using the
surroundings in learning, student-centered learning, experience-based and practical learning, social
learning, play and quiet moments in quiet zones. Furthermore activities related to sustainability, food
and animals were imagined by the respondents to be useful.

As described above in chapter 2.3.10, a project-based learning approach can increase understanding
on the students’ side (Wilensky & Reisman 2006, Fägerstam & Grotherus 2018). Similar to project-
based learning, learning with and in the surroundings can also contribute to a cross-curricular
understanding and make relevance of school content visible to students (see chapter 2.3.10 and
2.3.12, Fägerstam & Grotherus 2018). This is the core of Outdoor Education. It is therefore not a
surprise that it was named by the respondents who are Outdoor Educators themselves. A recommendation can therefore be given to future Outdoor Primary Schools to include project-based learning.

Inquiry-based or student-centered learning emphasizing students’ choices was found to make up half of all outdoor teaching in the Danish udeskole (Barfod & Daugbjerg 2018). This goes in line with my respondents’ choices to regard student-centered learning activities as especially useful. It has furthermore been shown that student-centered learning activities are beneficial for children learning in formal schooling environments (see chapter 2.3.4 above). The teaching in an Outdoor Primary School should therefore include student-centered learning.

When Szczepanski & Dahlgren (2011) asked Swedish primary school teachers about what Outdoor Education meant to them, the most important aspects to them were experiential learning in authentic environments, integration of movement and sensory experiences for learning school subjects and nature orientation. These results reflect the results of this thesis, where professional outdoor educators named the same aspects widely. Furthermore, experience-based learning has been proven to be beneficial for children in many ways (see chapters 2.3.1-6, 2.3.10-11). A recommendation can therefore be given to future Outdoor Primary School to base the learning on experiences.

As can be seen in chapter 2.3.3, there are a lot of social benefits of learning outdoors, mostly because of its cooperative methods and its connection to the surrounding society. This connection to the surrounding society and even the international one as well as general social skills learning was mentioned by the respondents of this thesis as well. They regard these as useful learning activities. Group work, that was also named by the respondents, has been proven to be a good method, Fägerstam & Grotherus (2018, 391) found that students participation increased and that also students liked it because it helped them “to listen to other students’ ideas and ways of solving problems”. These findings in line with each other suggest that it can be recommended for Outdoor Primary Schools to include social learning.

In their study, Hartmeyer & Mygind (2016) found that play led to an improvement of social relations inside the class. Keeping this in mind and looking at the review by Gill (2014), we can see why the respondents both opted for and worried about too little play. Gills table (Table 1) shown above in chapter 2.3.5 indicates how beneficial playful activities are for children. A recommendation can therefore be made for Outdoor Primary Schools to include play areas and playful learning activities in their teaching.
Furthermore, the respondents regarded quiet zones and quiet moments for resting and focusing as especially useful. That these are needed for children to get some rest from noise in order to enable their learning is a widely researched fact and in a review looking at both noise from the classroom and the surrounding environment, Shields & Dockrell (2003) summarize what the outcomes of too much noise can mean for school students learning and their school performance:

“In summary, it appears from this body of work that the general effects of chronic noise exposure on children are deficits in sustained attention and visual attention; poorer auditory discrimination and speech perception; poorer memory for tasks that require high processing demands of semantic material; and poorer reading ability and school performance on national standardised tests.” (Shields & Dockrell 2003, 98)

It can therefore be recommended to future Outdoor Primary Schools to make sure that quiet moments and zones without noise are included in the learning activities and the campus design.

Learning activities including food and animals, namely growing and preparing food and keeping and caring for animals were regarded as useful by the respondents. As already evaluated in the section above on the outdoor and indoor space, these results go in line with findings about ecotherapy (Chalquist 2009) and gardening activities with school children (Swank & Shin 2015), as well as the biophilia hypothesis (Wilson 1986). These activities can therefore be recommended for Outdoor Primary Schools.

It is important to be aware of the fact that these findings do not only suggest that these learning activities and methodical approaches should be included in an Outdoor Primary School among others and be practiced e.g. just once every two weeks, but that they should make up all the learning activities happening in the school and are meant as an alternative to regular frontal instruction.

Even though this master thesis is focused on an Outdoor Primary School, these findings can also be recommended for regular primary schools, as they are based on general research about how different ways of learning and different environments affect school students.

### 7.3 How do they see the curriculum for this school?

The respondents opted for social learning (international, surrounding community, inside school), sustainability, food, animals and learning about health to be included in the curriculum, furthermore all common school subjects were named to be suitable for an Outdoor Primary School. If the national curriculum should be followed or rather an own be made, was something the respondents had very different opinions about. For more details, see the results chapter above.
The benefits of social learning and learning about food and animals were already discussed in the preceding section.

Another aspect named was learning about health and sustainability. As shown above in chapter ‘2.3.9 Environmental benefits’, Outdoor Learning can foster students’ connection to the environment and has a great potential to teach them sustainable alternatives. The chapter ‘2.3.8 Physiological benefits’ above outlines the health benefits of outdoor learning found in past research. It is therefore not a surprise that Outdoor Education Professionals see learning activities connected to sustainability and health as a part of an Outdoor Primary School. Learning about sustainability and health are both a part of the national curriculum in some countries, but not necessarily in all and with a varying degree. As the data suggests, it is though important to Western European Outdoor Education Professionals that health and sustainability education is done in an Outdoor Primary School regardless of its place and the curriculum it follows.

As just described, the question if the school should follow the national curriculum or make an own is something that the respondents had very different opinions about. As they are from different countries with different laws, policies and possibilities this is not a surprise. This thesis does therefore not provide a result that can be used for a recommendation for an Outdoor Primary School, as this aspect is highly dependent on local regulations. For some places it might be the case that “the curriculum actually support being outside” while it might be the case that in others, the curriculum “is 100 years old and nothing changed since then”.

Furthermore, learning activities as mentioned above can also be seen as part of the curriculum, as they cover the methodical side of it. Therefore, chapter 7.2 should also be read when really wanting to explore the dimensions of the curriculum for an Outdoor Primary School fully.

7.4 Which possible challenges due to the full outdoor concept can they imagine?

Challenges seen in my study for an Outdoor Primary School were:

- Weather including: cold, general weather conditions
- Parents including: finding them, convincing them
- Politics & Community including: laws, insurance, convincing
- Materialistic Challenges including: money, clothing, finding the place, IT
- Safety & Health including: a healthy place, a safe design, injury management
- Enough preparation for further schooling
- Teachers including: finding teachers with good education and love for outdoors, further training
Due to the fact that I measured them in the context of an Outdoor Primary School and not of an outdoor school day performed by indoor schools (udeskole in Danish), they are for sure not entirely comparable to Bentsen et al.s (2010) results, but it is still interesting to see what the barriers were that Danish udeskole teachers perceived.

As can be seen in Graph 1 (shown and discussed above in chapter 2.2), “Weather” was the challenge that was perceived as least limiting in Bentsen et al. (2010) study. This challenge was also named by my respondents. Two more challenges perceived as minor in Bentsen et al. (2010) are “Safety” and “Lack of support from Parents”, themes also named by my respondents. “Lack of qualified staff” and “Lack of acquaintance with udeskole” were named in Bentsen et al. (2010) study, as well as in my study, where respondents found it hard to find people with good education and love for the outdoors. While the participants of Bentsen et al. (2010) rather worried about the costs for training of staff, my respondents rather feared that there would be too little training opportunities. Another challenge named by my respondents were the “Materialistic challenges including: money, clothing, finding the place, IT”, they can be found in several of Bentsen et al. (2010) challenges, monetary aspects are in their study the three barriers that are at the top of their ranking, clothing can’t be found on their list, but “finding the place” corresponds with their “Lack of ‘good’ green space”. The IT aspect can’t be found either, which can be explained easily, as the schools they looked at have a full indoor classroom building, which is a different precondition than an Outdoor Primary School. In Bentsen et al.s (2010) list, the barriers “Unwillingness from managers/owners” and “Rules” represent the challenge “Politics & Community including: laws, insurance, convincing” from my study, the aspect of insurance can’t be found in Bentsen et al.s data though. The challenge “Enough preparation for further schooling?” that my respondents named can’t be found in Bentsen et al.s (2010) barriers, which might be due to the fact that they looked at fully equipped mainstream schools additionally performing Outdoor Education, in contrast to my study talking about Outdoor Education only.

I conclude that an Outdoor Primary School shares many barriers that were found for not practizing outdoor school days (udeskole) in public indoor schools but has additional ones due to its full-time outdoor concept. These additional challenges are:

- Enough preparation for further schooling?
- IT
- Clothing
- Insurance

Looking back at Figure 30 and comparing it to the challenges found in my study, it also becomes visible that an Outdoor Primary School doesn’t include all of the barriers that outdoor school days do. The following barriers perceived by Bentsen et al.s respondents were not perceived by mine:
• Non-flexible timetable
• Crowded curriculum
• Distance to ‘good’ green spaces
• Extra time for transportation
• Lack of interest from teachers
• Pupil-teacher ratio
• Extra time for preparation
• Lack of interest from pupils

I therefore conclude that an Outdoor Primary School is only partly comparable to outdoor school days (udeskole) when it comes to barriers for practicing it. An Outdoor Primary School poses additional challenges, as named above. At the same time it doesn’t come with challenges that are barriers for outdoor school days, as it is situated in nature, transport to the green spaces is not a problem and timetable/curriculum barriers are also not perceived as hindering. A lack of interest from teachers and pupils is also something that is not being worried about as much in an Outdoor Primary School. The pupil-teacher ratio is not a topic to worry about. Furthermore, extra time for preparation doesn’t seem to pose a barrier to an Outdoor Primary School either. An Outdoor Primary School can therefore be seen as an alternative to outdoor school days, especially for localities that see the just named challenges as the biggest ones and could live up with the ones that come along with Outdoor Primary Schools additionally. In order to really draw conclusions, it is far too early though, as this is just a single research project done on Outdoor Primary Schools and based on the respondents’ imagination rather than a reality. In order to really assess the challenges of an Outdoor Primary School, people that are practicing them (which is the case in Rome and Zürich as described in chapter 2.1) need to be asked and further research needs to be conducted around their design.

7.5 Which other aspects are they thinking about when asked about the Outdoor Primary School?

The themes identified in the data analysis Teachers and Class Construction were aspects not directly related to the other research questions (a part of Teachers was related to Challenges though) and can therefore be identified as other aspects. As the respondents obviously thought about them when asked about an Outdoor Primary School, they play an important role as well and should definitely be considered when planning for an Outdoor Primary School.

As mentioned above, there was no literature included regarding further general aspects of school and schooling. This would be very useful here though. It suggests that more work on this topic of an
Outdoor Primary School is needed focusing on different aspects of it more in detail. Especially studies that look at existing Outdoor Primary School settings and how classes are constructed in these and how teachers work and cooperate are needed.

### 7.6 A critical perspective on an Outdoor Primary School

Even though the benefits of Outdoor Education and an Outdoor Primary School are clear, there are shortcomings that I have not talked about yet. Outdoor Educational settings can be exclusive for children with physical handicaps, even though they might be inclusive for children with mental or social-emotional difficulties, as mentioned above in chapter 2.3.14. If an Outdoor Primary School would be a private school, it would include school fees which create exclusivity for children of low income families. The school fees can for sure be handled in a different way, e.g. by making parents pay 1-10% of their income depending on it\(^\text{18}\), but this is definitely a barrier that needs to be considered carefully when planning such a school. School equipment has to be thought about carefully as well. Especially when also including children from low-income families, the decision-makers should plan in such a way that minimal equipment from the individual child’s home is needed.

Furthermore an outdoor school can seem scary to any family, and also to families with a migration background, as they might never have heard about Outdoor Education. This problem could be solved by providing information about the how and why of the school in more languages than the local language, e.g. having an English version of the homepage or another language that many people of the area can speak. Another solution could be to hire staff with migration backgrounds to show that people with similar backgrounds are involved and trust this exceptional school. It might for sure also happen that some people with migration backgrounds are very attracted to the school, as their native culture and society might be more closely connected to nature and appreciate experiential learning more than the European societies do. As already mentioned in the preceding chapters, any family can be very skeptical towards an Outdoor Primary School and this is a problem that is hard to solve and ways to find solutions are yet to be researched.

### 7.7 An outlook into the future

As already mentioned a few times throughout this thesis, more research in the area of Outdoor Primary Schools is needed in the future, both looking at places that practice this model (Rome and Zürich, as mentioned in the beginning of this thesis as the first examples in Europe), and related

\(^{18}\) Which is a common practice in Waldorf Schools in Germany: [https://www.waldorfschule.de/eltern/schulgeld/](https://www.waldorfschule.de/eltern/schulgeld/)
programs such as the outdoor school days (udeskole in Danish). These future studies can provide an
insight into both the challenges in practice and the benefits of outdoor schooling, as well as common
practices shared by all places practicing it. These outcomes can both help establishing more outdoor
schooling places and provide recommendations for general teacher training and the one specialized
on Outdoor Education.

I also believe that further investigation using Professional Outdoor Educators, as I did, can lead to a
better insight into possible models to integrate Outdoor Education into formal schooling, as they
have tested different options in their professional every day practice and can see the risks, challenges
and chances of different options.

I furthermore want to point out that research focused on how to teach certain subjects outdoors are
valuable contributions that are needed in higher number, as they can make teachers planning of
lessons much easier and even provide teachers that have not attended courses about Outdoor
Education a gateway into practicing Outdoor Education with their students.

8 Conclusion

A first overview about the idea of an Outdoor Primary School could be given in this study, but it still is
a very new idea that has not been explored in research yet and this master thesis is not enough work
done for drawing overarching conclusions either. With this thesis, one more step is taken though
towards the aim of bringing children back into the beneficial outdoor environment and letting them
learn in ways which are more beneficial for them than indoor frontal instruction.

It could be shown that an Outdoor Primary School is a way to incorporate beneficial ways of learning,
such as project-based learning, experience-based and practical learning, social learning, play and
student-centered learning into formal schooling. Including learning content and activities that can aid
children’s development such as food, animals and sustainability is also possible in an Outdoor
Primary School as shown above. Furthermore, an Outdoor Primary School is an institution that can
be equipped with beneficial learning environments, such as natural environments, a vast space,
spaces for cooking, growing food and keeping animals, quiet zones, play zones and opportunities for
creating, building and crafts. It can be concluded that an Outdoor Primary School therefore holds a
big potential for being a formal-learning institution that can support child development in many
aspects and therefore can pose an alternative to current formal learning institutions.

It could furthermore be shown in this thesis that an Outdoor Primary School comes with challenges
as other concepts of Outdoor Education do as well, but that these challenges differ from other
concepts such as Outdoor School Days (udeskole). This means that an Outdoor Primary School can provide an alternative to other concepts of Outdoor Education if they are not feasible.

I can therefore conclude that an Outdoor Primary School is a valuable idea that seems to be possible to put in place in the western European society.

The outcomes of this thesis can furthermore be used to see which directions might be useful to follow when wanting to explore this topic further later on in research. Additionally, recommendations could be made for the design of an Outdoor Primary School and in general for governments and civilian initiatives that want to make formal schooling more beneficial for child development and the overall society.

9 Literature


Nationellt centrum för utomhushpedagogik (NCU) [National Centre for Outdoor Education] at Linköping University: https://old.liu.se/ikk/ncu?l=en&sc=true (8th June 2019, 14:20h)


Silverman, D. (2013). Doing Qualitative Research. SAGE.


10. Appendix

10.1 Screenshot of the first email sent to respondents

![Email Screenshot](image-url)
10.2 Questionnaire Screenshots

Thank you for participating in this online survey about an outdoor primary school!
I currently study the M.A. Outdoor & Sustainability Education at Linköping University, Sweden.
As my Master Thesis Project, I want to explore the idea of a primary school that works fully outdoors from professionals’ viewpoints. This research will help to create such a school in the future and bring more children outdoors.
And you are one of the professionals that can help. Thank you for your willingness!

This survey has only 10 pages and you don’t need any special knowledge to reply, just give your opinion.
Your data will be handled 100% anonymously.

In case of any question, you can always send me an email: sidd@sis@student.liu.se
All the best! Sina Drexler

M.A. Sina Drexler. Linköpings universitet – 2019
Imagine an Outdoor Primary School, where children (ages 6-12) are learning outdoors all the time. They learn all kinds of subjects, e.g. math, physical education, reading, music, writing, natural and sociological knowledge, foreign languages, crafts and arts outdoors.

How can you imagine such a school? What are the most important things that need to be considered, according to you?

Let's start with the first question...

According to you, what would be important to consider for the planning of the outdoor space of the school?

Next
According to you, what facilities should be present in an indoor space? How should it be situated in the outdoor space?

Next

According to you, what would be important to consider for the planning of the teaching style in the school?

Next

According to you, what learning activities are suitable for this school?

Next
**According to you, what could be the challenges due to the full outdoor concept?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Would you send your own children to the school you just imagined?**

- [ ] Yes
- [x] No

**For this study, I also need to conduct interviews. Would you be willing to be interviewed by me?**

The interview will be about your thoughts about an Outdoor Primary School and its flexible placewise and timewise.

Please fill in your email, if you would like to participate in the interviews and you will get an automatical email from me about the interview. If you don't want to, you can skip this page.

Your email address will not be stored in the data at all.

E-mail: 

[Next]
This is the email that was sent to the respondents that filled in their email address:

**E-Mail Settings**

**E-Mail subject:** Interview about an Outdoor Primary School

**Mail content (text only):**

Dear survey participant,

thank you for being willing to be interviewed about your thoughts about an Outdoor Primary School! This helps me a lot in making my research more valid and finding out more about how such a school should be designed.

For agreeing on a time and place for the interview, please write me a quick email: stdr958@student.liu.se

You can either suggest some dates and place yourself, if you don't want to do this, I will reply to you and send you some suggestions. Don't worry, I am quite flexible timewise and placewise!

Thank you and all the best wishes! Stina Drexler

M.A. Stina Drexler - Master student at the institution of behavioural science and learning - Linköping University

---

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

If you have any question or would like to receive a copy of the master thesis, email to: stdr958@student.liu.se

Your answers were transmitted, you may close the browser window or tab now.

M.A. Stina Drexler, Linköpings universitet – 2019